

## Prayers of Scripture

**Ryle:** “This is one of the common marks of all the elect of God: “They cry unto Him day and night” (Luke 18:1). The Holy Spirit, who makes them new creatures, works in them the feeling of adoption, and makes them cry, “Abba, Father” (Rom. 8:15). The Lord Jesus, when He quickens them, gives them a voice and a tongue, and says to them, “Be dumb no more.” God has no dumb children. It is as much a part of their new nature to pray, as it is of a child to cry. They see their need of mercy and grace. They feel their emptiness and weakness. They cannot do otherwise than they do. They must pray.

I have looked carefully over the lives of God’s saints in the Bible. I cannot find one of whose history much is told us, from Genesis to Revelation, who was not a man of prayer. I find it mentioned as a characteristic of the godly, that “they call on the Father,” that “they call on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.” I find it recorded as a characteristic of the wicked, that “they call not upon the Lord” (1 Peter 1:17; 1 Cor. 1:2; Psalm 14:4).”

**Nehemiah: Nehemiah rightly prays in response to distressing news about the condition of Jerusalem and the people who have returned to the land.**

**His example highlights two critical components of prayer:**

### I. The Reason for Prayer

- “What makes a man of God is first and foremost his vision of God”<sup>1</sup>
- “In the first place, the God of Nehemiah is the transcendent Creator, the God “of heaven” (1:4–5; 2:4, 20), self-sustaining, self-energizing, and eternal (“from everlasting to everlasting,” 9:5). He is “great” (8:6), “great and awesome” (1:5; 4:14), “great, mighty and awesome” (9:32), and the angels (“the multitudes of heaven”) worship him (9:6). Lord of history, God of judgment and mercy, “a forgiving God, gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love” (9:17; see Ex. 34:6–7), God was to Nehemiah the sublimest, most permanent, most pervasive, most intimate, most humbling, exalting, and commanding of all realities. The basis on which, like William Carey the missionary, Nehemiah attempted great things for God and expected great things from God was that, like the Calvinist Carey, he had grasped the greatness of God himself”<sup>2</sup>

### II. The Characteristics of Prayer

#### 1. Prayer must be Persistent

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<sup>1</sup> Packer, J. I. 1995. [\*A Passion for Faithfulness: Wisdom from the Book of Nehemiah\*](#). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

## 2. Prayer must be Perpetual

- Ryle: “It is not for nothing that Paul said, “Continue in prayer,” and “Pray without ceasing.” He did not mean that men should be always on their knees... But he did mean that our prayers should be like the continual burnt offering, – a thing steadily persevered in every day; – that it should be like seed-time and harvest, and summer and winter, – a thing that should unceasingly come round at regular seasons; – that it should be like the fire on the altar, not always consuming sacrifices, but never completely going out. Never forget that you may tie together morning and evening devotions, by an endless chain of short ejaculatory prayers throughout the day. Even in company, or business, or in the very streets, you may be silently sending up little winged messengers to God, as Nehemiah did in the very presence of Artaxerxes. And never think that time is wasted which is given to God... A Christian never finds he is a loser in the long run, by persevering in prayer.”
- “What does this mean? Does it mean that you should do nothing but pray? No. It means that you are to do nothing without prayer. Don’t take a step without prayer. Don’t make a decision without prayer. Don’t take action without prayer. You ought always to pray and not lose heart.”<sup>3</sup>
- But this sort of prayer has a context. Nehemiah *had been praying* about these matters for months (see 1:4ff.). On-the-spot prayer is based on ongoing prayer. And here it shows the instinctive dependence Nehemiah has on God’s help.”<sup>4</sup>
- “The prayers for help with which he punctuates his story show where he believed that his strength lay, and where on a day-to-day basis he looked for support”<sup>5</sup>
- “...we must be instant in prayer. To be instant in prayer means that prayer is urgent and pressing; it is near the surface in our lives. Each new need and event produces new prayer. Young children speak instantly to their parents. Every pain or joy creates a fervent desire to tell father or mother so that the child can hardly contain him or herself. A child-like spirit should fill our walk with God. One fruit of this will be being instant in prayer.”<sup>6</sup>

## 3. Prayer must produce Proclamation

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<sup>3</sup> H. B. Jr Charles, *It Happens after Prayer: Biblical Motivation for Believing Prayer* (Moody Publishers, 2013)., p. 48.

<sup>4</sup> Davis, Dale Ralph. 2025. [Ezra & Nehemiah: The Quest for Restoration](#). Focus on the Bible Commentaries. Ross-shire, Scotland: Christian Focus.

<sup>5</sup> Packer, J. I. 1995. [A Passion for Faithfulness: Wisdom from the Book of Nehemiah](#). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books.

<sup>6</sup> James W. Beeke and Joel R. Beeke, *Developing a Healthy Prayer Life: 31 Meditations on Communing with God* (Reformation Heritage Books, 2010).