Spurgeon, Charles
The Practice of Powerful and Effective Prayer

5. The Secret of Power in Prayer

A sermon by Spurgeon on John 15:7. It teaches that mighty, answered prayer is not for every believer but for those who 'abide' in Christ and let his words abide in them. Spurgeon works through three questions: what the blessing is, how it is obtained, and why it comes only this way.

Key takeaways

- The gifts of grace grow over time. We are saved by union with Christ, but joy, power, and freedom deepen as we keep abiding in him.
- The special blessing is prevailing prayer. Note that Christ says not 'ye shall do' but 'it shall be done unto you' — power flows through asking, not striving.
- For the abider, prayer becomes natural and constant, like a vine putting out fruit — exercised freely, felt as a necessity, and answered.
- It is obtained by two conditions: abiding in Christ (trusting and yielding to him, even through the pruning knife) and letting his words abide in you (believing and obeying them).

- Why it works: Christ's fullness holds all we need; God's promises give prayer its warrant; and a soul shaped by grace wills what God wills, so it is safe for God to grant its requests.
- The Spirit intercedes within such a believer, and the Father regards him as he regards his own Son — so love cannot reject his prayers.
- This is not for those outside Christ. 'Ye must be born again' comes first; only then can one aspire to abide and to pray with power.

Passages worth keeping

> *"Prayer is the promise utilized. A prayer which is not based on a promise has no true foundation."*

Sums up his teaching that we pray by holding God to his own word.

> *"Our desires are reflected beams of the divine will: ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be even so."*

Explains why a sanctified will can be trusted with 'ask what ye will.'

How it connects

The whole sermon hangs on the vine-and-branch image of John 15: fruit and prayer alike come not from the branch's effort but from its living union with the stem.

Scripture referenced

- **John 15:7** -- The text: abiding brings answered prayer.
- **John 8:31-32** -- Continuing in his word brings truth and freedom.
- **John 15:1-5** -- The vine and branches — pruning, cleansing, fruit only by abiding.
- **Romans 8:26** -- The Spirit intercedes with groanings that cannot be uttered.
- **Psalm 37:4** -- Delight in the Lord and he gives the heart's desires.
- **John 15:9** -- As the Father loved Christ, so Christ loves us.