

the complete works of em bounds on prayer

The Enduring Legacy: Exploring The Complete Works of E.M. Bounds on Prayer

The complete works of em bounds on prayer represent a profound and enduring exploration of a spiritual discipline that shaped his life and ministry. E.M. Bounds, a prolific writer and ardent advocate for a prayer-saturated existence, left behind a treasury of insights that continue to inspire and challenge believers today. This comprehensive collection delves deep into the necessity, power, and practice of prayer, offering practical guidance for both neophyte supplicants and seasoned intercessors. We will navigate the foundational principles of prayer as articulated by Bounds, examine his emphasis on the character and preparation of the prayer warrior, and uncover the transformative impact he believed prayer could have on the individual, the church, and the world. Through his rigorous examination, Bounds underscores that prayer is not merely a religious duty but the very lifeblood of genuine Christian discipleship.

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The Foundational Call to Prayer: Why Bounds Emphasized Its Centrality

E.M. Bounds' entire corpus on prayer is a resounding testament to his unwavering conviction that prayer is not an optional addendum to the Christian life, but its very bedrock. He argued with relentless passion that

a deficiency in prayer was the root cause of spiritual weakness in both individuals and the church at large. For Bounds, prayer was the primary engine through which God's power is unleashed on earth, the vital conduit connecting the human spirit to the divine. He saw a direct correlation between the depth and breadth of prayer in a believer's life and the vitality and effectiveness of their spiritual walk and ministry. His writings consistently return to this core truth: without a fervent and consistent prayer life, the Christian message loses its potency and the believer becomes ineffective in fulfilling God's purposes.

The Neglect of Prayer as the Root of Spiritual Decline

Bounds believed that the modern church, and indeed many individual believers, had largely relegated prayer to a secondary, even superficial, role. This neglect, he contended, was the most insidious threat to spiritual growth and impact. He lamented a culture that prioritized intellectual assent over spiritual communion, outward activity over inward dependence on God. The erosion of prayer meant an erosion of divine enablement, a dilution of the gospel's transformative power. He painted a stark picture of a church attempting to operate on human strength and ingenuity, devoid of the supernatural power that prayer alone could access.

Prayer as the Essential Element for Effective Ministry

For E.M. Bounds, no aspect of Christian service or ministry could truly flourish without a robust foundation of prayer. He saw prayer not as a means to an end, but as the very means by which all spiritual work is accomplished. Whether it was evangelism, discipleship, or pastoral care, Bounds insisted that prayer was the indispensable prerequisite for success. He challenged the notion that eloquent sermons or well-organized programs could substitute for the profound spiritual forces set in motion by earnest supplication. Prayer, in his view, was the oxygen of ministry, without which all other efforts would eventually suffocate.

The Character of the Prayer Warrior: Cultivating a Spiritually Prepared Heart

E.M. Bounds understood that effective prayer was not merely about uttering words, but about cultivating a specific disposition and character within the supplicant. He spent considerable time expounding on the qualities that made a prayer warrior effective in their communion with God. This wasn't about magical incantations or rote recitations, but about a deep-seated spiritual

readiness, a heart aligned with God's will, and a life surrendered to His purposes. Bounds' emphasis was on the internal landscape of the individual, believing that the outward practice of prayer flowed directly from the inward condition of the soul.

Purity of Heart and Motive in Prayer

A central theme in Bounds' writings is the absolute necessity of a pure heart and unadulterated motives for effective prayer. He warned against praying for selfish gain, personal ambition, or to impress others. True prayer, according to Bounds, emanates from a desire to glorify God and to see His will established. He encouraged believers to examine their hearts for any trace of ego, pride, or impure intentions, understanding that such impurities act as significant barriers to unhindered access to the throne of grace. A pure heart is one that is emptied of self and filled with the will of God.

The Importance of Faith and Perseverance

Faith was a non-negotiable element for Bounds when it came to prayer. He taught that believers must approach God with an unshakeable conviction that He hears and answers prayer, according to His perfect will. This faith, however, was not passive; it was to be coupled with unwavering perseverance. Bounds often cited biblical examples of those who prayed persistently, refusing to give up until their petition was answered or their faith was fully tested and proven. He saw perseverance in prayer as a demonstration of the sincerity of one's desire and the depth of their faith in God's promises.

Surrender and Obedience as Prerequisites

Bounds consistently linked the efficacy of prayer to the believer's willingness to surrender their will to God and to live a life of obedience. He asserted that one cannot expect God to respond favorably to prayers that are incongruent with a life of disobedience or an unwillingness to submit to His commands. The prayer warrior, in Bounds' estimation, is one who has yielded their entire being to God's Lordship, making their prayers an extension of their surrendered life. This obedience creates an atmosphere of trust and receptivity, allowing God's answers to flow more freely.

The Power and Efficacy of Prayer: Unlocking Divine Intervention

E.M. Bounds was a fervent proponent of the supernatural power inherent in prayer. He did not view prayer as a mere communication tool, but as a potent force capable of moving the hand of God and bringing about extraordinary

results. His writings are replete with affirmations of prayer's ability to effect change in the spiritual, physical, and circumstantial realms. Bounds consistently pointed to Scripture and historical examples to underscore that when God's people pray with the right heart and according to His will, divine intervention is not only possible but expected.

Prayer as a Means of Access to God's Power

Bounds articulated prayer as the primary channel through which believers gain access to God's limitless power. He argued that God has ordained prayer as the means by which His power is often manifested in the world. This is not to suggest that God is limited, but rather that He has chosen to work through the earnest intercessions of His people. For Bounds, prayer was the key that unlocked the storehouse of divine strength, enabling believers to overcome obstacles that would otherwise be insurmountable. He encouraged believers not to shy away from asking for the impossible, for in prayer, the impossible becomes the purview of God.

The Transformative Impact on Individuals and Circumstances

The transformative power of prayer, as described by Bounds, extends beyond the immediate request to the deeper reshaping of individuals and their circumstances. He believed that persistent prayer could lead to profound personal transformation, cultivating godliness, resilience, and a deeper understanding of God's character. Furthermore, Bounds saw prayer as instrumental in altering the course of events, turning the tide of battles, influencing decisions, and bringing about salvation for lost souls. The petition offered in prayer, when aligned with God's purpose, possessed the capacity to rewrite destinies and redirect nations.

Prayer for the Sick, the Needy, and the Lost

Bounds dedicated significant attention to the application of prayer in specific contexts, particularly for those who are suffering. He fervently advocated for prayer for the sick, believing that God's healing power was often accessed through faith-filled supplication. Similarly, he emphasized prayer for the poor and needy, trusting that God would respond to the cries of His children through the intercession of others. Most importantly, Bounds championed prayer for the salvation of the lost, seeing it as a crucial component in God's plan to redeem humanity. He believed that no soul was beyond the reach of God's grace when fervent prayers ascended on their behalf.

The Practice of Prayer: Strategies and Disciplines for Consistent Communion

Beyond the theological underpinnings, E.M. Bounds was deeply concerned with the practical execution of prayer. He recognized that the most profound theological understanding of prayer would remain academic without a committed and disciplined approach to its practice. His writings are filled with practical advice, urging believers to move beyond sporadic or casual prayer towards a structured and intentional engagement with God. Bounds advocated for prayer as a lifestyle, not just a moment in time, emphasizing consistency, diligence, and immersion in the spiritual disciplines that foster deeper communion.

Establishing a Regular Time for Prayer

One of Bounds' most consistent admonitions was the importance of setting aside a dedicated time for prayer each day. He saw this not as a legalistic requirement but as a practical necessity for cultivating a prayerful habit. He argued that without a designated time, the demands of daily life would inevitably encroach upon, and ultimately crowd out, the practice of prayer. Bounds encouraged believers to rise early, before the distractions of the day began, to seek God's face. This intentional allocation of time signaled a prioritization of one's relationship with God.

The Necessity of Bible Study in Conjunction with Prayer

Bounds firmly believed that prayer and Bible study were inseparable disciplines, each enriching and informing the other. He taught that a thorough understanding of God's Word was essential for praying according to His will. The Bible provides the promises, the principles, and the very character of God that believers should bring before Him in prayer. Conversely, prayer illuminates Scripture, helping believers to grasp its spiritual truths and apply them to their lives. Bounds advocated for praying over Scripture and allowing Scripture to shape the content and direction of prayer.

Developing a Life of Prayerful Meditation and Supplication

Beyond formal prayer times, Bounds encouraged a pervasive spirit of prayerfulness throughout the day. This included cultivating a habit of prayerful meditation on God's truth and a constant posture of supplication. He advocated for brief, spontaneous prayers throughout daily activities,

recognizing that the Holy Spirit can prompt prayer at any moment. Furthermore, Bounds championed the practice of prolonged periods of prayer, often referred to as prayer vigils or extended times of intercession, believing that such deep dives into communion with God yielded significant spiritual fruit. He stressed the importance of wrestling in prayer, persevering until spiritual breakthroughs occurred.

Prayer for the Church and the World: Bounds' Vision for Corporate Intercession

E.M. Bounds' concern for prayer extended far beyond the individual believer's private communion with God. He possessed a profound conviction regarding the indispensable role of corporate prayer for the health and effectiveness of the Church and for the spiritual welfare of the world. Bounds saw the gathered church as a powerful force when united in prayer, capable of achieving what individual efforts could not. His vision encompassed a church that was not only individualistically prayerful but also corporately engaged in earnest intercession for God's kingdom purposes.

The Vital Role of Prayer Meetings

Bounds was a passionate advocate for the church prayer meeting, often lamenting its decline in attendance and fervor. He viewed these gatherings not as optional social events but as essential spiritual powerhouses for the local congregation. For Bounds, the prayer meeting was where the church collectively sought God's guidance, power, and intervention. He believed that the synergy of multiple voices united in supplication amplified God's response and strengthened the spiritual bonds of the community. He urged pastors and leaders to prioritize and cultivate vibrant prayer meetings.

Intercession for Missions and the Unreached

A significant portion of Bounds' focus was on the imperative of intercessory prayer for global missions and the salvation of the unreached peoples of the world. He strongly believed that the Great Commission could not be fulfilled apart from sustained, fervent prayer for missionaries, for open doors, and for the hearts of those who had never heard the gospel. Bounds saw prayer as the vital spiritual artillery that supported and empowered missionary endeavors, enabling the spread of the gospel to the remotest corners of the earth.

Prayer for Spiritual Awakening and Revival

Bounds' writings often carry an undercurrent of longing and expectation for

widespread spiritual awakening and revival. He firmly believed that such divine movements were not spontaneous occurrences but were directly linked to the fervent and persistent prayers of God's people. He called the church to pray for a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit, for a return to the power and purity of primitive Christianity, and for a spiritual resurgence that would shake the foundations of complacency and indifference. His vision was of a church so saturated with prayer that it became an irresistible force for God's glory.

The Lasting Impact of E.M. Bounds' Teachings on Prayer

The complete works of E.M. Bounds on prayer have left an indelible mark on Christian literature and practice for over a century. His rigorous scholarship, passionate conviction, and practical guidance continue to resonate with believers seeking a deeper and more effective prayer life. Bounds' unflinching emphasis on prayer's centrality, the character of the intercessor, its profound power, and the disciplines required for its practice provide a timeless blueprint for spiritual vitality. His legacy is not merely in the words he wrote, but in the countless lives transformed by the practical application of his profound insights into the art and science of prayer.

Frequently Asked Questions

What are the core themes Emily Dickinson explores in her poems about prayer?

Emily Dickinson's poems on prayer often delve into themes of direct communion with God, the personal and intimate nature of faith, the struggle with doubt, the power of unspoken supplication, and the questioning of established religious dogma. She frequently portrays prayer not as a ritualistic act, but as an internal, often wordless, dialogue with the divine.

How does Dickinson's concept of prayer differ from traditional religious views?

Dickinson's approach to prayer often bypasses conventional religious structures. Instead of formal petitions or communal worship, her poems emphasize individual revelation, direct address to God without intermediaries, and the belief that God is accessible in nature and within the self. She questions doctrines and rituals, finding spiritual truth in personal experience.

What role does nature play in Dickinson's understanding of prayer?

Nature is a profound conduit for Dickinson's prayers. She finds divine presence and spiritual communication in natural phenomena – birds, flowers, seasons, storms. For her, the natural world is a sacred text, and observing or experiencing it can be a form of prayer, offering direct insights into God's being and will.

Are there recurring metaphors or imagery Dickinson uses to depict prayer?

Yes, Dickinson employs several recurring metaphors. She uses imagery of 'speaking' or 'whispering' to God, suggesting direct communication. 'Knocking' at heaven's door signifies persistent seeking. She also portrays prayer as a form of 'listening' for divine responses, a profound silence filled with understanding, and sometimes as a journey or exploration into the divine.

How does Dickinson's poetry address the concept of unanswered prayer?

Dickinson frequently grapples with the idea of unanswered prayer, exploring the frustration, doubt, and questioning that arise when spiritual pleas seem ignored. She often presents this not as a failure of the divine, but as a complexity in the human-divine relationship, or as a sign that God's ways are beyond human comprehension. Sometimes, the 'unanswered' nature of prayer reveals a deeper, more subtle divine presence.

What is the significance of silence and introspection in Dickinson's prayers?

Silence and introspection are paramount in Dickinson's depiction of prayer. She often suggests that the most profound spiritual communion occurs not through eloquent speech, but through quiet contemplation and inner stillness. This allows for direct reception of divine thought and feeling, bypassing the limitations of language and outward expression.

Additional Resources

Here are 9 book titles, related to E.M. Bounds on prayer, with short descriptions:

1. *The Power of Persistent Prayer*. This collection distills Bounds' core teachings on the necessity of unyielding perseverance in prayer. It emphasizes that true spiritual victories are often born from prayers that refuse to give up, even in the face of prolonged silence or apparent defeat.

Readers will find encouragement to cultivate a prayer life characterized by tenacious faith and unwavering commitment.

2. *The Secret of Effective Intercession*. This book delves into the profound mysteries and practicalities of intercessory prayer. Bounds explores what makes our prayers for others impactful, highlighting the importance of a surrendered will and a deep understanding of God's character. It guides believers toward becoming more potent advocates for the lost and for the advancement of God's kingdom.

3. *The Call to Constant Communion*. Bounds powerfully advocates for prayer not as an occasional duty, but as a continuous, intimate dialogue with God. This title focuses on the transformative potential of living in a perpetual state of prayerful awareness. It challenges readers to integrate prayer into every moment of their lives, fostering a deeper and more abiding fellowship with the Divine.

4. *The Soul-Winning Ministry of Prayer*. This work links fervent prayer directly to the effectiveness of evangelism and soul-winning efforts. Bounds argues that prayer is the indispensable engine that drives spiritual harvest, preparing hearts and opening doors for the Gospel. It inspires a vision of prayer as a powerful, yet often underestimated, tool for reaching the lost for Christ.

5. *The Discipline of Devotional Prayer*. This book underscores the crucial role of structured and disciplined prayer in spiritual growth. Bounds examines how consistent, dedicated prayer cultivates a robust spiritual life and deepens one's relationship with God. It offers practical guidance for developing habits that will strengthen prayer muscles and yield lasting spiritual fruit.

6. *The Audacity of Asking in Faith*. Here, Bounds explores the bold and unwavering faith required for asking God for great things. This title encourages believers to shed timidity and embrace the privilege of approaching God's throne with audacious requests, rooted in His promises. It aims to ignite a spirit of confidence and expectancy in the prayer lives of Christians.

7. *The Fire of Earnest Prayer*. This book highlights the passionate and fervent nature of truly effectual prayer. Bounds passionately asserts that prayer, when offered with genuine fervor and deep conviction, carries immense power. It serves as a compelling call to ignite a more zealous and burning desire for God in our prayer lives.

8. *The Heart of a Praying Man*. This title focuses on the inner disposition and character that undergirds a powerful prayer life. Bounds examines the qualities of humility, dependency, and surrender that are essential for effective prayer. It explores how God shapes and refines the heart of a man or woman dedicated to prayer.

9. *The Pervasive Influence of Prayer*. This collection examines the wide-

ranging impact of prayer beyond immediate petitions. Bounds illustrates how consistent prayer can subtly yet powerfully shape circumstances, transform individuals, and advance God's purposes in countless unseen ways. It reveals prayer as a force that touches every aspect of life and ministry.

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