

## SECTION 2

\*\*\*\*\*

# *Our Personal Preparation*

**Goal:** *To fulfill God's personal requirements in our lives which will produce power in our prayers and bring results in our witnessing to those who need Jesus.*

### I

**The Bible clearly teaches that our personal lifestyle will determine whether or not God will answer our prayers.**

1. God will grant what we ask of Him *because* of our godly lifestyle.

*"And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight" (1 John 3:22).*

- a. This "keep" and "do" are in the continuous present tense in the Greek, meaning consistently obeying and pleasing God.
  - b. This is not just an occasional burst of doing what God expects and demands of us.
2. In John 15:7, Jesus said there are two "*if's*" that will determine His fulfilling this promise of prayer power.

*"If you abide in Me, and [if] My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish and it shall be done for you."*

- a. This is the strongest promise of intercessory prayer power in the New Testament.
- b. But Jesus promised it only if we fulfill His requirements of the two "*if's*" in our personal lives:

- 1) “Abiding in Jesus” means first being part of His body through salvation—and then getting our daily sustenance and strength from Him.
- 2) His words “abiding in us” mean we must live by and obey **all** of Jesus’ words, which are:
  - a) All Jesus spoke on earth (John 14:25).
  - b) His opening the Old Testament Scriptures for His followers to understand (Luke 24:27,45).
  - c) His words the Holy Spirit recalled for Jesus’ followers to record (John 14:25,26).
  - d) Words Jesus dictated to John after Jesus was back in heaven (Revelation chapters 2 and 3).
- 3) Obeying these words of Jesus produces answers to our prayers.

**II**  
**What requirements does the Bible lay down in order for us to have God’s power in prayer and witnessing? \***

[\* For more complete coverage of these requirements, see *What Happens When Women Pray* by Evelyn Christenson.]

- 1. The first requirement is to know Jesus personally.**
  - a. “Abiding in Jesus” for prayer power in John 15:7 is impossible without knowing Him personally as Savior and Lord.
  - b. There is no New Testament promise of power resulting from intercessory prayer to those who do not believe in Jesus.
  - c. Our New Testament era privilege of praying *in Jesus’ name* (John 16:24) was given only to those who were Jesus’ followers.

*Examine Your Heart*  
**Make sure you know Jesus personally before you attempt to pray for the salvation of others. If you don’t, pray through instructions in Section 6 (page 51).**

- 2. The second requirement is that there must be no unconfessed sin in the life of the pray-er.**
  - a. Every good we know to do (from the Bible) and yet don’t do is sin according to James 4:17.

- b. There are two classes of sin in the Bible: *singular* sin and *plural* sins.
  - 1) *Singular* sin is the state of sin into which all were born (see John 3:18; Romans 5:18).
    - a) To Jesus “the world” always was those who have not accepted Him as Savior.

**“And He [the Holy Spirit], when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin, and righteousness, and judgment ...because they do not believe in Me” (John 16:8,9).**

- b. Jesus came preaching “repent and believe” (Mark 1:15).

***Examine Your Heart***  
**Make sure when you accepted Jesus as your Savior you not only believed but repented of your sin.**

- 2) *Plural* sins are those sins which we commit after becoming a Christian.
  - a) Jesus taught His followers (only) in His model Lord’s Prayer in Matthew 6:9-12 to pray:

**“Our Father who art in heaven...forgive us our debts” (see Matthew 6:14).**

“Debts” or “trespasses” means “sins” biblically.

- b) The apostle John wrote the book of 1 John to Christians and said in 1:9: “If **we** confess our sins...” God will forgive and cleanse **us**.
- c) Peter was writing to Christians when he said in 1 Peter 3:12: “The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and His ears attend to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who *do evil*” (emphasis added).
- d) In 1 John 3:22, not obeying and not doing things pleasing to God are sins.
- e) It is the prayers of a *righteous* person in James 5:16b (NKJV) that “avails much.”
- f) See Jesus’ “repent” messages in Revelation chapters 2 and 3 that He sent to His Christian churches (us) after He was back in heaven. (See also 2 Chronicles 7:14; Psalm 66:18; Psalm 51:10-13; Psalm 24:3-5.)
- g) Most revivals from Christ’s time until now have begun when a few Christians got completely right with God (see 2 Chronicles 7:14; 1 Peter 4:17).

***Examine Your Heart***  
**As you confess your sins at the end of this section, you'll need to remember these requirements about sins.**

**III**  
**What part does God play in this personal preparation for effective evangelism praying?**

1. God knows no human being ever could fulfill all these requirements without help, so don't try by yourself.
2. But He promised that He Himself would be the One to do it in us.

***“For it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure” (Philippians 2:13 NKJV).***

- a. Since God gave us all these requirements in His Holy Word, the Bible, we know they are His will.
  - b. We also know that He will do it in us, no matter how inadequate, unable or frail we may feel personally.
3. God's Holy Spirit even originates the desire in us for holy living and is anxious and waiting to assist us.
  4. Jesus is up in heaven praying for us now (Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:24,25).

## For You To Do

Read the enclosed “List of Sins” (pages 22-24) carefully and prayerfully, asking God to convict you of any sin still in your life or unconfessed.

Reflect on this lesson’s biblical, personal requirements for prayer power so you can confess as sin any ones that are missing in your life.

Ask God to bring any other unconfessed sins to your mind; then, wait in silence for Him to recall them for you.

## For You to Pray

1. *If alone*, confess in prayer each specific sin God has brought to your mind either through the list, reading the Bible, or by His recalling them to you.
2. *If with others*, form small groups of about four people each. Out loud, all together, pray, “Father, forgive me...” and then name each sin aloud to be forgiven, continuing until all are finished.

Praying all together helps the shy, intimidated and new pray-ers to have courage to pray and helps the proud to be honest. However, if all in your group are mature pray-ers, take turns confessing your sins.

Use discretion about identifying out loud a sin that should be between you and God alone. Simply ask God to forgive the sin you are thinking about.
3. Accept forgiveness on the grounds of God’s Word (1 John 1:8,9).
4. Remember, it is our *known* sins we must confess to have power with God in intercessory prayer. Do not expect God to reveal every past sin at one time, but stay open to hear and confess additional ones as He reveals them to you.

## **List of Scriptural Sins to be Read Before Confessing Sins in Prayer**

Every “yes” answer is a sin in your life that needs to be confessed. ***“Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do, and does not do it, to him it is sin.”*** (James 4:17). [References are from the New American Standard Bible unless noted.]

1. Thessalonians 5:18 ***“In everything give thanks; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”***  
Do you worry about anything? Have you failed to thank God for all things, the seemingly bad as well as the good? Do you neglect to give thanks at mealtime, openly in front of others?
2. Ephesians 3:20 ***“Now to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us...”***  
Do you fail to attempt things for God because you are not talented enough? Do feelings of inferiority keep you from trying to serve God? When you do accomplish something for Christ, do you fail to give Him all the glory?
3. Acts 1:8 ***“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.”***  
Have you failed to be a witness with your life for Christ? Have you felt it was enough to just live your Christianity and not witness with your mouth to the lost?
4. Romans 12:3 ***“For...I say to every man among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think.”***  
Are you proud of your accomplishments, your talents, your family? Do you fail to see others as better than yourself, more important than yourself in the body of Christ? Do you think as a Christian you are doing quite well? Do you rebel at God wanting to change you?
5. Ephesians 4:31 ***“Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.”***  
Do you complain, find fault, argue? Do you have a critical spirit? Do you carry a grudge against Christians of another group because they don’t see eye-to-eye with you on all things? Do you speak unkindly about people when they are not present? Are you angry with yourself? Others? God?
6. 1 Corinthians 6:19 ***“Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?”***  
Are you careless with your body? Are you guilty of not caring for it as the

- temple of the Holy Spirit in eating and exercise habits? Do you defile your body with unholy sex acts?
7. Ephesians 4:29 ***“Let no unwholesome word proceed out of your mouth.”***  
Do you ever use filthy language, tell slightly off-color jokes? Do you condone others doing so in your presence, in your home?
  8. Ephesians 4:27 ***“And do not give the devil an opportunity.”***  
Do you fail to see you are a “landing strip” for Satan when you open your mind to him through satanic music, occult electronic games, pornographic literature, computer chat rooms, yoga, séances, psychic predictions, occult movies and literature? Do you get advice for daily living from horoscopes rather than from God? Do you let Satan use you to thwart the cause of Christ in your church through criticism, gossip, non-support?
  9. Romans 12:11 ***“Not lagging behind in diligence”*** (NAS) ***“Not slothful in business.”*** (KJV)  
Do you fail to pay your debts on time? Avoid paying them altogether? Do you charge more on credit cards than you can pay when due? Do you neglect to keep honest income tax records? Do you engage in shady business deals whether as an employer or employee?
  10. 1 Corinthians 8:9 ***“But take care lest this liberty of yours somehow become a stumbling block to the weak.”***  
Do you feel you can do anything you want to do because the Bible says you are free in Christ? Even though you were strong enough not to fall, do you fail to take responsibility for a weaker Christian who has fallen because of following your example?
  11. Hebrews 10:25 ***“Not forsaking our own assembling together.”***  
Are you irregular or spasmodic in church attendance? Are you skipping prayer meetings? Have you neglected family devotions?
  12. Colossians 3:9 ***“Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices.”***  
Do you ever lie? Exaggerate? Do you fail to see “little white lies” as sins? Do you tell things the way you want them rather than the way they really are?
  13. 1 Peter 2:11 ***“Beloved...abstain from fleshly lusts, which wage war against the soul.”***  
Are you guilty of a lustful eye toward either sex? Do you fill your mind with pornography or sex-oriented TV programs, movies, books, magazines? Do you indulge in any lustful activity God’s Word condemns—fornication, adultery, perversion?
  14. John 13:35 ***“By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”***

Are you guilty of being a part of factions and divisions in your church? Would you rather add fuel to a misunderstanding than help correct it? Have you loved only the ones in your church, feeling those of other denominations are not of the body of Christ? Are you secretly pleased over the misfortunes of another? Annoyed by their successes?

15. Colossians 3:13 ***“Forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone, just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.”***

Have you failed to forgive anybody anything that person might have said or done against you? Have you turned certain people off? Are you holding grudges?

16. Ephesians 4:28 ***“Let him who steals steal no longer; but rather let him labor.”***

Do you steal from your employer by doing less work, staying on the job less time than you are paid for? Do you underpay your employees?

17. Ephesians 5:16 ***“Making the most of your time, because the days are evil.”***

Do you waste your time or that of others? Do you spend time watching TV trash, reading cheap books, procrastinating?

18. Matthew 6:24 ***“No one can serve two masters...you cannot serve God and mammon (riches).”***

Is your goal in life to make as much money as possible? Accumulate things? Have you withheld God’s share of your income from Him? Is money your God?

19. Matthew 23:38 ***“Even so you too outwardly appear righteous to men, but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.”***

Do you know in your heart you are a fake, just pretending to be a real Christian? Are you hiding behind church membership to cover a life still full of sin? Are you faking Christianity for social status, acceptance in your church, community? Do you smile piously during the Sunday sermon but live in your sin all week? Are you the person in your home you are trying to impress people you are?”

20. Philippians 4:8 ***“Finally, brethren, whatever is true, ... honorable, ...right, ...pure, ...lovely, ...of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things.”***

Do you enjoy listening to gossip? Passing it on? Do you believe rumors or partial truths, especially about an enemy or your competitor? Do you fail to spend time every day reading the Bible? Do you fail to think on the things of God—only good and true and pure things—always?

Permission granted by Evelyn Christenson to reproduce this List of Sins.

If you would like to delve deeper into biblical requirements for more personal applications, the following section will help you. I also recommend a review of 1 John 3:22.

## *Further Biblical Requirements*

(For Optional Study)

### 1. **We must forgive as we are forgiven.**

- a. Jesus in His “Lord’s Prayer” put a condition on God’s forgiving the sins of Christians—our forgiving others.

***“Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors” (Matthew 6:12).***

- b. Immediately after the Lord’s Prayer, Jesus added that *if we* (Christians) forgive others, God will also forgive us; but, if we do not forgive them, God will not forgive us our sins committed as Christians either (Matthew 6:14,15). (This does *not* apply to non-Christians being forgiven when they accept Jesus as Savior.)
- c. Jesus connected receiving because of praying in faith in Mark 11:24 with an “*and*” to Mark 11:25—that when we stand praying we should forgive because if we don’t God won’t forgive us either.
- d. So our sins committed as Christians (although confessed) are not forgiven by the Father *if we will not forgive others* who sin against us; and, thus, our prayers are not answered by God.

***Examine Your Heart***

**Make sure you are not refusing to forgive every person for any wrong done to you.**

### 2. **Pray in faith believing God’s promises.**

- a. Faith is necessary in order to please God so we will receive His answers to our prayers (Hebrews 11:6).
- b. This is faith in God—not based on what the pray-er thinks but on what God’s Word says—believing that He is and also believing that He rewards those who diligently seek Him.

***Examine Your Heart***

**Ask God to increase your faith and help you to truly believe Him for the things you ask.**

### 3. **We must pray in God’s will.**

- a. Although the Bible seems to tell us at times we can pray anything we want, when Jesus taught us *how* to pray in His Lord’s Prayer, He said we must pray: “[*Father*] *Thy will be done*” (Matthew 6:10).

- b. Jesus became a model for us by submitting Himself to the Father's will in the Garden of Gethsemane before going to the cross (Luke 22:42).
- c. When we submit to the Father's will, we automatically bring ourselves—and our wills—into conformity with His.
  - 1) Then we can ask anything we desire, because we no longer *want* anything that isn't the Father's will.
  - 2) This includes submitting to God's will in our personal lives and in our prayer requests.
  - 3) *However, never ask God if it is His will for us to pray for someone to find Christ*, for 2 Peter 3:9 tells us that the Lord is not willing for *any* to perish, but for *all* to come to repentance.

***Examine Your Heart***  
**Make sure you are not resisting God's will in anything in your life or what you are praying for. If you are, give it up to God for His will.**

- 4. **We must maintain a daily prayer life.**
  - a. Jesus commanded us to pray in our private places rather than only to be seen and heard by people (Matthew 6:5,6).
  - b. It is in these deep, intimate times when we:
    - 1) Draw nigh to God and He will draw nigh to us (James 4:8).
    - 2) Confess our sins (1 John 1:8,9).
    - 3) Worship and praise God (Psalm 100).
    - 4) Forgive others (Ephesians 4:32).
    - 5) Listen to God (John 10:27).
    - 6) Submit to God's will in our lives (Matthew 6:10).
    - 7) Get victory over Satan (Ephesians 6:12,13).
    - 8) Exchange our mutual love with God (Mark 12:30).
    - 9) Get empowered for our life and ministry (Acts 1:8).
    - 10) Intercede for others daily (Ephesians 6:18).
  - c. *The power of our public prayers in our Triplets, groups, and prayer chains is dependent upon the quality and the quantity of our private praying* (Matthew 6:6).

***Examine Your Heart***  
**Promise God you will guard and give top priority to your daily prayer life.**

5. **We must pray without ceasing.**
  - a. When we leave our daily closet praying, we don't slam the door promising God we'll meet Him again tomorrow. We keep our communication open with God 24 hours a day, even being willing to pray during our sleepless hours at night (1 Thessalonians 5:17; Luke 18:1).
  - b. The Holy Spirit usually seems to woo the ones who need Jesus in proportion to our praying for them.

*Examine Your Heart*  
**Ask God to fill you with the desire and  
ability to keep in a spirit of prayer.**

6. **We must pray with properly motivated prayers.**
  - a. James 4:3 tells us that although we pray, we sometimes do not receive because we ask with selfish motives.
  - b. Our *reason* for praying for the lost must be because we love them and believe that they are eternally damned if they don't receive Jesus as Savior—and not for our personal achievement and glory.

*Examine Your Heart*  
**Examine your recent prayers to see why you  
wanted what you asked for, even lost souls.**

7. **We must resist Satan.**
  - a. Since our praying for and winning souls is rescuing captives out of Satan's kingdom (Colossians 1:13), we must learn to recognize his deceitful ploys and then actively resist him (James 4:7).
  - b. We must claim the *name of Jesus* (Philippians 2:9-11; Colossians 1:15-17) and the *blood of Jesus* against Satan (Revelation 12:9-11; 5:8,9) for, although we have no power in ourselves to battle Satan, he cannot stand against the power of the name and blood of Jesus.

*Examine Your Heart*  
**Practice actively doing battle with Satan  
whenever he tempts or tries to hinder you.**

