

# RESOLVE!

## Let Your Problems Prompt You To Pray

by Pastor Dale O'Shields

What can we do about our problems? What is the right response to the problems we experience?

*The Bible is very clear with its instructions to us:*

James 5:13 (NIV) "Is any one of you in trouble? He should pray..."

Hebrews 4:16 (NIV) "Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need."

One of the most marvelous privileges we have as believers is the privilege of prayer. All through the Bible we are encouraged to talk to God about our needs, to listen for His voice of instruction and to believe Him for answers in response to our prayers.

Prayer is much more than a "request session" with God. It is one of the primary ways we build our relationship with Him.

Let's take a look at *eight biblical examples of problems people solved through prayer*:

- *Slavery.*

Exodus 3:7-9 (NLT) "Then the Lord told him, 'You can be sure I have seen the misery of My people in Egypt. I have heard their cries for deliverance from

their harsh slave drivers. Yes, I am aware of their suffering. <sup>8</sup> So I have come to rescue them from the Egyptians and lead them out of Egypt into their own good and spacious land...<sup>9</sup> The cries of the people of Israel have reached Me ...”

- *Barrenness.*

Genesis 25:21 (NIV) “Isaac prayed to the Lord on behalf of his wife, because she was barren. The Lord answered his prayer, and his wife Rebekah became pregnant.”

1 Samuel 1:10 (NIV) “In bitterness of soul Hannah wept much and prayed to the Lord.”

- *Fear and Insecurity.*

Exodus 14:10-14 (NIV) “As Pharaoh approached, the Israelites looked up, and there were the Egyptians, marching after them. They were terrified and cried out to the Lord...<sup>13</sup> Moses answered the people, ‘Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the Lord will bring you today. The Egyptians you see today you will never see again. <sup>14</sup> The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still.’”

- *Lack.*

Matthew 14:17-20 (NLT) “‘Impossible!’ they exclaimed. ‘We have only five loaves of bread and two fish!’ <sup>18</sup> ‘Bring them here,’ He said. <sup>19</sup> Then He told the people to sit down on the grass. And He took the five loaves and two fish, looked up toward heaven, and asked God’s blessing on the food. Breaking the loaves into pieces, He gave some of the bread and fish to each disciple, and the disciples gave them to the people. <sup>20</sup> They all ate as much as they wanted, and they picked up twelve baskets of leftovers.”

- *Broken relationships.*

Genesis 32:9-11 (NIV) “Then Jacob prayed, ‘O God of my father Abraham... <sup>10</sup> I am unworthy of all the kindness and faithfulness You have shown your servant... <sup>11</sup> Save me, I pray, from the hand of my brother Esau, for I am afraid he will come and attack me, and also the mothers with their children...’”

- *Stress.*

1 Kings 3:7-9 (NLT) "O Lord my God, now You have made me king instead of my father, David, but I am like a little child who doesn't know his way around. <sup>8</sup> And here I am among Your own chosen people, a nation so great they are too numerous to count! <sup>9</sup> Give me an understanding mind so that I can govern Your people well and know the difference between right and wrong. For who by himself is able to govern this great nation of Yours?"

- *Sickness and disease.*

Isaiah 38:1-2 (NLT) "About that time Hezekiah became deathly ill, and the prophet Isaiah...went to visit him. He gave the king this message: 'This is what the Lord says: Set your affairs in order, for you are going to die. You will not recover from this illness.' <sup>2</sup> When Hezekiah heard this, he turned his face to the wall and prayed to the Lord."

Luke 8:41-42 (NLT) "And now a man named Jairus, a leader of the local synagogue, came and fell down at Jesus' feet, begging Him to come home with him. <sup>42</sup> His only child was dying, a little girl twelve years old..."

- *Personal limitations.*

1 Chronicles 4:9-10 (NIV) "Jabez was more honorable than his brothers. His mother had named him Jabez, saying, 'I gave birth to him in pain.' <sup>10</sup> Jabez cried out to the God of Israel, 'Oh, that You would bless me and enlarge my territory! Let Your hand be with me, and keep me from harm so that I will be free from pain.' And God granted his request."

These biblical stories are exciting to review, but they will never really help us unless we learn something from them for our own lives. We have to apply the principles we discover in such passages to our daily living, if our lives are going to be changed.

The whole goal of this message is to help each of us understand that prayer connects us to the living God—the God who cares about us and wants to help us solve our problems—whatever those problems might be.

*This message is a call to:*

- *A renewed prayer life.*
- *New levels of confidence in God as you pray.*

*The New Testament emphasizes this call to confidence in God when we pray:*

Hebrews 4:16 (NIV) "Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need."

The Hebrew word for "confidence" means "free and fearless; boldly; to have a cheerful courage and assurance."

This is how God wants us to pray about our problems! We are to pray with confidence! This kind of prayer enables us to "...receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need."

How can we develop this kind of confidence in prayer?

*Here are several important principles to follow:*

- *Don't wait until you have a problem to pray.*
- *Live under Christ's Lordship.*
- *Understand your position and privileges in Christ.*
- *Fill your heart and mind with God's promises.*
- *Use the promises of God when you pray.*
- *Focus on the Person of prayer, not the process of prayer.*
- *Regularly reflect on past answers to prayer.*
- *Partner with others in prayer.*

Our prayers do make a difference — our prayers release the help of God into the problem we experience!