

## **How Prayer Works**

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### I. Introduction.

- A. Text: Ephesians 3:14-21.
- B. Problem: what can be done about the problem of self-discipline. (Galatians 5:23)
- C. The world answers with self-effort but Paul approaches the problem differently.

### II. Do not lose heart.

- A. People need light and power to continue—there is a need for motivation and resolution to stick it out until the end.
- B. Light helps us begin, but power gives us ability to continue.

### III. Steps to continuing.

#### A. Prayer.

- 1. We need to understand more about the ministry of prayer.
- 2. This is the place to begin when someone's faith is failing.
- 3. Position does not matter.
- 4. Prayer is directed to the Father—the archetype of all paternity.
  - a. We can turn to Him for comfort in our need.
  - b. God is a tender, concerned and deeply involved with us.

#### B. Being strengthened by the Spirit into the inner man.

- 1. The inner man is part of us that is getting better and richer as we grow. (II Corinthians 5)
- 2. The inner man is the realm of the unconscious.
- 3. God infuses His strength into our inner man.
- 4. Spiritual recovery is not a quick fix—it is a process.
- 5. God initiates spiritual recovery.
- 6. Ask God that you would receive a new infusion of strength.

C. Christ dwelling in your heart through faith.

1. The strengthening of the Spirit results in Christ in you.
2. The key here is faith.
3. The fundamental fact of faith is that Jesus Christ has come.
4. Jesus Christ takes up residence in you. He belongs to you.

D. Being rooted and grounded in love.

1. Feeling begins to return here.
2. You understand again and realize the love.
3. We need foundations for our experience—love is that foundation.
4. We need the assurance that God accepts and loves us.

E. Having power to comprehend and relate.

1. We are not to live in isolation but to live with one another.
2. We cannot have privacy without love.
3. We need to be open to others.
4. We are caught up in a vast cosmic endeavor with Christ.
5. The power we receive is authority over anything that would drag us down.
6. We are called out of a living death—living life for everything wrong.

F. Knowing the love of Christ. Here is where feeling comes in full strength.

G. Realizing the purpose of our creation.

1. We were made to be fully flooded with God—filled with the Spirit.
2. We were made to live in this victory continuously.

H. God in you will accomplish all of this.

**Application questions:**

1. Why is prayer the essential first step for discipline?

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2. What does it mean to be strengthened in the inner man?

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3. Where could you use power to comprehend and relate in your life especially? How will you tap into this power?

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