

THE
POWER
OF A
Praying
Teen

STORMIE
OMARTIAN



HARVEST HOUSE PUBLISHERS

EUGENE, OREGON

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THE POWER OF A PRAYING® TEEN

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Published by Harvest House Publishers

Eugene, Oregon 97402

www.harvesthousepublishers.com

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Omartian, Stormie.

The power of a praying teen / Stormie Omartian.

p. cm.

ISBN-13: 978-0-7369-0190-1 (pbk.)

ISBN-10: 0-7369-0190-6

1. Christian teenagers—Religious life. 2. Prayer—Christianity. I. Title.

BV4531.3.O43 2005

248.8'3—dc22

2005009384

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Printed in the United States of America

05 06 07 08 09 10 11 12 / BP-MS / 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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LORD,
HELP ME
Know You
Better

BEFORE I CAME TO KNOW THE LORD, I was involved in all kinds of occult practices and Eastern and New Age religions. In each one of these I was trying to find God and discover some purpose for why I was alive. I became desperate to find a way out of the emotional pain, fear, anxiety, and depression I had experienced nearly every day since I was a child. I thought that there must be a God, and if I could just be good enough to get close to Him, maybe He would give meaning to my life and then I could feel better about myself.

Of course that didn't happen because the gods I chased after were distant and cold. And this depressed me even more because I was raised by a mother who was distant and cold. She was also physically violent, verbally abusive, frightening, and cruel. She locked me in a closet for long periods of time, and that made me

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The Hardest Thing About Prayer Is:

- Admitting my sins
- Praying from my heart
- Keeping my eyes closed
- Not being selfish
- Nothing. It's easy!

(Ages 13-15)

very afraid and sad. I realized later that she was seriously mentally ill, and because she never received any medical help, she only grew worse and worse as time went on.

I eventually forgave my mother for all the things I suffered because of her, but I still had extremely bad memories of my childhood. I had

always hidden that part of my life from other people, but especially when I was a teenager. Being different was not a good thing at that age, and it certainly wasn't good to be different in a *negative* way like that. The pain I felt as a teenager became like an avalanche that crashed in on me until it seemed as though I were suffocating under the weight of it. The hopelessness, depression, and despair I felt became so unbearable that I had constant thoughts of suicide.

Once I was in my twenties and out on my own, I tried everything I could think of to get out of my misery, but nothing worked. I took drugs to the point that I nearly killed myself a couple of times from an overdose. I drank alcohol to try to numb the pain, but it only made me feel sick and confused. Finally, at the lowest point in my life, I was **28** years old and had done everything I knew to find a way out of the pain I constantly felt. I wanted to die and was planning a way to kill myself.

It was at that very time that my friend Terry saw I wasn't doing very well, so she asked me to go with her to meet her pastor. She was a Christian and I wasn't; I hesitated. I was afraid I would have to tell them both about my mother or my problems, or reveal the terrible things I had done. I didn't want anyone to know. But I was also desperate to find a reason to live, and so I went.

Terry's pastor, Pastor Jack, met us at a popular restaurant in town. We ate and sat there for two hours while he told me about

Lord, Help Me Know You Better

Jesus. When Pastor Jack talked about Him, He didn't seem like the cold, judgmental gods I had been reading about in my books on the occult and Eastern religions. Pastor Jack told me that if I received Jesus as my Savior, I could begin a close walk with God that would change my life forever. He would help me find peace and restoration. He would show me His purpose for my life, and it would be better than anything I had ever imagined.

Pastor Jack gave me three books to read. One was about the reality of evil. My occult practices had taught me that there was no evil. The second book was on the power of the Holy Spirit. I had never known about that kind of power, and I was fascinated that I could have access to it when I received Jesus. The third book was the Gospel of John in a small book form. It told about the life of Jesus and who He was and what He taught. Pastor Jack asked me to come to his office with Terry after I had read the books, and then I could let him know what I thought of them.

I went home, put my suicide plans on hold, and read all three books in just a few days. When I went back with Terry the following week, I told Pastor Jack that I believed what I had read was the truth. He asked me if I was ready to receive Jesus as my Savior, and I told him yes.

After I gave my life to the Lord, I could sense His Spirit working in me. I felt hope for the first time in my life, and I could see that I had a future. I didn't know exactly what it was, but I knew I had one. And that was a lot more than I could ever see before.

I could also see that there was a common thread in all those other occult practices and Eastern religions I had dabbled in previously. The similarity was that the gods of each of those religions had no power to save or transform a person and their life. But the

I Pray for Others When:

- They ask me to
- God tells me to
- They need help
- They are sick
- They are traveling
(Ages 13-15)

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God of the Bible did. He is the one, true, living God, and when we receive His Son, Jesus, as our Savior, the Holy Spirit of God comes to dwell in us (John **14:16-17**). It is by the power of His Spirit that He transforms us from the inside out and miraculously changes us and our circumstances and our lives.

I also learned that the God of the Bible can be known and that He *wants* to be close to us. That's why He is called Immanuel, which means "God *with* us." He comes close to *us* when we draw close to *Him* (James **4:8**).

Everything You Need

I wish I could sit down and talk with you in person about your life. If I could, I would tell you that if you have received Jesus, the answer to everything you will ever need for your life is within you. That's because the Holy Spirit of God is in you. He promises to lead you in your life and teach you things you need to know. But you have to give your life to Him and be patient to let Him work in you in His way and in His timing.

To be *transformed* means to be changed permanently. It doesn't mean a *temporary* fix or a *little bit* changed. This is not about trying to be good enough in order to get God to love you. God already loves you. He loved you first. He is just waiting for you to love Him. This is about coming to know Jesus, who is perfect, and letting His perfect love change you and help you do the right things. This is about a close walk with God and the great things that will happen in you because of it.

What Everyone Wants

Everyone wants to be loved, but no one will ever be able to love us as much as God can. Only God can meet your needs all the time—and then only when you have a *close* relationship with Him. No person can ever touch you as deeply as God can. No one can

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ever know you as well. Whenever you feel an emptiness inside of you that you want those closest to you to fill and they just aren't doing that, remember that this emptiness is put there by God. He wants you to come close to Him so *He* can fill it.

God wants you to want Him. And when you realize that it is really *Him* that you want, it frees you to identify the longings, loneliness, or emptiness inside of you as a sign that you need to draw near to God and ask Him to fill you with more of Himself. But this deep relationship with God that we all want, whether we know it's what we want at the time or not, doesn't just happen. It has to be sought after. We have to *pray* for a deeper relationship with God. We have to pray that our walk with God is not shallow.

Five Ways to Tell if Your Walk with God Is Shallow

1. *If you love the Lord only for what He can do for you, then your walk with Him is shallow. If you love Him enough to ask what you can do for Him, then your relationship is growing deeper.*
2. *If you only pray to God when things are tough or you need something, then your walk with Him is shallow. If you pray to Him often just because you love to be close to Him, then your relationship with God is growing deeper.*
3. *If you get mad at God or disappointed in Him when He doesn't do what you want, then your walk with Him is shallow. If you can praise God and pray to Him no matter what is going on in your life, then your relationship with Him is growing deeper.*
4. *If you praise God only because of what He does for you, then your walk with Him is shallow. If you also praise Him because of who He is, then your relationship with Him is growing deeper.*
5. *If you feel you have to beg God or twist His arm to get Him to answer your prayers, then your walk with Him is shallow. If*

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you believe that God *wants* to answer your prayers according to His will, then your relationship with Him is *growing deeper*.

Spending Time Alone with God

We can never draw close to God and get to know Him well if we don't spend time alone with Him. It's in those private times with God that we are refreshed and strengthened. That's when we can better see our lives from His perspective and discover what is really important. That's where we understand who God really is and all that He has for us.

Jesus Himself spent time alone with God. If anyone could get away with not doing it, surely it would have been Jesus. How much more important must it be for us?

I Think of God As:

- Someone who listens to me
 - Someone who loves me
 - Someone I can talk to
 - Someone who is always good
 - Someone who leads me
- (Ages 13-15)

I know that finding time alone to pray to God can be difficult. But if you will make it a priority, you'll see answers to your prayers like never before. Remember, if you haven't been praying much, you can't expect things to change overnight. When someone tries to get an enormous ocean liner turned around and headed in a different direction, it doesn't happen the moment they

begin steering. In fact, they may hardly see any change at all at first. It's the same way with prayer. Prayer can turn your life around, but it doesn't always happen the moment you say your first words. If you haven't been praying very much, or not at all, you can't expect things to change immediately. It may take a time of continued prayer before you actually see the scenery of your life begin to change. This is normal, so don't give up. You will soon be heading full speed in a new direction.

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Far too often people give up just before they see the answers to their prayers. Just remember that this is not a short trip around the harbor. It's a lifelong voyage to meet your destiny. Giving up is not an option.

Naming Names

Do you ever have trouble remembering names? I know I do. Especially when I meet a lot of people at one time. It's easier to remember faces than it is to remember names. With God it's a different situation. He has only one face, but many, many names. The reason for that is there's so much to know about God that we need all those names to help us remember. In other words, if we don't know all of His names, we may not fully understand all the aspects of who He is.

God is referred to by many different names in the Bible, but sometimes we have trouble just remembering a few of the basic ones. We may forget one just when we most need to remember it. For example, we may think of God as our Provider, but forget that He is also our Protector. Or we may remember Him as our heavenly Father, but forget that He is also our Friend. We may think of God as our Savior, but forget that He is also our Deliverer.

Each of God's names in the Bible represents a way He wants us to trust Him:

Do you trust Him to be your Strength (Psalm **18:1**)?

Is He your Peace (Ephesians **2:14**)?

Is He the Lifter of Your Head when you are down (Psalm **3:3**)?

Is He your Wisdom (**1** Corinthians **1:24**)?

Is He your Counselor (Psalm **16:7**)?

There is great power in each one of God's names. And when you

**I Prayed and God
Answered**
I prayed when
I got sick and
God healed me.
(Age 13)

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Speak them with faith and understanding, you come to know God better. The better you know Him, the more fantastic your life will be.

For example, God's name is always a safe place to run to anytime you need help. "The name of the LORD is a strong tower; the righteous run to it and are safe" (Proverbs **18:10**).

If you are sick, run to your Healer.

If you are in need of something, run to your Provider.

If you are afraid, run to your Hiding Place.

By speaking one of His names, you invite Him to be that to you. Often there is so much we don't have in our lives simply because we don't see God as the answer to that need.

My Prayer to God

Lord, help me
to remember to turn
to you first when

I am down.
(Age 15)

In the following list of God's names, I have included only **20**. But there are hundreds more in His Word—the Bible. As you go through each of these names, thank God for being that to you. When

you do, you will be amazed at how your faith will grow and how much closer to God you will feel. Knowing how much He has done for you will help you love Him more.

Twenty Names of God to Remember

1. God is my Healer (Psalm **103:3**).
2. God is my Redeemer (Isaiah **59:20**).
3. God is my Deliverer (Psalm **70:5**).
4. God is my Strength (Psalm **43:2**).
5. God is my Shelter (Joel **3:16**).
6. God is my Friend (John **15:15**).
7. God is my Restorer (Psalm **23:3**).
8. God is my Father (Isaiah **9:6**).
9. God is my Love (**1** John **4:16**).
10. God is my Hiding Place (Psalm **32:7**).

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11. God is my Resting Place (Jeremiah 50:6).
12. God is my Truth (John 16:13).
13. God is my Eternal Life (1 John 5:20).
14. God is my Lord Who Provides (Genesis 22:14).
15. God is my Lord of Peace (2 Thessalonians 3:16).
16. God is my Shield (Psalm 144:2).
17. God is my Helper (Hebrews 13:6).
18. God is my Counselor (Isaiah 9:6).
19. God is my Hope (Psalm 71:5).
20. God is my Comfort (Romans 15:5).

Read this list of names often, and every time you do, choose one name that you especially need God to be that day and then thank Him for being that to you. And whenever you are reading your Bible and you come across a name for God, underline it or jot it in the margin or add it to the list here. It will remind you of another aspect of who God is to you.

Prayer Power

Lord, I want to have a closer walk with You. I draw close to You right now and thank You that as I do, You are drawing closer to me just as You promised in Your Word (James 4:8). I want a deeper relationship with You. I want to know You in all the ways You can be known. I am open to everything You want to do in me and in my life. I don't want to limit You by neglecting to acknowledge You in every way possible. Teach me what I need to learn in order to know You better. I don't want to be a person who is "always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" (2 Timothy 3:7). I want to know the truth about who You are. Today I especially need to know You as my (say a name of the Lord that you most need Him to be to

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you today). Help me to trust that You will always be that to me. Help me to know You in that way more and more each day. In Jesus' name I pray.

WORD POWER

Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.

JAMES **4:8**

Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.

JOHN **16:24**

It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

LUKE **12:32**

GIVING
IT SOME
FURTHER
THOUGHT

1

The names of God that mean the most to me are:

2

The names of God that represent the ways in which I want to know God better are:

3

Write out a prayer telling God how you feel about Him and why you want to know Him better.