

# How to Have Effective Prayers

Matthew 8:5-13

## I. Recognize the Power of God

### A. Who was the servant?

1. **v6** - **Servant** (παῖς) = a young male child; pre-puberty. He could be his son or a slave - this word doesn't make that distinction.
2. But in **Lk 7:2** the word is slave (δοῦλος).
3. He certainly had his master's affection (**Lk 7:2**).

### B. What was his condition?

1. **v6** - This was a hopeless situation. He was **about to die** - **Lk 7:2**.
2. Palsy was a progressive paralysis caused by brain & nerve damage.
3. It caused muscular spasms & painful respiratory movements.
4. It was incurable & always resulted in death.

### C. What was the Centurion's attitude?

1. **v9** - He lived under a chain of command: he had the responsibility to carry out orders from superiors & the authority to give orders to his subordinates.
2. **v8** - The Centurion believed Jesus had the same authority over creation he had over Roman soldiers.

### D. Like the Centurion, you should trust that no circumstances in this life are too big for God to overcome!

1. We have a big God - you can pray for big things!
2. God is willing to display His power if you are willing to receive it.
3. This miracle was performed in public.
  - a. **v1** - This was the same crowd who heard the Sermon on the Mount.
  - b. Capernaum, where the miracle occurred, was a big city on the shore of the Sea of Galilee.
4. Lord Jesus was even willing to defile Himself ceremonially & enter the home of a Gentile (a non Jew).
  - a. The Pharisees believed ceremonial cleansing was necessary for anyone who came in contact with anything belonging to a Gentile.
  - b. That's how willing Jesus is to answer prayer!

## II. Recognize Your Own Condition

### A. A Centurion was important.

1. He was an officer in an army that occupied Palestine for over 100 years.
2. He had absolute authority over 100 soldiers.

### B. But - this Centurion was also humble.

1. **Lk 7:3** - He didn't even approach Jesus personally. He sent the elders of the city.
2. **Lk 7:5** - He had built the Jewish synagogue in Capernaum.
3. **Lk 7:7** - He denied he was even worthy to stand in the Lord's presence.

### C. Like the Centurion, you need to constantly see yourself only as sinners redeemed by grace!

1. You need to say like the Prodigal: **Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son** - **Lk 15:18-19**.
2. The stronger your faith - the higher you think of God & the lower you realize you are!

### III. Recognize the Way to Pray

- A. God is pleased when faith is expressed.
  - 1. Your faith should not be blind. The Centurion's faith was built on evidence.
    - a. He may have been acquainted with the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament since he was so close to the Jewish leaders in Capernaum.
    - b. He may have heard about the Lord's reputation for healing since he healed the paralytic carried by his 4 buddies there (**Matt 9:1-8**) & Peter's mother-in-law lived there (**v14**).
  - 2. There are only 2 times Jesus marveled:
    - a. Here - when unexpected faith was observed. - **v10**
    - b. In Nazareth - when He expected faith & it wasn't there! (**Mk 6:6**)
- B. Faith is the criteria for a relationship with God - not heredity!
  - 1. The Centurion was not a part of the "in" crowd. He was a Gentile (a non-Jew).
    - a. Jews were supposedly unclean if they went into a Gentile's home.
    - b. **v7** - Jesus was willing to do that!
  - 2. But **Is 11:10** says that Jews & Gentiles alike would come to God by faith. This happened twice:
    - a. **The Ethiopian's Conversion (Act 8:26-39)**.
    - b. **Cornelius' Conversion (Act 10:1-48)**.
- C. Like the Centurion, you must pray with the faith that God is present, hears you & answers!

1. Recognize the Power of God  
Nothing is too big for Him!

2. Recognize Your Own Condition  
A sinner saved by grace!

3. Recognize the Way to Pray  
With faith that He hears & answers!

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