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HOW TO RELY ON THE PROTECTIVE POWER OF PRAYER

There are numerous teachings about the importance of prayer found throughout the scriptures, but one specifically ties prayer to power, especially the power to resist temptation: “Pray always, that you may come off conqueror; yea, that you may conquer Satan, and that you may escape the hands of the servants of Satan that do uphold his work” (D&C 10:5).

What a wonderful promise! In this spiritual warfare that rages over individual souls, that is what we want more than anything else—to conquer Satan and to escape the hands of evil men and women who carry out his work. I cannot stress too highly the protective power that comes into our

lives through earnest, humble, consistent, yearning prayer.

I know you believe that; but in the hectic, pressure-filled schedules you face, I also know how easy it is to let prayer slip. Some of you hit the snooze button on your alarm clocks, thinking you can eke out just another minute or two of sleep, then jerk awake realizing that you are going to be late for school. On such mornings prayer gets pushed aside, perhaps with a feeble promise to yourself that you will do better tomorrow. Put the alarm clock where you can’t reach it from bed; that will solve this problem. Sometimes you return home late at night, exhausted and eager to collapse into bed. You may go through the motions of prayer in a superficial manner, but that is not the kind of prayer that helps us conquer Satan.

I know many of you live where the television or stereo may be on day and night. People talk loudly enough that even in your bedroom you can hear them clearly. There is laughter, noise, interruptions. You need to find a time and place where you can be alone with the Lord and pour out your heart to Him, that you might add strength and power to your spiritual lives. Every honest and sincere prayer strengthens you.

Perhaps there are some of you who have slipped into patterns of behavior that you know in your heart are displeasing to the Lord.

You feel unworthy and ashamed to approach your Father in Heaven. “I’ll repent first,” you say to yourselves, “and then I’ll begin saying my prayers again.” I tell you with all soberness that those thoughts are not from the Lord but come from the evil one. Nephi said it very clearly: “The evil spirit teacheth not a man to pray, but teacheth him that he must not pray” (2 Nephi 32:8).

It is when we are lost in the mists of darkness and cannot find our way that we most desperately need the influence of the Lord. Nowhere in all of the scriptural injunctions on prayer do we find the suggestion that we must first be perfect in order to communicate with God.

A further word of caution. I often hear people say, “I told the Lord” this or “I told the Lord” that. Be careful not to “tell” Him but, rather, humbly seek and ask your Heavenly Father for guidance and direction. Prayer should be yearning and filled with gratitude.

My young friends, one of the most important ways to protect yourselves is to make sure that prayer—earnest, sincere, consistent prayer—is part of your daily lives. **NE**

From a Church Educational System fireside given on March 3, 2002.



Share Your Experiences

Share your experiences with prayer and read the experiences of other youth at lds.org/go/prayerNE7.