

## **05 | Pray Always**

### God Answers Prayer Series

Hello and welcome to the last teaching of our series God Answers Prayer. Today we will be on Pray Without Ceasing. Pray without ceasing. And I'm going to go ahead and open up in a quick word of prayer. Would you pray with me right now as we get into the Word of God? Father, I thank You for Your Word. I thank You that the Holy Spirit is our teacher and the one who reveals Jesus to us. Holy Spirit, You're the helper that gives us insight into the Word of God. So we welcome You and invite You in this time of being in Your Word. In Jesus name, Amen.

I want to go over to 1 Thessalonians 5:17, as this is where we will be. But before that, I want to go ahead and read the passage of Scripture where we find 1 Thessalonians 5:17, and that passage starts in verse 14. And it says this "Now we exhort you brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the faint hearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all, see that no one renders evil for evil to anyone. But always pursue what is good, both for yourselves and for all. Rejoice, always. Pray without ceasing. In everything, give thanks. For this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit, do not despise prophecies. Test all things. Hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of

evil." Now I want to focus on verse 17 where it says pray without ceasing, but I want to give a little bit of context with regards to the book of Thessalonians or the letter of Thessalonians that Paul wrote. And in this particular passage in verse, Paul the Apostle, had written letters to the church in Thessalonica. The disciples there in Thessalonica, Timothy had come to him and reported that there they had suffered persecutions there in the church, but that the new converts held steady and stayed strong even in the midst of persecution. In Chapter 5, Paul begins to talk to them about the times and the seasons. So if you read a little bit earlier in Chapter 5, you'll see that Paul begins to talk about the seasons they were in, the times they were in, and he says about the day of the Lord, he began to talk to them about that day. And really what he was talking about is the return of Jesus. Because when they shared with the disciples and the new believers, they would win them over by talking about Jesus the Messiah had come, but that He would be coming again. So Paul goes ahead and addresses this in this chapter. This is important because as much as they were suffering and seemed like things were getting darker, I would imagine that they were anxious for Jesus to return. Well, are we not anxious for Jesus to return as well? And fast forward thousands of years later. Now even more so darker. Even more so. We're more eager for the return of Jesus. And so in its context, it's important for us to look at it when he was addressing them with these things, these precious disciples. He

was addressing the concerns of their heart, and he was encouraging them. But he was also giving them instruction on how to continue in these days of darkness, in these days of persecution. And so I want us to be able to look at this.

Let's look at it again. It says here, see in verse 15, "see that no one renders evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good, both for yourselves and for all. Rejoice always." Isn't it interesting that he was telling them to rejoice always? No matter what you're going through! These are new converts, and he's telling them to rejoice in the middle of persecution! We just got here. We're just now beginning to do this. And you're telling us to rejoice always. And he was. But this little verse 17, right here, just smushed in there, it says, "Pray without ceasing." Pray without ceasing. If you're like me, you wonder, what does that mean? What does that look like? What are you telling me? What are you saying to me? Pray without ceasing. Pray without stopping. You may wonder. Well, does that mean I stop everything that I'm doing? I stop my life itself? I mean, I'm a wife or perhaps you're a husband or you've got your career and you've got work and you've got children and you've got your ministry and you're calling. There's so many different things. And we say, Well, we pray without ceasing? We just stop? We just go into our room and close the door and suddenly just stop everything we're doing so that this is true of us that we would stop and just simply pray? Well, I would say to

you, no, that's not what it means. But praying without ceasing is talking about continual. It's talking about perpetual. It's talking to us about having a constant conversation with the Lord. It's talking about us having this ongoing conversation. Fellowship. Talking with Him. Is it important to have those times of going into our room and closing the door because it's scriptural? It is. Is it talking about having concentrated times of devotion and prayer, meaning you're uninterrupted? You're going to be alone with God? You're going to pray the Word, declare the Word? You're going to have conversations with Him about what's going on? Absolutely. But pray without ceasing means it doesn't stop there.

It means that you are inviting him to be a part of every day. All day. It means when you walk out of your room and even out of your home and wherever it is that you go and that you do, that you're praying. What does that mean? You're acknowledging Him in every situation and in all things. It means that when you come into a situation where you're unsure or something bad happened or it's causing anxiety or it's causing worry. So many different things that suddenly that you recognize, "Oh, I'm going to need God in this." And then you mutter a prayer to Him, you mutter a whisper to Him, and you say, "God, I need you in this." Perhaps you received a bad report. And you stop and say, Lord, I believe your report. I believe the report of the Lord. Perhaps it's a report of an illness. You say to yourself, God, I thank

you that the doctors may have said this, but your word says that. That is praying without ceasing. Remember that we're talking about troubled times and times of persecution. You may be experiencing persecution for yourself in many different ways, in various ways. And you'll need the strength of the Lord. You'll need the wisdom of the Lord. You'll need the guidance of the Lord. Well, you don't have to stop and or, wait, I should say. You don't have to wait until you're able to get home and you're able to have that concentrated time. Should you? Absolutely. Every day it should be like breathing. It's a conversation with God every day. But throughout the day, taking time and saying right now, Lord, I need you in this situation. You pull yourself aside for a moment. If you're alone, you can have a quick prayer where you are. It's a relationship with Him. He is a real person. And by the Holy Spirit, you have conversation. You pray without stopping. It's perpetual. It's ongoing. It's. It's a relationship. I like to give the example of a marriage. In a marriage, you wake up with each other and you go to bed together and you're doing life together. Are you always in the same room all day every day? No. Likely you are not. Your spouse is going their way and you're going another way. But you have constant communication with each other. You catch each other up with things. You're there for one another. Sometimes I will throughout the day, if something just happened and I feel like my husband needs to know about it right then and there, I'll send him a little message. If it's significant enough where I

feel like I might need to interrupt his day, if you will, I'll give him a phone call. What is that? That is conversation. I am not stopping this ongoing flow of relationship with him, and I know that he is there for me and I am there for him. But all the more, the Lord Your God is there for you. He's there for us. He is desiring this constant conversation with us in our lives. He's desiring an invitation for you to include him in on things.

Well, what does it look like? Well, you remember Scripture. When something happens and it comes up in your heart, you pray that Scripture. It may not be a Scripture. It may be a song. You know, you can sing that out. You can pray it out. That's prayer! It's conversation with the Lord in all things. When you're in need of something, you just ask Him in the middle of being in need of something, "God, I need this. I thank that you supply my every need." It could be financial. It could be a resource. It could be something else. But you are in constant prayer, and I'll go even deeper into other things. Perhaps you have the responsibility on your shoulders of many things in your family, the things that you're responsible for other people. And you say to yourself, I don't know if I can carry all these burdens by myself. Well, praying without ceasing or stopping, says "Lord, I cast all my cares on you, for you care for me. But I thank you that even though outwardly it looks not possible, it doesn't look possible for me to get to all of these things all at the same

time." Guess what? The Bible declares that all things are possible with God and with God nothing is impossible. That is prayer. And you're including Him in on this situation. You're saying, "God, come and help me. Where it seems impossible here, I'm inviting you in. And I'm saying right now it is possible with God. I'm saying that when I need wisdom, and I lack it, and I don't know what to do in a situation and You are coming in with all of Your wisdom because You said I can ask for it according to James, and you will give it to me liberally and without reproach." And again, it doesn't have to be in a concentrated time, although you ought to have those times of intimacy with God. He needs to be the first person we consult in the morning, the one we consult with and talk with all throughout the day and praying to Him. And then, He's the last person that we whisper to at night before we go to bed, before we go to sleep. That is praying without ceasing. That is what it looks like.

It's not overwhelming, when you think about it as He's with you always, even into the ends of the earth, the Bible said. And He said He would never leave you. He would never forsake you. He doesn't forsake us. He doesn't leave us. The Bible says He's an ever present help in time of need. And so what does that mean? That means when I'm ready to talk to Him about something, when I'm ready to pray, when I'm ready to call for Him, He is there. He is readily available so that the things that I pray about, I have confidence in those things that He hears me, the Bible

declares. That we have the confidence that He hears us when we pray and that if He hears us, we will have the things that we have asked of Him. He said, ask and receive that your joy may be full. You want to be full of joy in these dark days, in these days of uncertainty, in these times where things would seem overwhelming, and now that the things that were right are no longer right, they're wrong. And the things that were wrong now they seem to be right! That in the midst of all that, we can continue to be right. We can continue to hang on. We can continue to live righteously. We can continue to receive the blessing of God. We can continue to have faith and stand firm that in the middle of all this, God is still with us because we're talking to Him constantly. We are not stopping. He is with us throughout the day, every day of our lives. And you know what? He's also answering us. He answers us when we stand firm and believe and we receive our breakthrough. He answers us in the midst of everything, even when we're not necessarily expecting it. Why? Because we're in this ongoing praying without ceasing.

There's so many other scriptures I can share. So many other places I can go. But really, by the Spirit of God, I believe strongly that if we just keep it to its simplicity. Pray without stopping. Pray all the time. Have conversations with Jesus. Talk to the Father in the name of the Son Jesus. Rely on the Holy Spirit to be your helper in prayer. Keep talking to Him. And if you don't know how to have a life like this, if you don't know how



to walk like this, all you simply need to do is ask for His help. Say, "God, I need You to help me to know this kind of intimacy, to have this kind of fervor, to be earnest about praying and seeking You and consulting with You first. To be so full of faith and so full of Your Word that it is the first place that I direct myself to. That Your face and Your Word is the first thing that I am seeking. And I'm standing on it and I'm breathing it out. And that You're also talking right back to me. Lord, help me have this kind of prayer life. Help me live like this." Can you imagine, people of God, can you imagine what our lives would look like if we would be a people that in the midst of everything, no matter what's happening in the world and no matter what's happening with us personally, that we would not stop praying? No matter what. Can you imagine how many prayers would be answered throughout our days? And then they would add up to weeks and months and even years. Can you imagine the kind of fruitfulness, the kind of supernatural power of God, because we have full access to Jesus because of what He's done. So I encourage you today, pray without ceasing every day. All day. Let us not stop praying. Amen? Amen.

Well, let us wrap this time up together in this series, God Answers Prayer. Let faith arise in your heart. That God is readily available to you to listen to your prayers and to answer them. So can we pray right now? God, I thank You for what You've been teaching us as a people. I thank You that the words that have gone forth through the

various teachers, that by Your Holy Spirit, You have revealed Yourself to us. You have built our faith because faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. That You are growing us in intimacy with You. That You are teaching us how to have the blessing and the results that You have for us. You're teaching us how to live in these dark days. You're teaching us how to pray as we wait for You, as the coming of the Lord draws near and we're in the midst of adversity. So we invite You. Would you invite Him right now? We invite you. We invite you to be a part of our prayer life as we have conversations with you in concentrated times of prayer. But we also have conversations with You every day, all day throughout our days. And we believe that we are going to see the kind of life that You meant for us to live here on this earth. That as Jesus even said when His disciples asked Him to teach us how to pray, He said: Our father, who are in heaven, hallow be your name. And then He said this: Your kingdom come, Your will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven. As we become a people of prayer, who pray the Word of God, the will of God, and do not stop praying. We are going to see the results of answered prayer because You're a good God, You're a faithful God. You do not lie! We're going to see the results of prayer first in our lives and then in the lives of people around us, and then in the lives of the people that You called us to touch as individuals and yes, even in the world. So we thank you, Lord, for what You've been teaching us, and we thank You for what You're going to do as we apply this to our lives. In

Jesus name, it is that we pray, and all the people of God say, Amen.