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PRAYER'S POWER

May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it (1 Thess. 5:23–24).

Prayer is a conduit through which the power of God flows. Prayer brings the power of heaven into the circumstances of earth. God has designed prayer to be the avenue by which the power promised in Scripture becomes available to His people.

If we take God at His Word, then nothing on earth is beyond the reach of His astounding power. “Ah, Sovereign LORD, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for you” (Jer. 32:17).

Am I overusing the word *power*? My writer’s instincts tell me I am. But there is no other word to take its place. Power is the essence of prayer. James 5:16 states: “The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.” Prayer is not a benign, feel-good, stress-relieving exercise. Prayer releases the power of God to change the circumstances of earth.

In this book, we will consider specifically the power of prayer to bring healing. As we examine what the Word of God tells us about this topic, keep in mind that prayer is not convincing God or even bringing your need to His attention. He



knows what you will need before you need it; He yearns to supply your need and is awakening in you the inclination to seek Him and His provision. Prayer is simply opening your life to receive what He has to give.

Ole Hallesby, one of Norway's leading Christian teachers, wrote, "To pray is nothing more involved than to let Jesus into our needs. To pray is to give Jesus permission to employ His powers in the alleviation of our distress. . . . To pray is nothing more involved than to open the door, giving Jesus access to our needs and permitting Him to exercise His own power in dealing with them."² And E. Stanley Jones writes in *Abundant Living*, "Prayer is . . . the opening of a channel from your emptiness to God's fullness."³

Whatever form of healing you need, God is able to do it. God cares about every aspect of your being. He created you to be a multidimensional creature, one layer interacting with and affecting another layer. In 1 Thessalonians 5:23, Paul prays that "your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless." John writes to his friend Gaius, "Beloved, I pray that in all respects you may prosper and be in good health, just as your soul prospers" (3 John 2 NASB). "*In all respects*," he says. And he uses the word prosper, a Greek word that means "to be led down a good path" or "succeed."⁴ Every part of you—your spirit, your soul, and your body—matter to God. He created all of you.

Your Creator does not disregard any part of you. You may begin these days with one agenda for healing, only to discover



that the need extends to another level. You may begin with a felt need for healing a relationship, only to discover that first you need a healing in your memories.

My friend Anna wanted prayer because she had done all she could do to repair her failing marriage. Her husband seemed oblivious to the fact that she was miserable. She felt continually angry with him, and that anger seemed to grow with each new offense. And the offenses seemed to come daily.

As we prayed regularly together, I asked Anna to concentrate on taking her focus off of what her husband did to hurt her and instead to observe what these hurtful incidents made her feel—other than angry. She found that as she monitored her emotional responses, a pattern emerged. At the bottom of most of her hurt feelings was a sense of having failed. She knew that her mother had regularly communicated to her that nothing she did was ever good enough. In subtle ways her mother caused Anna to feel as if her decisions were wrong and her actions never measured up to her mother's expectations.

Anna began to realize that she read into her husband's words what she was used to hearing from her mother. This realization led her to deeper inner healing as she came to a compassionate understanding of her mother. Anna also recognized that she believed that she was a failure and expected to hear it from others. Her need for healing in a relationship was the impetus for a deeper healing.

So be open to how the Spirit directs your thoughts, and

trust Him. Know that He can and will guide you into all truth. “The lamp of the LORD searches the spirit of a man; it searches out his inmost being” (Prov. 20:27). “You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free” (John 8:32).

Are you willing right now to open your entire life to His healing presence? Even knowing that His power may interrupt cherished sin-patterns or challenge comfortable beliefs? Do you want *all of Him* more than you want any other thing? You can have as much of Him that you make room for.

REFLECT

As you begin this healing journey, what is motivating you to seek the Healer? List your symptoms as you perceive them right now.

Do you have any anxiety about putting yourself in the hands of the Healer and holding nothing back? Are there areas of your life that you would like to keep off-limits from Him? Remember, you can be fearlessly honest. He knows your heart inside and out.

Write out today’s date, and give a brief description of the circumstances of your life right now. This will be a reference point for you for years to come.

PRAYER

Lord, I am opening myself fully to You. I release all of my needs to You. I invite You to search out the hidden toxins in my

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soul. I want to cooperate with You in the healing You will bring. Let the rushing, mighty wind of Your Spirit blow through my life. Even now I thank You for the mighty and powerful work of healing You have already begun and will complete. I claim it now as my own. Amen.

HEAR HIS HEART

“Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus” (Phil. 1:6).