

Published based on [The Benefits of Prayer -- sermon outline](#)

The Benefits of Prayer -- sermon outline

(The following is an excerpt from the fourth chapter of Andrew Murray's book, PRAYER. It focuses on what a person can expect if they more passionately engage their prayer life. Under his main headings, I offer an alternate suggestion.)

SUGGESTED TITLE -- THE BENEFITS OF PRAYER

If now we are delivered from the sin of prayerlessness, and understand how this deliverance may continue to be experienced, what will be the fruit of our liberty? He who sees this aright will, with renewed earnestness and perseverance, seek after this liberty. His life and experience will indeed be an evidence that he has obtained something of unspeakable worth. He will be a living witness of the blessing which victory has brought.

Consider -

1. The blessedness of unbroken fellowship with God (SUGGESTION: THE BENEFIT OF A CLOSER FELLOWSHIP)

Think of the confidence in the Father which will take the place of the reproach and self-condemnation which was the earlier characteristic of our lives. Think of the deep consciousness that God's almighty grace has effected something in us, to prove that we really bear his image and are fitted for a life of communion with him and prepared to glorify him. Think how we, notwithstanding our conviction of our nothingness, may live as true children of a King, in communion with their Father, and may manifest something of the character of our Lord Jesus in the holy fellowship with his Father which he had when on earth. Think how in the inner chamber the hour of prayer may become the happiest time in the whole day for us, and how God may use us to take a share in the carrying out of his plans, and make us fountains of blessing for the world around us.

2. The power which we may have for the work to which we are called (SUGGESTION: THE BENEFIT OF A GREATER POWER)

The preacher will learn to receive his message really from God, through the power of the Holy Spirit, and to deliver it in that power to the congregation. He will know where he can be filled with the love and zeal which will enable him, in his rounds of pastoral visiting, to meet and help each individual in a spirit of tender compassion. He will be able to say with Paul: 'I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me' (Ph 4.13). 'We are more than conquerors through him that loved us' (Rom. 8.37). 'We are ambassadors for Christ ... we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God' (2 Cor. 5.20). These are no vain dreams or pictures of a foolish imagination. God has given us Paul an illustration, so that, however we may differ from him in gifts or calling, yet in inner experience we may know the all-sufficiency of grace which can do all things for us as it did for him.

3. The prospect which opens before us for the future (SUGGESTION: THE BENEFIT OF A BRIGHTER FUTURE)

This is to be consecrated to take part as intercessors in great work of bearing on our hearts the need of the Church and world. Paul sought to arouse men to pray for all saints, and he tells us what a conflict he had for those who had not yet seen his face. In his personal presence he was subject to conditions of time and place, but in Spirit he had power in the name of Christ to pray blessing on those who had not yet heard of the Saviour.

In addition to his life in connection with men here on earth, far or near, he lived another, a heavenly life - one of love and of a wonderful power in prayer which he continually exercised. We can hardly form a conception of the power God will bestow, if only we get freed from the sin of prayerlessness and pray with the daring which reaches heaven and brings down blessing in the almighty name of Christ.

What a prospect! Ministers and missionaries brought by God's grace to pray, let us say twice as much as formerly, with twofold faith and joy! What a difference it would make in the preaching, in the prayer meeting, in the fellowship with others! What a gentle power would come down in an inner chamber, sanctified by communion with God and his love in Christ! What an influence would be exercised on believers, in urging them forward to the work of intercession! How greatly would this influence be felt in the Church and among the heathen! What power might be exercised over ministers of other churches, and who knows how God might use us for his Church through the whole world! Is it not worth while to sacrifice everything, and to beseech God without ceasing to give us real and full victory over the prayerlessness which has covered us with such shame?

Why do I now write these things and extol so highly the blessedness of victory over 'the sin which doth so easily beset us' and which has so terribly robbed us of the power which God has intended for us? I can give an answer. I know all too well what low thoughts we have concerning the promises and the power of God and how prone we are always to backslide, to limit God's power, and to deem it impossible for him to do greater things than we have seen. It is a glorious thing to get to know God in a new way in the inner chamber. That, however, is but

the beginning. It is something still greater and more glorious to know God as the allsufficient One and to wait on his Spirit to open our hearts and minds wide to receive the great things, the new things which he really longs to bestow on those who wait for him.

God's object is to encourage faith and to make his children and servants see that they must take trouble to understand and rely upon the unspeakable greatness and omnipotence of God, so that they may take literally and in a childlike spirit this word: 'Unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think ... be glory ... throughout all ages' (Eph. 3.20, 21). Oh, that we knew what a great and glorious God we have!

Someone may ask: 'May not this note of certain victory become a snare and lead to levity and pride?' Undoubtedly. That which is the highest and best on earth is always liable to abuse. How, then, can we be saved from this? Through nothing so surely as through true prayer, which brings us really into contact with God. The holiness of God, sought for in persistent prayer, will cover our sinfulness. The omnipotence and greatness of God will make us feel our nothingness. Fellowship with God in Jesus Christ will lead us to the experience that there is in us no good thing, and that we can have fellowship with God only as our faith become a humbling of ourselves as Christ humbled himself, and we truly live in him as he is in the Father.

Prayer is not merely coming to God to ask something from him. It is above all fellowship with God and being brought under the power of his holiness and love, till he takes possession of us and stamps our entire nature with the lowliness of Christ, which is the secret of all true worship.

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