

DAVE EARLEY

THE
CHRISTIAN
LIVING
SERIES

5 PRAYERS
TO
PRAY
EVERYDAY

FIVE PRAYERS TO PRAY EVERYDAY

By Dave Earley

Chapter 1

Special Intimacy Prayer

Imagine the thoughts that went through his mind that day. He was exhausted and hungry, and he smelled like a pig. He had been away from home so long...too long. Sure, he missed the warm meals and having his own bed, and the steady work and resulting allowance were definitely nothing to scoff at. But there was one thing he missed much more than all of that. He missed Father.

Over and over he had heard Father's voice in his head. It was deep, but warm. Many times, that voice had a laugh in it, but was never frivolous. It spoke words of unerring wisdom. But best of all, Father's voice was always full of love, even on the day he left.

Why did he have to say what he had said that day? "Give me my share." He could tell his arrogant departure speech had hurt Father deeply. How he

would love to take back every stupid word. But it was too late for that. He had made a fool of himself, had wasted his inheritance, and worst of all he had hurt Father.

The best he could do now was to go back and say, "I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired men."

So he went back to his father's house and the most amazing thing happened:

But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him (Luke 15:20).

Jesus told us this story to show us the Father heart of God. It teaches us one of my favorite types of prayer. I call it special intimacy or *Abba* prayer.

The word *Abba* is an Aramaic term used in the Bible to describe the unique relationship granted to believers under the new covenant. It is the most intimate term available to express a child's tender relationship with his or her father, and as such was used only by children. It is translated as "Father" or "Daddy." It is a personal word that moves prayer into the realm of deep

intimacy as shown by Jesus when, in deep agony at the Garden of Gethsemane, He unburdened His soul to His Father in heaven (see Mark 14:36).¹

Abba prayer is the special privilege of the New Testament saint (see Rom. 8:15-16; Gal. 4:5-6). In the Old Testament believers were not allowed such personal access to God. They certainly were not encouraged to call Him "Father," let alone "Daddy." According to Professor Joachim Jeremias, "There is not a single example of the use abba in the whole of Jewish literature."²

Special intimacy prayer is the way a child of God approaches our Heavenly Father. It is crawling into the Father's lap to receive His love, comfort, healing, and strength. It is taking our Heavenly Daddy's hand and walking awhile. Special intimacy prayer is more than prayer of the lips or of the mind. It is the deep prayer of the heart. It is crying out to the Father to be your Father and to "father" you through a difficult season of life. It is bringing your prodigal soul home to God and experiencing the Father running to you, throwing His arms around you, and giving you a hug and a kiss. It is enjoying the same privilege of intimacy with the Father that Jesus the Son experienced in the flesh.³

* * *

"Father, please 'father' me. I feel like a lost little boy. The world is more than I can handle. I am supposed to be the one with the answers and I don't have a clue. Everyone needs me to be the parent right now, but I need permission to be your little boy for just a few minutes. Daddy, father me."

This was my prayer. I was buried under the stress of being the pastor of a large church. My three teenage sons were at the natural stage of life where they were pulling away from their mother and especially needed me to father them through adolescence. I felt the terrible tug of having to parent both my children and aged parents. My mom had just passed away. My dad needed me. My wife's father was dying. I was overwhelmed with feeling like I had to be everyone's "parent."

So, I practiced the joy of special intimacy prayer...and a wonderful thing happened. I felt the reassuring hug of God around my weary soul. I sensed Him saying, "You'll do fine. I am with you all the way."

* * *

One Sunday I was speaking on the prodigal son and special intimacy prayer in my church. As I spoke, I found myself nearly overwhelmed with a passion that everyone would experience what I had known in special intimacy prayer. My voice quaked as I spoke of the Father running up to us, putting His arms around us, and kissing our cheeks. I was startled by the boldness in which I asked the audience if they had ever known the hug and kiss of God. One of our members sat on the fourth row with a deep frown etched on her face.

Afterward this wonderful, mature believer came to me with her complaint. "I have never had such an intimate experience with God. It makes me uncomfortable when you talk about being hugged and kissed by God."

I waited for a rebuke. But she surprised me when she dropped her head and asked, "Will you pray for me?"

I put my arm on her shoulder and prayed, "Father, this is Your daughter. She has served You so faithfully and diligently for many years. You love her more than she can possibly imagine. I ask that in Your way and in Your time that You would reveal Your fatherly love for her on a deeper level than she has ever known. Let her experience Your hug."

Wiping tears off her cheeks she walked away.

The next Sunday I saw her approaching. The moment I saw her I knew. "Pastor Dave," she said through dancing eyes. "Now I know what you mean when you talk about being hugged by the Father. This week I got my hug. The rest is more than words can express."

* * *

I wonder. Have you ever gotten a hug from God? Do you know what it means to feel the Father's loving arms around you? Have you ever sensed His tender kiss on your cheek?

Have you truly experienced the Father love of God? Have you ever felt the freedom to call God, "Daddy"? Do you know what it is like to lose your little hand in His great big hand? Have you heard His warm voice saying, "Never fear, Father is here? Let Daddy take care of it?"

Quietly, picture yourself being hugged by your Heavenly Father. Feel His strong arms around you. Know that you are in the place where you are loved completely.

Let the troubles of the day disappear in the power of His presence. Tell Him all about everything that happened to you today.

Feel free to sigh, smile, cry, or just listen to the thump of His heart beating with yours.

Thank Him for loving you enough to be your Heavenly Daddy. Slowly allow yourself to be drawn into deeper prayer, worship, rest, and love.

Endnotes

1. William Hendriksen, *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of Paul's Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1980), p. 259.
2. Joachim Jeremias, *The Prayers of Jesus* (Philadelphia: SCM, 1967), p. 11.
3. Richard Foster, *Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home* (San Francisco: Harper Collins Publishers, 1992), p. 135.

Chapter 2

Solitude Prayer

What a busy, draining day! Jesus got up that morning and went to the synagogue and taught the people. As Jesus taught with authority, a demon-possessed man cried out, “What do You want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have You come to destroy us? I know who You are—the Holy One of God!” (Mark 1:24)

Jesus cast out the demon and freed the man from his agony. Then Jesus and some of His disciples went to the house of Simon Peter’s mother-in-law. She was sick in bed with a fever. Jesus healed her, and she got up and fixed them a meal.

News of the freeing of the demon-possessed man and the healing of Peter’s mother-in-law spread all afternoon. By evening the people began to line up with sick and demon-possessed people. Mark 1:23 says the crowd was so large that “the whole town gathered at the door.” Jesus was busy late into the night healing the sick and freeing the demonized.

Now that's a draining day of teaching, healing, and casting out demons! I would have been exhausted. Yet, as I read this passage in Mark's Gospel, what is amazing to me is not Jesus' long day, but what He did the next morning.

Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed
(Mark 1:35 NKJV).

How did Jesus combat the fatigue of a draining day of ministry? He practiced solitude prayer. Notice carefully what He did:

"In the morning...a long while before daylight." Jesus chose a solitary time.

"He went out and departed." Jesus chose a solitary act to distant Himself from people for a time.

"To a solitary place." Jesus chose a solitary place.

"He prayed." Jesus used solitude from people as a sanctuary to God and He prayed.

Jesus got away from others so He could get away with the Father. He sought physical solitude in order to address His spiritual needs. He not only got still before God, He got alone with God. He practiced solitude prayer.

This was His secret for staying fresh, sharp, full, centered, and on-track.

During His three-and-a-half years of intense ministry He used solitude to keep His spiritual tanks full and His emotional batteries charged.

Don't we need to learn to do the same?

You may be thinking, "Yeah, but He was the Son of God."

And I say, "Yes, and if the Son of God needed to practice solitude prayer, how much more do you and I? If the Son of God needed to get up early and go to a solitary place and pray, how much more do you and I?"

The sad reality is that most of us are too busy, too crowded, and too cluttered to stay spiritually sharp, full, charged, and optimally useful to God, others, or even ourselves. Most of us have lives filled with too much activity, too much noise, and "too much people" for us to have very much left for God. Our lives are so full of stuff—good stuff, perhaps, but still "stuff"—that there is little room for God. All of us must learn the art of solitude prayer.

Solitude prayer is shutting ourselves away from people so we can shut ourselves away with God. It is escaping the sound of human voices so we can hear the voice of God. It is the voluntary abstinence from our normal patterns of activity and interaction with people for a time in order to rediscover that our strength and well-being come from God alone.

Henri Nouwen has noted, "Without solitude it is virtually impossible to lead a spiritual life."¹ Why is this so? Because in solitude we are freed from our

bondage to clatter, clutter, and crowds so we can hear, feel, touch, taste, and know God. In solitude, we learn to let go of all else so that we might grab hold of God. We find a healthy detachment from the world and a special attachment to God.

Solitude prayer is an essential secret of spiritual freshness, fullness, centeredness, and strength. I know I desperately need those graces, especially spiritual strength. Isaiah gives us insight about how to derive strength from God.

*Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God,
the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, neither faints nor is
weary. His understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the
weak, and to those who have no might He increases strength. Even
the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly
fall, but those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they
shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be
weary, they shall walk and not faint (Isaiah 40:28–31 NKJV).*

Notice that in verse 31 the secret of great mental, emotional, spiritual fortitude is with those who “wait on the Lord.” This “waiting” involves time and speaks of place. The spiritually strong are those who have a time and place for solitude prayer.

Jesus not only practiced solitude prayer, He encourages us to practice it. He spoke of going into our “closet” so that the God who sees in secret may reward openly:

But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you (Matthew 6:6).

Have you formed the holy habit of meeting with God daily in quiet time and in the secret place? Those people who could be called spiritual successes; those who have developed spiritual depth; those who have tasted and seen that God is good; those who have run and not grown weary and walked and not fainted, those are people who have practiced one thing above all others. They have established the habit and discipline of a daily time alone with God in His Word and in prayer.

I have found that one of the most important questions I can ask people to determine their spiritual potential and future is this: When and where do you meet God daily? Without exception, the individuals who can answer this question with a solid answer do well. The others are going to struggle.

Let me encourage you to carve out a special time of secret and solitude with God on a consistent basis. Maybe it will be first thing in the morning. Possibly it will be late at night. Maybe it will be at midday. It could be at the dining room

table. Possibly it will be in your car on the way to work. Maybe it will be in your bedroom. Perhaps it will be as you walk in a nearby park. The time and place are not as important as the fact that you have a time and a place for secret/solitude prayer. Pick a time. Choose a place. Get started today.

Endnotes

1. Henri Nouwen as quoted by Richard Foster and James Bryan Smith in *Devotional Classics* (San Francisco: Harper Collins Publishers, 1990), p. 95.

Chapter 3

Simple Prayer

When I was beginning high school, I was very confused and unhappy. I was running from God and disgusted with myself. Despair and loneliness dominated my thoughts. Thankfully God kept after me. Eventually, in my junior year I got tired of fighting against God and I quit running. I stopped and committed my all to God.

One of the most wonderful results of committing my life to God was the great joy in knowing I had discovered an awesome secret friend. Prior to coming to God, I had felt lonely. But now I was never alone. I could think of and quietly talk with God all day long. Everything became an object of prayer. Every place became a place of prayer. No matter where I went, I could hang out with God. He is omnipresent and had been there before, but now I was keenly aware of His presence. I felt it.

It was so much fun developing my familiar friendship with Jesus. I liked my other friends, but in so many ways He was so much better. He was smarter than

the rest of us. He understood how I really felt, even when I did not. And He was always there.

I woke up in the morning chattering to God because He was there. I would come back to Him again and again throughout the day because He was there. I talked with Him silently as I walked through the hall and cried out to Him as I jogged or hiked in the woods after school because He was there. Drifting off to sleep I thanked Him for all He did for me that day because He was there. It was not complex. It was all very simple. Later I discovered that my prayer life was what some Christian mystics call “simple prayer” and others refer to as elements of contemplation or meditation.¹ I did not know or care what it is called, I simply enjoyed having a friend who was always there.

* * *

Simple prayer is an ongoing and growing relationship with God. It is carrying on a never-ending conversation with God about the daily stuff of life. It is chattering away to the Father about all of our thoughts, events, hurts, sorrows, joys, and questions freely and openly because He listens. It is sanctifying the ordinary by turning all of the ordinary events and experiences of daily life into prayer.

In college, I came across a little book called *The Practice of the Presence of God*. A man named, Nicholas (who was later known as Brother Lawrence), wrote it. He was a very large and awkward man who was always breaking

things. His job was washing pots and pans and cleaning a large kitchen. Yet he loved God with all his heart. He set a goal for himself to practice the presence of God all day long. This continual practice of the presence of God is the essence of simple prayer.

Nicholas discovered that the way to sense God's presence all day was to have lots of conversations with Him. In fact he thought it was shameful to cut off a conversation with God. His goal was to form the habit of talking to God all the time. The key was continually loving God and recognizing Him as intimately present with us, and therefore addressing Him with every thought.²

I am not sure I have attained the continual conversation with God advocated by Brother Lawrence, but I do enjoy simple prayer. I love the days when I seem to be thinking about and talking to God all day long. I thank Him for this and praise Him for that. I ask for help with one task and wisdom for another. I pray for this person and rejoice over God's work in another. And it is fun!

I have tried to build some habits into my life that trigger simple prayer. Whenever we get in the car we pray short prayers about where we are going and what we are going to do. Whenever I walk the dog the first thing I do when I walk out the front door is repeat the Lord's Prayer. When I go through my all my E-mails at work, I like to pray a simple prayer regarding each one.

The days I help out with my son's paper route I pray through the ACTS of prayer (A: adoration, C: confession, T: thanksgiving, and S: supplication) as I walk

the route. At mealtime, we always thank God before we eat. As I lay in bed I try to thank God for the events and answers of the day. And I cast all my cares upon Him.

Let me encourage you to make today a day of simple prayer. Try to go through your day with the persistent awareness of the presence of God. Carry on a never-ending conversation with God about the daily stuff of life. Chatter away to the Father about all of your thoughts, events, hurts, sorrows, joys, and questions freely and openly because He listens. Sanctify the ordinary by turning the ordinary events and experiences of daily life into prayer.

Endnotes

1. Thomas Merton, *The New Seeds of Contemplation* (New York, NY: New Directions, 1961), p. 1.
2. Brother Lawrence, *The Practice of the Presence of God* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1975).

Chapter 4

Securing Wisdom Prayer

Talk about big shoes to fill. Wow! King David was a dashing, intelligent, handsome, larger-than-life living legend. He was a military hero, songwriter, folk legend, spiritual leader, wise governor, and powerful king. He had killed Goliath, eluded Saul's army, recruited a band of merry men, become the king, led the tiny nation to become a world power, wrote the Psalms, created the "Bathsheba-gate" scandal, survived an ugly military coup plotted by his own son, and planned to build God a great temple. And now his son Solomon had to step up and take his place.

What Solomon needed is what all of us in positions of responsibility need: wisdom. So he approached God with a humble heart and asked for wisdom. First Kings and Second Chronicles record his prayer:

"Now, O Lord my God, You have made Your servant king in place of my father David. But I am only a little child and do not know how to carry out my duties. Your servant is here among the people You have chosen, a great people, too numerous to count or number. So give Your servant a discerning heart to govern Your people and to

distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of Yours?" (1 Kings 3:7-9)

That night God appeared to Solomon and said to him, "Ask for whatever you want Me to give you." Solomon answered God, "You have shown great kindness to David my father and have made me king in his place. Now, Lord God, let Your promise to my father David be confirmed, for You have made me king over a people who are as numerous as the dust of the earth. Give me wisdom and knowledge, that I may lead this people, for who is able to govern this great people of Yours?" (2 Chronicles 1:7-10)

Notice his requests, "Give your servant a discerning heart to govern Your people and to distinguish between right and wrong" (1 Kings 3:9) and "Give me wisdom and knowledge, that I may lead" (2 Chron. 1:10). What does Solomon do when facing overwhelming responsibility? He prays a securing wisdom prayer.

Securing wisdom prayer is asking God to give you wisdom to lead. It is humbling yourself and realizing that you do not have the answers. It is asking God to give you discernment to know what is right. It is seeking direction as you make decisions affecting those under your responsibility.

This request for wisdom is the type of request God loves to answer. And God did answer Solomon in an unbelievable fashion. First Kings records God's response:

The Lord was pleased that Solomon had asked for this. So God said to him, "Since you have asked for this and not for long life or wealth for yourself, nor have asked for the death of your enemies but for discernment in administering justice, I will do what you have asked. I will give you a wise and discerning heart, so that there will never have been anyone like you, nor will there ever be" (1 Kings 3:10-12).

Second Chronicles records the Lord's answer with these words:

God said to Solomon, "Since this is your heart's desire and you have not asked for wealth, riches or honor, nor for the death of your enemies, and since you have not asked for a long life but for wisdom and knowledge to govern My people over whom I have made you king, therefore wisdom and knowledge will be given you. And I will also give you wealth, riches and honor, such as no king who was before you ever had and none after you will have" (2 Chronicles 1:11-12).

Soon after this two prostitutes came to Solomon to get a ruling. They lived in the same house and both had newborn children. The first woman claimed that the second woman's baby had died in the night and the second woman had switched her dead baby with the first woman's living baby while the first woman slept. The second woman claimed that this was not true. Solomon had to decide who was right.

Solomon ordered a man to cut the living baby in half and give each woman a half. The first woman cried out, "Give her the baby. Don't kill him!"

The second woman said, "Neither of us will have a living baby. Cut him in two."

Solomon smiled and wisely ordered, "Give the baby to the first woman. She obviously is the real mother" (see 1 Kings 3:16-28). The fame of Solomon's wise decision spread throughout the nation.

The Book of First Kings summarizes the amazing way God answered Solomon's prayer for wisdom:

God gave Solomon wisdom and very great insight, and a breadth of understanding as measureless as the sand on the seashore.

Solomon's wisdom was greater than the wisdom of all the men of

the East, and greater than all the wisdom of Egypt. He was wiser than any other man, including Ethan the Ezrahite—wiser than Heman, Calcol and Darda, the sons of Mahol. And his fame spread to all the surrounding nations. He spoke three thousand proverbs and his songs numbered a thousand and five. He described plant life, from the cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop that grows out of walls. He also taught about animals and birds, reptiles and fish. Men of all nations came to listen to Solomon's wisdom, sent by all the kings of the world, who had heard of his wisdom (1 Kings 4:29-34).

Solomon is now known as one of the wisest and richest men who ever lived. He wrote the books of Proverbs, Song of Solomon, and Ecclesiastes. God certainly answered his prayer for wisdom.

* * *

The securing wisdom prayer is not reserved for Solomon or just some rare individual. The Book of James gives all of us the encouragement to ask for wisdom. "If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him" (James 1:5).

One of the 31 flavors of prayer I use most often is the securing wisdom prayer. I have three teenage sons and I lead a large church with a couple of dozen employees. It seems like I need to make an important decision or give someone necessary advice every day. So, I ask for wisdom and God helps me.

Are there some decisions you need direction in making? Are you trying to figure out how to lead your family? Do you need insight into a relationship? Do your job responsibilities require you to make decisions that affect the livelihoods of other people? Are there other areas where you need wisdom? Let me encourage you to try securing wisdom prayer. Why not pause right now and ask God to give you wisdom for each decision you encounter and each area you're responsible for?

Chapter 5

Success Prayer

Thousands of years ago, a man faced a very difficult assignment. It all began when his boss, Abraham, was 140 years old. Abraham's wife, Sarah, had recently passed away. Abraham desperately wanted his son, Isaac, to marry and give him a grandson, but Isaac was 40 years old and still single. So Abraham took action.

Abraham called in his chief servant and gave him a very difficult assignment. (Many Bible scholars believe this servant was Eliezer, the servant whom Abraham trusted enough to consider making his heir in Genesis 15: 2-3.) Abraham asked him to travel 450 desert miles by camel to the area from which Abraham had come. There he was supposed to find a suitable bride for Isaac from among Abraham's distant relatives. (The custom at that time was to marry a first cousin.) After finding such a girl, he then would have to convince her to return with him to marry a man she had never met. This was a very difficult assignment.

The servant gathered a small caravan and made the long trek to Abraham's homeland. His plan was to find the right girl at the central meeting

place for desert communities, the well. As he approached the town, he offered a simple prayer:

*Then he prayed, “O Lord, God of my master Abraham, **give me success today**, and show kindness to my master Abraham. See, I am standing beside this spring, and the daughters of the townspeople are coming out to draw water. May it be that when I say to a girl, ‘Please let down your jar that I may have a drink,’ and she says, ‘Drink, and I’ll water your camels too’—let her be the one You have chosen for Your servant Isaac. By this I will know that You have shown kindness to my master” (Genesis 24:12-14).*

The servant prayed, “Give me success today.” This prayer was short and personal, and definite in reference to time. He wanted God to lead him to the right girl and do it right away. Abraham was very old and Isaac was not getting any younger. In order to know which girl was the right one the servant added to his request that she not only offer him a drink, but also offer to water his camels. He prayed a success prayer and God answered.

Before he had finished praying, Rebekah came out with her jar on her shoulder. She was the daughter of Bethuel son of Milcah, who

was the wife of Abraham's brother Nahor. The girl was very beautiful, a virgin; no man had ever lain with her. She went down to the spring, filled her jar and came up again. The servant hurried to meet her and said, "Please give me a little water from your jar."

"Drink, my lord," she said, and quickly lowered the jar to her hands and gave him a drink. After she had given him a drink, she said, "I'll draw water for your camels too, until they have finished drinking"

(Genesis 24:15-19).

Wow! God answered his prayer and then some. Before he had finished praying, God sent the right girl in the right way. As he would later find out, she was a relative of Abraham. The Bible describes her as a very beautiful virgin. Beyond that, she not only gave him a drink, but also offered to water his camels! That's not all. Later on we read that she was willing to leave with him right away. And best of all, when Isaac met her, he immediately loved her (see Gen. 24:58-67).

This servant's prayer for success became a life-changing blessing for everyone involved. Rebekah's life was radically changed as she left home and family to live 450 miles away. She was blessed with a husband who loved her and was given a place in the lineage of the Messiah.

Isaac's life was changed because he received a bride, and a very beautiful one at that. She would be the woman he would love and who would bear his sons.

However, I think that the one most influenced by this prayer was the servant himself. Prior to this event, he viewed God solely as "Abraham's God." He did not have a very personal relationship with the Lord. Yet, when he saw the loving and powerful way God answered his prayer, he became a man with a firsthand relationship with God, who worshiped God for himself.

Then the man bowed down and worshiped the Lord, saying, "Praise be to the Lord, the God of my master Abraham, who has not abandoned His kindness and faithfulness to my master. As for me, the Lord has led me on the journey to the house of my master's relatives" (Genesis 24:26-27).

His life was changed to such an extent that he became an excited witness to others. He eagerly told Rebekah's older brother all the Lord had done for him (see Gen. 24:34-48). In his excitement, he spared no detail.

Success prayer is asking God to give you success in a task you believe God wants you to accomplish. It is doing your part and asking God to do the

rest. It is being willing to stick your neck out expecting God to come through for you.

Many of us tend to hold back. We think God's promises and great answers to prayer are for some super saint and not for us. But I think this story reminds us that praying for success is for everyone who wants to give God the glory. The servant in this story was unnamed. Although we might conjecture that the servant was Eliezer, we do not know. In Genesis 24 he is simply called "the chief servant" of Abraham. Since nothing in the Word of God is written the way it is written by accident, I think the servant is unnamed to remind us that prayer is for everyone. All of us can be a servant and see God answer our prayers.

It is so encouraging to realize that if God would answer the prayer of this unnamed man who had only a secondhand relationship with God, then how much more will He do for us! We are His children. We call Him "Abba Father." We do not have to be "big-name Christians" to see God answer our prayers.

* * *

Abraham's servant is not the only one who prayed the success prayer when facing a difficult assignment—so did Nehemiah. Nehemiah realized that God had positioned him to fulfill the impossible task of rebuilding the walls around Jerusalem. In order to have any hope of succeeding he would need to convince King Artaxerxes to grant him permission to leave his post as the king's cupbearer and, more importantly, to supply him for both the journey back to

Jerusalem and with the materials he needed to rebuild the walls. Notice what he prayed:

O Lord, let Your ear be attentive to the prayer of this Your servant and to the prayer of Your servants who delight in revering Your name. Give Your servant success today by granting him favor in the presence of this man." I was cupbearer to the king (Nehemiah 1:11).

This success prayer was wonderfully answered (see Neh. 2:8). This success prayer and God's answer of it became a source of great encouragement for Nehemiah when he encountered opposition. He even mentions it in responding to the "naysayers."

I answered them by saying, "The God of heaven will give us success. We His servants will start rebuilding, but as for you, you have no share in Jerusalem or any claim or historic right to it" (Nehemiah 2:20).

The success prayer is a simple little prayer that can yield big blessed results. Let me encourage you to ask God to give you success when you begin a

new day and before each new assignment. When you sense that there is a task God wants you to accomplish, do not be afraid to ask God to give you success. He did it for Abraham's servant. He did it for Nehemiah. He has done it for countless others. And He can do it for you.

For more on this subject see:

- ***The 21 Most Effective Prayers in the Bible***
- ***Prayer Odyssey***