

February 1

James 5:16 (CJB) Therefore, openly acknowledge your sins to one another, and pray for each other, so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective. **1 Corinthians 2:14 (ESV)** The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.

The news was filled with another report of a heinous act that took the lives of innocent people. Before long, the debate centered around the actions of those responsible and what to do to prevent this from happening again. One article reported that Christians had gathered and were praying for the families involved and for all affected. That report set off a firestorm as others lambasted Christians for praying. They argued, instead of throwing up useless prayers, Christians needed to take concrete action. Praying, to them, was like putting a message in a bottle and throwing it into the ocean hoping it might some day land. The outburst against praying was swift and loud.

I thought of that article recently as we were praying for our nation and for those around us. At first, I was angered by their reaction, but the Lord quickly pointed out that the natural person cannot comprehend the Spirit of God. I, too, at one time, saw prayer as nothing more than an activity that made others feel better but accomplished little. Such reactions from the world should not anger, discourage, or hinder us as we walk this world. We know that the prayers of a righteous person avail much IF we openly acknowledge our sins and failings. When we pray, we are asking the Kingdom of God to enter this world to help those who can only be helped by the Lord Almighty. We pray because we can touch the heart of God for those who need Him even if they do not know Him. We pray because there is nothing more important than making our requests known to the Living God. The very act of praying is an act of faith that can touch even those who do not believe. Additionally, after praying, we may then realize that we are the very answer to those prayers.