

## Praying from a Position of Righteousness

Main Text: James 5:16 (NKJV) <sup>16</sup> Confess *your* trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.

IN any area where the righteousness of God does not prevail, our faith will not be sufficient, because righteousness is the seat of faith.

From situation to situation, action to action one's faith increases as he or she continues to move out and respond to what God is telling them to do.

(Romans 12:3,6)

Apart from righteousness, faith becomes ineffective.

1. Who is considered righteous? It is those who remain aligned with God's nature and character through Christ.

a. When we are not aligned with God, with His name and His word, we become an easy prey for the enemy.

b. The Son, Jesus Christ, made us righteous before the Father.

1) Romans 3:21-22

2) Matthew 26:28. To be justified and made righteous is to be brought back to a state of complete innocence, where every sin is erased and there is no record left of our transgressions. To be justified is to be forgiven and cleansed from all iniquity.

c. In any area of our lives which we are not standing in the righteousness Jesus won for us, the enemy will have the legal right to accuse us before God.

1) Example: If a man mistreats his wife, he won't receive an answer to his prayers in the area of family, because his position of unrighteousness will hinder his prayers.

a) 1 Peter 3:7 (NKJV) <sup>7</sup> Husbands, likewise, dwell with *them* with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as *being* heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.

2) Likewise, if a woman doesn't submit to her husband, or doesn't give him his place as the head of their home, she will be in an unrighteous position before the Father.

a) Ephesians 5:22–23 (NKJV)<sup>22</sup> Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. <sup>23</sup> For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body.

3) Same way in a business, if a businessperson abuses their employees, not paying them a fair wage or respecting their rights, they won't be standing in a position of righteousness in the area of business and finances and God will not hear their prayers.

a) Colossians 4:1 (NKJV) **4** Masters, give your bondservants what is just and fair, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.

d. Before we ask something of God, we must examine ourselves to see if we are violating His commandments or not reflecting His nature and will. Jesus always lived in righteousness. He simply gave thanks (John 11:41-42 – Lazarus' tomb)

### **Obstacles to Praying from a Place of Righteousness**

If we remove the obstacles to praying from a place of righteousness, we can be assured that our prayers will be heard by God.

1. Iniquity.

a. Isaiah 59:2 (NKJV) <sup>2</sup> But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden *His* face from you, So that He will not hear.

b. The word for iniquity in Hebrew indicates the bending or twisting of morality, to the point of perverting it from the roots. The term alludes to the extreme immorality and perversity that originates in the heart of man.

1) Matthew 15:18–19 (NKJV) <sup>18</sup> But those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man. <sup>19</sup> For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.

c. Iniquity and sin (missing the mark of obedience to God's commandments) are two conditions that separate us from God, preventing us from being in right standing before His presence.

d. God will not hear, attend to, or answer a prayer made from a place of unrighteousness., regardless of how much one may pleade, cry out, shout or sow financially.

1) Examples: Those who twist the truth are living in a state of dishonesty(2 Peter 3:16; Psalm 56:5; Acts 13:10) Those who don't recognize authority and refuse to be accountable for their actions are perverting obedience. (Romans 13:1-7;Titus 3:1-3; Ephesians 5:21-27) Those who harbor unforgiveness, bitterness, or hatred are distorting God's love and their hearts are filled with rebellion (Mark 11:25, Matthew 6:14-15; Colossians 3:13; Ephesians 4:31-32)

Iniquity is the mixture of the carnal and the demonic, which perverts the righteousness of God. Where there's dishonesty, unforgiveness, and envy, lack of love, bitterness, resentment , hatred is rebellion in us, we are not standing in a position of righteousness.

2. A guilty conscience. How to overcome?

a. We must go before God with a broken and contrite spirit, acknowledge our sin, repent, and ask for forgiveness.

b. Psalm 51:17 (NKJV) <sup>17</sup>The sacrifices of God *are* a broken spirit, A broken and a contrite heart— These, O God, You will not despise.

c. We must learn to receive God's forgiveness, through the blood of Jesus after confessing and forsaking our sins. Although we have repented, the enemy will continue to bring condemnation we must rebuke him and command him to leave in Jesus name!

1) Romans 8:1-2 (NKJV) **8** *There is* therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. <sup>2</sup> For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.

2) Romans 12:1-2 (NKJV) **Living Sacrifices to God 12** I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is* your reasonable service. <sup>2</sup> And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

d. The Word encourages us to draw close to God “with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkles from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water (Hebrews 10:22)

1) If we go to God with a clean conscience, as His sons and daughters, in the name of Jesus, standing from a place of righteousness, He hears us.

2) We can never enter into God’s presence on the basis of our own merits, intelligence, or personal abilities but only because we are clothed with the righteousness of God.

a) Job 29:14 (NKJV) <sup>14</sup> I put on righteousness, and it clothed me; My justice *was* like a robe and a turban.

b) Isaiah 61:10 (NKJV) <sup>10</sup>I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, My soul shall be joyful in my God; For He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, As a bridegroom decks *himself* with ornaments, And as a bride adorns *herself* with her jewels.

c) We are righteous and the works we perform are righteous too.

d) Hebrews 10:19 (NKJV) <sup>19</sup> Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus,

### 3. Self Righteousness

a. All believers have been called to be in a place of righteousness before God. We have been clothed with Christ’s Righteousness.

1) 2 Corinthians 5:21 (NKJV)<sup>21</sup> For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

2) If Christ has made our nature righteous, then we have been empowered to do righteous works, but not because of anything we do, but only because we have been justified by Christ and God’s Holy Spirit lives in us.

Righteousness captures God’s Attention! We see this with David. As long as David remained in the will of God, his kingdom prospered. But, when he lived outside of righteousness, crisis came into his life. Also when he repented, he was back in right standing with God (1 Samuel 13:14).

## How to Walk in Righteousness

### 1. Practice Repentance as a Lifestyle

a. Every time we sin against God, or we allow iniquity and perversion a place in our heart, we must repent.

1) Repentance brings us back into the presence of God

2) Proverbs 28:13 (NKJV) <sup>13</sup>He who covers his sins will not prosper, But whoever confesses and forsakes *them* will have mercy.

b. When a person has iniquity in their hearts, they will always find a way to do things “their way” separated from God.

c. We need to ask God if there is any sin or iniquity in our lives to remove it and lead me in Your (Christ Jesus’) path.

1) Psalm 139:23–24 (NKJV) <sup>23</sup>Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties; <sup>24</sup> And see if *there is any* wicked way in me, And lead me in the way everlasting.

### 2. Seek First the Righteousness of God.

a. Ephesians 4:22–24 (NKJV) <sup>22</sup> that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, <sup>23</sup> and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, <sup>24</sup> and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.

b. There is things that you have to physically and spiritually do: put off the old man and put on the new man and then be renewed in your spirit of your mind.

c. Matthew 6:33 (NKJV) <sup>33</sup> But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

1) Seek God First

2) Seek His Righteousness

3) All things will be added to you because when you seek God and His righteousness, you immediately want to Him in the expressed image of His Son Jesus Christ.

### 3. Always Watch and Pray.

a. 1 Thessalonians 5:17 (NKJV) <sup>17</sup> pray without ceasing,

b. It is vital for believers who wish to maintain their place of righteousness to watch and be careful that their prayers do not weaken.

C Our prayer life should grow and become the first and most important part of our day. (If you have walked out your door before praying, you are already setting your self up for defeat)

d. When we watch in the presence of God with a righteous heart, the Holy Spirit shows us any areas of unrighteousness in our lives, or where we have allowed the enemy to gain a foothold. When we take the time to examine ourselves in prayer it is exposed and then we deal with it not allowing the enemy to have a foot hold in our lives.