



## THEME: CHRISTIAN CHARACTER

### Bible Study 9 :Answered Prayer – Travailing with the Lord.

**INTRODUCTION** In most situations and activities of life we find that if we want to grow and become more experienced in something, then there is a need to persevere. Even in the processes of prayer we are taught as the people of God to lay hold of the Lord and not let Him go until He has blessed us or answered us. For many the reason why they do not break through to the place of answered prayer is that they give up before the process of prayer has been completed in them and through them. Scripture makes it clear that the Lord uses the process of prayer to shape our faith, to refine our character and to teach us both reliance and patience in Him.

**DISCUSS** – Do you think perseverance is an important part of answered prayer if so why?

What do you think we can do to stop ourselves from getting disheartened when it comes to prayer that takes time to be answered ?

How do you think perseverance can shape and deepen our character as a Christian for the better ?

**TEACHING SLOT** – CONDITIONS OF ANSWERED PRAYER.

The wonderful thing about the word of God is that we do not have to guess how to do things God's way. His word is a lamp unto our feet, a light unto our path. In His word we see clear conditions of a heart and a mind that is placed in a right position before the Lord that His Spirit will lead the person praying into such intimacy that the Lord's anointing will be on the prayers that they pray. This is a journey of openness, intimacy and submission to the Lord that empties our lives of self and opens our lives to His guidance, wisdom and heart. There is a very real sense that the process of real prayer changes the person and brings them more and more in line with the will of God, more and more sensitive to the prompting of His Holy Spirit.

**DISCUSS** – Do you think that most Christians understand that real prayer will change them?

How do you think prayer has the capacity to change the person who is interceding?

If real prayer means change and cost, do you think that Christians will pray like this? (Give reason for answer.)

**(1) Keeping a clear Conscience** – 1 John 3 v 21 – 22, Psalm 66 v 18 – 20

When we look at keeping a clear conscience before God we are talking about both keeping short accounts with Him and learning to walk and live in a way that is pleasing in His sight. In a real sense when we become Christians and the Holy Spirit lives in our hearts we find that our conscience's becomes more sensitive to what is right and wrong in the eyes of God. If we violate our conscience by omission sins (things that we should of do but didn't) or commission sins (things we did do but shouldn't) we find that we lose our peace and conviction comes upon our hearts. If left unchecked and unrepentant we find ourselves justifying our sinful behaviour and becoming harder and harder in our sinning.

**(2) Must be obedient to God** – Proverb 28v 9, Psalm 1,

The Lord Jesus in Matthew 7 v 23 made it clear that those who live lives of hearing but not obeying, seeing but not doing that they are lawless people who have no place with Him or in His Kingdom. Scripture declares that when we come to Jesus we die to self and come alive to His will, His word and His purposes. What we see is that just as Jesus declared that His love, his purpose was to do the will of the Father, so we as the followers of Jesus are under the obligation of love that is expressed in active obedience to God's will and word. Jesus tells us if we do what He has commanded us He will come and make His home in our hearts. Refusal or neglect of obeying the Lord's Word and will results in unanswered prayer. This is because we have been saved to His purposes, for His plan, that we might declares His message of salvation in this world today. As a result of this our passion, our sympathy and desire should be that the will of God will be manifested in our lives and situations.

**(3) Abiding in Christ** – John 15 v 7 – 8, Romans 12 v 1 – 2, 1 Corinthians 2 v 10 – 16

Abiding in Christ is all about cultivating closeness and intimacy with Him. Jesus does not keep us at arms length. But bids us to come into the very throne room of the God to present our needs to Him. He knocks at the door of our hearts that He might come in and have fellowship with Him and He with us. As we submit and are lead by His Spirit and as we are open and responsive to His word we see that our minds are opened to the active wisdom and discernment that comes from God and this informs our prayers. We need to cultivate both being and abiding daily in Christ Jesus. For If we do not our minds become carnal and we ask out of selfishness and sin rather than out of the perfect purposes of God. Abiding in Christ is to live and walk in the Spirit – to dwell in Christ and He in us. To yield ourselves to Him in confidence embracing Him and His ways in faith, submitting ourselves to Him and His perfect will as we walk in step with His Spirit.

**(4) Passion for Him and His ways** – Revelation 2 v 4 – 5

Prayer that prevails with the Lord is prayer that comes from a passionate and surrendered heart to the Lord Jesus and His kingdom work here on earth. It is prayer that has a strong desire founded in the heart to seek the Lord and hold onto Him for that certain blessing He has promised to pour out. It is a willingness for God to do it His way and not our way that His glory will be seen. Again this means a forsaking of the selfish desire and a cultivating of a passionate and godly desire.

**(5) We must have faith** – Hebrews 11 v 1 & 6

Faith in the Lord and in His integrity is one of those real keys that unlocks a mighty work of the Lord. While God will not be manipulated by strong faith, when it is in the context of a sincere and obedient heart the Lord does release greater works on the foundation of faith.

**(6) You must pray in His name**

When we come to prayer we do so in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ . We are given His name by Jesus Himself to approach the throne of grace and because of His authority and work we approach that throne in boldness and confidence as children of the living God in full assurance of our salvation and our rights as His children. When we come through the name of JESUS we come in His power and His authority and seal our request in His name. **(7) Persevere in Prayer** – Jacob wrestled with God until He got a blessing.