

Characteristics of an Effective Prayer

By
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Text: Acts 4:31-33

- I. Crisis precipitated by an emergency
 - a. Boldness for the hour of need
 - i. To counter the fear of men
 - ii. To encourage the fear of God
 - iii. From the anointing of the Holy Ghost
 - b. Confidence in the faithfulness of God
 - i. To believe like Abraham when he offered Isaac
 - ii. To know that God's Word is true
 - c. Faith in the promise of God
 - i. To trust like Elijah when he prayed for rain
 - ii. To know that God's promise is true
 - d. Concern for the cause
 - i. To care like Moses when he denied himself and prayed for the people rather than for his lineage to be great in Israel
 - ii. To know that God's cause is greater than oneself
- II. Immediate results
 - a. The place was shaken.
 - i. Saints are stirred to carry on the work.
 - ii. Sinners are stirred up by conviction.
 - b. All were filled with the Holy Ghost.
 - i. When God fills, unusual things happen.
 - ii. Human desires disappear (They held all things in common)
 - iii. Godly desires appear (They gave generously to the needs of others)
 - c. They spoke the Word of God with boldness.
 - i. Human fears are under God's control.
 - ii. God's gifts in men break human authorities and power.
 - d. All were of one heart and one soul.
 - i. United by the Holy Ghost.
 - ii. United to preach the Gospel.
 - iii. United to invade a pagan world.
- III. Great grace upon them all
 - a. Unmerited favor of God
 - b. Astonishing fellowship and friendship among the believers (all things held in common)
 - c. Extraordinary power to testify (When Pentecost falls, witnesses rise up.)