Prayer: The Present Power in the People of God

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The first mention of prayer is in Genesis 4:26. ***Seth also had a son, and he named him Enosh.***

***At that time people began to call on[***[***a***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+4%3A26&version=NIV#fen-NIV-106a)***] the name of the Lord. New International Version(NIV).*** The term ‘prayer’ is not mentioned but it is certainly implied by the language- ***At that time people began to call on[***[***a***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+4%3A26&version=NIV#fen-NIV-106a)***] the name of the Lord.*** The same text in **the Easy to Read Version** **(ERV)** says **Seth also had a son. He named him Enosh. At that time people began to pray to the Lord.** The need for divine aid has always been the case as we can see from this scripture. The time period of this text is before the flood.

**Effectual Prayer Causes Great Things to Happen**

There is a text in the New Testament (Romans 8:20) which states, ***For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope (NIV).*** In the Amplified Version (Amp), the same text reads ***For the creation (nature) was subjected to [***[***a***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+8%3A20&version=AMP#fen-AMP-28135a)***]frailty (to futility, condemned to frustration), not because of some intentional fault on its part, but by the will of Him Who so subjected it—[yet] with the hope.*** This frailty and frustration keeps us running to the throne of grace for help in coping with life. It is interesting to note in both versions that subjection is applied to two seemingly opposite sides-frustration on the one hand and hope on the other. This being the case, according to the scriptures, the latter can be expected when we fall into the grasp of frustration due to our frailty. Hope opposes the victory of the negative over the positive, frustration over peace. Hope or expectation as it is defined is ever positive. Now the greater one’s faith, the greater one’s hope. Consider this for a moment. One’s faith is dependent upon one’s belief in God. (Hebrews 11:6). Is this statement sound? One’s belief in God is dependent upon the word of God (Romans 10:17). Is this statement not sound? Our minds must be settled on the matter that nothing is impossible for God! (Genesis 18:14; Ephesians 3:20). So when faith and hope are brought to the sphere of prayer, great things happen! Anxiety is diminished! Fear disappears! Joy surfaces! Sunlight appears in a soul once dominated by dark gray clouds. Birds sing where once there was gloomy silence! While all of this may sound too far-fetched to some, the point that I am trying to make is that a strong faith coupled by undying hope does in fact yield these results. Above all else, as the Master said, “Have faith in God!” (Mark 11:22).

**Prayers of the Wicked are Unanswered**

Yes, my friends, prayer can yield great things! But what can be said of this? Can anyone’s prayer yield great things? Are there not things which must be considered for such a result? The wicked cannot expect to have their prayers answered. I will list the scriptures as taken from Nave’s Topical Bible, page 793). They are as follows: Deut. 1:45; 2 Sa. 22:42; Job 35:12, 13: Psa. 18:41; 66:18; Pr. 1:24-28; 15:8, 29: 21:13, 27; 28:9; Isa 1:15; 45:19; 59:2; Jer 11:11; 14:12; 15:1; 18:17; Lam 3:8, 44; Eze 8:18; 20:8, 31; Hos 5:6; Mic 3:4; Zec 7:12-13; Mal 2:11-13; Jn 9:31; Jas 1:6-7; 4:3). While there may be some who find pleasure in wickedness, how utterly sad it is that in time of trouble they are left to their own devices! They loved wickedness and did not choose the fear of the Lord. The very idea of coming to the throne of grace in the mind of the unrepentant wicked is not going to happen! But in the mind of the repentant wicked whose disposition has been mightily affected by the “fallen hammer” (Jeremiah 23:29)—that is to say the “word of God,” hope is reborn. The stage is now set for “godly sorrow” which leads to forsaking the sin, and coming back into the light of God.

**Prayers Not Answered As Expected**

A New Testament case of this is found in 2 Corinthians 12:7-10.

*7And to keep me from being puffed up and too much elated by the exceeding greatness (preeminence) of these revelations, there was given me a thorn ([*[*a*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Corinthians+12&version=AMP#fen-AMP-29028a)*]a splinter) in the flesh, a messenger of Satan, to rack and buffet and harass me, to keep me from being excessively exalted.*

*8Three times I called upon the Lord and besought [Him] about this and begged that it might depart from me;*

*9But He said to me, My grace (My favor and loving-kindness and mercy) is enough for strength and power are made perfect (fulfilled and completed) and [*[*b*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Corinthians+12&version=AMP#fen-AMP-29030b)*]show themselves most effective in [your] weakness. Therefore, I will all the more gladly glory in my weaknesses and infirmities, that the strength and power of Christ (the Messiah) may rest (yes, may [*[*c*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Corinthians+12&version=AMP#fen-AMP-29030c)*]pitch a tent over and dwell) upon me!*

*10So for the sake of Christ, I am well pleased and take pleasure in infirmities, insults, hardships, persecutions, perplexities and distresses; 10So for the sake of Christ, I am well pleased and take pleasure in infirmities, insults, hardships, persecutions, perplexities and distresses; for when I am weak [[*[*d*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Corinthians+12&version=AMP#fen-AMP-29031d)*]in human strength], then am I [truly] strong (able, powerful [*[*e*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Corinthians+12&version=AMP#fen-AMP-29031e)*]in divine strength).*

There is a wealth of spiritual information in these few verses! Paul is exceedingly troubled by an aggravating thorn the Lord has allowed to come upon him because of the abundance of revelations given him for the gentiles through the Spirit. The affliction is so great that the apostle petitions the Lord three times to remove it. The removal doesn’t happen. Here is a man seeking to live as God would have him to live but his prayer is refused! Is this contrary to the words **the eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, and his ears are attentive to their cry? (Psalms 34:15).** Absolutely not! Here is the scriptural reasoning behind my answer. The removal of the affliction was not what Paul needed. The removing of the affliction would have presented a danger that would have brought Paul into disfavor with the Lord. Pride could have worked its ugly way into the mindset of Paul through the abundance of revelations he had received from the Lord. As a preventative measure, the Lord allowed a messenger of Satan, a thorn in the flesh to buffet him. The word “buffet” means **to hit (something) with great force many times**. (<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/buffet>). This buffeting was not a temporary measure but an ongoing thing! Though the removal is denied, something exceedingly greater is provided. Paul calls it character in Romans 5:3-5. Listen to him. I will set two versions before you: The English Standard Version and The Amplified Version. First, the English Standard Version.

*3Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, 4and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, 5and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us*.

Now let us look at The Amplified Versison.

*3Moreover [let us also be full of joy now!] let us exult and triumph in our troubles and rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that pressure and affliction and hardship produce patient and unswerving endurance. 4And endurance (fortitude) develops maturity of [*[*a*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+5%3A3-5&version=AMP#fen-AMP-28050a)*]character (approved faith and [*[*b*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+5%3A3-5&version=AMP#fen-AMP-28050b)*]tried integrity). And character [of this sort] produces [the habit of] [*[*c*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+5%3A3-5&version=AMP#fen-AMP-28050c)*]joyful and confident hope of eternal salvation. 5Such hope never disappoints or deludes or shames us, for God’s love has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit Who has been given to us.*

*Author’s Note. The next time you read James 1:2-4, think of Romans 5:3-5.*

Both versions use the word character. In the King James Version, the word “experience” is used. Is there a difference between character and experience? The word “experience” means “proof.” **The word "experience" in Rom 5:4 means "character that has been proved."** (from The Bible Exposition Commentary. Copyright © 1989 by Chariot Victor Publishing, and imprint of Cook Communication Ministries. There is something that I would like to share which comes from the same source on the subject of tribulation.

*Our English word "tribulation" comes from a Latin word tribulum. In Paul’s day, a tribulum was a heavy piece of timber with spikes in it, used for threshing the grain. The tribulum was drawn over the grain and it separated the wheat from the chaff. As we go through tribulations, and depend on God's grace, the trials only purify us and help to get rid of the chaff.*

**This is the process which develops that experience which is character that has been proven.** I have taken quite a long leave of absence from the subject of prayer to make a point regarding Paul in 2 Corinthians 12:7-10. But this very thing was one of the results Paul received when the Lord answered his prayer another way than Paul expected. The grace of which Jesus spoke would yield this very fruit that Paul speaks of in Romans 5:3-5. So you see, answer to prayer when it does not come as we would like comes better than expected.