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PRAYER!

**EFFECTIVE
PRAYER
THAT
WILL
CHANGE
YOUR
LIFE**

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**JOHN
BRADSHAW**



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**1, 2, 3, 4,
PRAYER!:**

**EFFECTIVE PRAYER THAT
WILL CHANGE YOUR LIFE**

Dan had a gambling problem.

He had gambled literally every day for many years, and his fiancé, Donna, knew they would have no future together if Dan continued to gamble. So Donna prayed.

“God,” she began, “I don’t know if You’re really out there. But if You are, I could really use Your help. I can’t get Dan to stop gambling. I’ve tried, but he won’t listen to me. If he doesn’t stop, we’re doomed. I need Your help. So, if You could change Dan, I’d really appreciate it.”

The next day, Dan felt different. “I don’t think I’ll gamble today,” he told a stunned Donna. “Maybe tomorrow.”

Dan had run illegal gambling operations. He had been wanted by police. Gambling had cost him jobs and relationships. Gangsters had broken into his home and, while Dan lay in bed, held a bayonet to his throat, demanding he repay gambling debts. “I don’t have any money,” Dan calmly lied. His gambling addiction was so strong, he would sooner die a violent death than part with his illicit earnings. But now, inexplicably, Dan had no desire to gamble.

The next day, Dan was still a changed man. “I don’t know what’s going on,” he stuttered. “I can’t remember ever feeling this way.” Before long, Donna shared her secret.

“I know why you don’t want to gamble,” she told her fiancé. He squinted, tilting his head slightly. “I prayed for you!” Donna confessed. Dan was incredulous. “You? You prayed?! What do you know about praying? You’ve never prayed in your life!”

Dan wasn’t wrong. Donna wasn’t a Christian, didn’t read the Bible, and never attended church. She enjoyed parties and nightclubs. Prayer was the last thing on the mind of the Donna Dan knew.

“True,” she said. “But I prayed that God would take away your desire to gamble. And He has. God answered my prayer!”

That phenomenal answer to prayer marked a turnaround in the lives of both Dan and Donna. Decades later, Dan has still never gambled and has never wanted to. Today, he helps gamblers beat their gambling addiction. Both Donna and he are strong Christians, thanks to an answered prayer, prayed by someone who had rarely, if ever, prayed.

Although endless stories could be told demonstrating that God answers prayer, many people don't pray. And many people who do pray are frustrated by a prayer life that seems stagnant or sluggish, where answers to prayer seem sporadic at best, and prayer itself feels lethargic or lifeless. So how can a person experience effective prayer, prayer that really works?

Jesus' disciples approached Him one day with a request. "Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1), they asked Him. In reply, Jesus gave the disciples what has often been referred to as the model prayer or the Lord's Prayer.

"Our Father in heaven,
Hallowed be Your name.
Your kingdom come.
Your will be done
On earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
As we forgive our debtors.
And do not lead us into temptation,
But deliver us from the evil one." (Matthew 6:9–13)

While not recorded in Luke's gospel, Matthew adds, "For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen" (Matthew 6:13).

While there is nothing ostensibly wrong with praying the Lord's Prayer as a stand-alone prayer, Jesus' intent was to show us what prayer should look like, the elements prayer may include. Prayer should be much more than a wish list, more than going to God with a litany of wishes and hopes.

Correctly understood, prayer is communication, the opening up of the thoughts and feelings to the One who created the universe and who knows you better than you know yourself. Prayer is time in the presence of God. Prayer is a dialogue, where the one who prays not only speaks, but also listens and receives from God. And while God will often communicate with someone during prayer, it might also be that time spent in prayer opens the heart to hear from God at a later time.

Prayers should be prayed in faith. Hebrews 11:6 states that the one who "comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him." God definitely wants you to pray, and the Bible assures you that