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The Book of Mormon as an Instrument in Teaching the Concept of Prayer

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John H. Mabey
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Justification and Purpose of This Study

Several thousand years ago an angel of the Lord, in attempting to teach Adam the importance of prayer, said:

Wherefore, thou shalt do all that thou doest in the name of the Son, and thou shalt repent and call upon God in the name of the Son forevermore.1

Thus we see that prayer was intended to play a vital and important role in the life of Adam and his posterity. If man's course was to be one of righteousness it became necessary for man to communicate with the author of righteousness. Man, in order to do good, must come under the influence of God and Jesus Christ. The Prophet Mormon made this clear when he said:

Wherefore, all things which are good cometh of God; and that which is evil cometh of the devil; for the devil is an enemy unto God, and fighteth against him continually, and inviteth and enticeth to sin, and to do that which is evil continually.

But behold, that which is of God inviteth and enticeth to do good continually; wherefore, every thing which inviteth and enticeth to do good, and to love God, and to serve him, is inspired of God.2

In the opinion of the writer, the only conclusion that can be made is that the person who desires to return to God must make prayer a part of his life.

The purpose of this study will be to determine and present as completely and as clearly as possible what the Book of Mormon teaches concerning prayer in order that the reader may gain a greater understanding

1Moses 5:8.  
2Moroni 7:12, 13.
of prayer and become more conscious of the need to make prayer a part of his daily life. It will also be the purpose of this study to show how the Book of Mormon can aid the teacher in teaching the proper concept of prayer. The writer's observation is that there seems to be a tendency for some teachers to use over and over again certain passages of scripture on a particular subject to the exclusion of others. This study will serve the purpose of pointing out to the teacher in the church the many scriptural passages that could and should be used in teaching prayer.

One must not forget the importance of the proper relationship of prayer and the teacher. The Lord has pointed out this relationship very plainly:

And the Spirit shall be given unto you by the prayer of faith; and if ye receive not the Spirit ye shall not teach.¹

Wherefore, I the Lord ask you this question—unto what were ye ordained?
To preach my gospel by the Spirit, even the Comforter which was sent forth to teach the truth.
Verily I say unto you, he that is ordained of me and sent forth to preach the word of truth by the Comforter, in the Spirit of truth, doth he preach it by the Spirit of truth or some other way?
And if it be by some other way it is not of God.
And again, he that receiveth the word of truth, doth he receive it by the Spirit of truth or some other way?
If it be some other way it is not of God.²

Remember that that which cometh from above is sacred, and must be spoken with care, and by constraint of the Spirit; and in this there is no condemnation, and ye receive the Spirit through prayer; wherefore, without this there remaineth condemnation.³

Perhaps the most important purpose of this study as it applies to the teacher is to point out how the teacher must pray so that he may obtain the Spirit and thereby be qualified to teach.

Methodology

The Book of Mormon was read and an attempt was made to record every reference that was in some way connected with the subject of prayer. These references were read again and the verses or portions of verses were recorded under various topics relating to prayer. These topics are in general the chapter headings and chapter divisions of this thesis. Further study was made of the recorded verses to determine what the Book of Mormon teaches concerning prayer and how it can aid and assist the teacher in teaching the concept of prayer.

Under the various chapters that will follow, lists of references will be found. The place where the verses or portions of verses are located will be cited first; then the name of who is speaking or writing, or who the reference is about; and finally the verses or portions of verses are quoted.

Limitations of Study

This study is confined to the various aspects of prayer as taught in the Book of Mormon. It was necessary to consider only the Book of Mormon since to have included other scriptural works would have made the study too voluminous.

Definition of Terms

Book of Mormon. The Prophet Joseph Smith, the translator of the Book of Mormon, has said the Book of Mormon is:

a record of the forefathers of our western tribes of Indians; having been found through the ministration of an holy angel, and translated into our own language by the gift and power of God, after having been hid up in the earth for the last fourteen hundred years, containing the word of God which was delivered unto them.1

1Joseph Smith, History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Salt Lake City, Utah: The Deseret Book Company, 1946), I, 315.
Prayer.—Is communication with God, either vocally or by the forming of thoughts in the mind. Prayer as discussed in this study will not include the ordinance prayers of the church.

Church.—As used in this study the word church refers to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints which was organized on April 6, 1830.
CHAPTER II

SOME BASIC ESSENTIALS OF PRAYER

In this chapter will be discussed some very important and basic essentials of prayer that must be kept in mind in order that our prayers may be acceptable and of the greatest possible benefit to the person praying. It is hoped that the material presented in this chapter will help the teacher lead his students to a successful life of prayer.

Pray to the Father in the Name of Jesus Christ

Before examining the references in the Book of Mormon concerning the teaching that we must pray to the Father in the name of Jesus Christ, let ask and answer a few pertinent questions about prayer. What does it mean to pray in the name of Jesus Christ? Why do we pray in the name of Jesus Christ? What right do we have to pray in the name of Jesus Christ? These questions are important and should be considered so that we may not be guilty of using the Lord's name in vain. It is just as important to put feeling into the ending of our prayer as we close it in the name of Jesus Christ as it is to put feeling into the main body of the prayer.

King Benjamin in his final address to his people points out very clearly the debt we owe to God and why we can't ask for the blessings in anyone's name except Jesus Christ. King Benjamin has said:

I say unto you, my brethren, that if you should render all the thanks and praise which your whole soul has power to possess, to that God who has created you, and has kept and preserved you, and has caused that ye should rejoice, and has granted that ye should live in peace one with another—
I say unto you that if ye should serve him who has created you
from the beginning, and is preserving you from day to day, by lending you breath, that ye may live and move and do according to your own will, and even supporting you from one moment to another— I say, if ye should serve him with all your whole souls yet ye would be unprofitable servants.

And now, in the first place, he hath created you, and granted unto you your lives, for which ye are indebted unto him.

And secondly, he doth require that ye should do as he hath commanded you; for which if ye do, he doth immediately bless you; and therefore he hath paid you. And ye are still indebted unto him, and are, and will be, forever and ever; therefore, of what have ye to boast?

And now I ask, can ye say aught of yourselves? I answer you, Nay. Ye cannot say that ye are even as much as the dust of the earth; yet ye were created of the dust of the earth; but behold, it belongeth to him who created you.1

And again I say unto you as I have said before, that as ye have come to the knowledge of the glory of God, or if ye have known of his goodness and have tasted of his love, and have received a remission of your sins, which causeth such exceeding great joy in your souls, even so I would that ye should remember, and always retain in remembrance, the greatness of God, and your own nothingness, and his goodness and long-suffering towards you, unworthy creatures, and humble yourselves even in the depths of humility, calling on the name of the Lord daily, and standing steadfastly in the faith of that which is to come, which was spoken by the mouth of the angel.2

As we pray in the name of Jesus Christ we should remember that answers to our prayers come as a result of the righteousness of Jesus Christ and not the fact that God and Jesus Christ are indebted to us and owe us these blessings. The prophet Zenos recognized that the answers to his prayers came because of Jesus Christ.

And thou didst hear me because of mine afflictions and my sincerity; and it is because of thy Son that thou hast been thus merciful unto me, therefore I will cry unto thee in all mine afflictions, for in thee is my joy; for thou hast turned thy judgments away from me, because of thy Son.3

Max B. Skousen has explained the answers to these questions as follows:

To pray in the name of Jesus Christ we must gain the right to use His name by obedience to the commandments. We must feel from the heart that we have no right to ask these things of ourselves,

1Mosiah 2:20, 21, 23-25. 2Mosiah 4:11. 3Alma 33:11.
but we are asking for them by the authority and through the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

Dare any of us then ask for anything of our Father in Heaven through the mercy and graciousness of His Beloved Son, and do it to gratify our own selfish spirit of personal aggrandizement? As children of Christ, our lives are dedicated to Him. Therefore, our prayers should be such that we can close them by sincerely pleading, "I ask for these things, not for my glory but for the glory of Jesus Christ!" If we can truly say that, then we can honestly add, "And I ask it, not by my righteousness nor in my name, but by the righteousness and in the name of my beloved Redeemer, Jesus Christ."¹

In summary then, to pray in the name of Jesus Christ means to request our blessings by the authority and through the righteousness of Jesus Christ. We become worthy to pray in Christ's name and represent him as we become obedient to his teachings. Jesus Christ is the king of the Kingdom of God on earth and members of the Church recognize him as their king by praying in his name.

The Book of Mormon teaches in the following references that we must always pray to the Father in the name of Jesus Christ:

1. II Ne. 32:9 Nephi I But behold, I say unto you . . . that ye must not perform anything unto the Lord save in the first place ye shall pray unto the Father in the name of Christ, . . .

2. II Ne. 33:12 Nephi I And I pray the Father in the name of Christ . . .

3. III Ne. 17:3 Jesus Christ Therefore, go ye . . . ask of the Father, in my name, . . .

4. III Ne. 18:19 Jesus Christ Therefore ye must always pray unto the Father in my name;

5. III Ne. 18:20 Jesus Christ . . . ye shall ask the Father in my name, . . .

6. III Ne. 18:21 Jesus Christ Pray . . . unto the Father always in my name, . . .

¹Max B. Skousen, How to Pray and Stay Awake (Salt Lake City, Utah: Bookcraft, 1949), p. 66.
7. III Ne. 18:23 Jesus Christ 

... ye shall pray for them unto the Father, in my name.

8. III Ne. 18:30 Jesus Christ 

... and shall pray for him unto the Father, in my name; ...

9. III Ne. 19:6 Nephite Twelve 

And the twelve ... they did cause that the multitude ... should pray unto the Father in the name of Jesus.

10. III Ne. 19:7 Nephite Twelve 

And the disciples did pray unto the Father also in the name of Jesus.

11. III Ne. 19:8 Nephite Twelve 

... they knelt again and prayed to the Father in the name of Jesus.

12. III Ne. 20:31 Jesus Christ 

And they shall believe in me, that I am Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and shall pray unto the Father in my name.

13. III Ne. 27:2 Nephite Twelve 

And Jesus again showed himself unto them, for they were praying unto the Father in his name; ...

14. III Ne. 27:28 Jesus Christ 

... whatsoever things ye shall ask the Father in my name shall be given unto you.

15. III Ne. 28:30 Mormon 

... if they [Three Nephites] shall pray unto the Father in the name of Jesus ...

16. Mormon 9:6 Moroni II 

0 then ye unbelieving, ... cry mightily unto the Father in the name of Jesus, ...

17. Mormon 9:21 Moroni II 

Behold, ... he shall ask the Father in the name of Christ ...

18. Mormon 9:27 Moroni II 

0 then despise not, and wonder not, but hearken unto the words of the Lord, and ask the Father in the name of Jesus for what things soever ye shall stand in need. ...

19. Ether 4:15 Jesus Christ 

Behold, ... when ye shall call upon the Father in my name, ...

20. Moroni 2:2 Jesus Christ 

... Ye shall call on the Father in my name, in mighty prayer; ...

21. Moroni 3:2 Nephite Twelve 

After they had prayed unto the Father in the name of Christ, ...
Upon examination of the above references, 105 pages can be read in the Book of Mormon before one finds expressed the teaching that we always pray unto the Father in the name of Christ. These 105 pages cover a span of about 55 years. The necessity of praying to the Father in the name of Jesus Christ, although not mentioned many times previous to the coming of Christ, was understood by Nephi, the son of Lehi (1, 2), and therefore, was undoubtedly taught to the people of the Book of Mormon from the beginning. The writer's research indicates that after reference is made to Nephi praying to the Father in the name of Christ (2), that it is not until III Nephi 17:3 when Jesus Christ himself is speaking that the statement is again made that we should pray to the Father in the name of Jesus Christ. This third reference comes over 300 pages later in the Book of Mormon and after over 550 years have passed since the first reference was made to this subject.

It is interesting to note that during the few days Jesus spent with the Nephite people that he clearly pointed out that we should pray to the Father in the name of Jesus Christ, (3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 12, 14, 20). The Nephite Twelve also made reference to this same concept of praying

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1Numbers in parenthesis in this thesis will always refer back to the preceding list of scriptural quotations.
to the Father in the name of Jesus Christ on four different occasions during Christ's ministry among them, (9, 10, 11, 13). Thus we have 13 references out of the 25 coming in a brief span of only a few days. With this added emphasis given by Jesus Christ to this aspect of prayer one would perhaps expect to find more written in the latter portion of the Book of Mormon on this subject. Such is exactly the case with 11 additional references given after Christ's appearances referring to this aspect of prayer, (15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25).

There should be no doubt in the mind of any honest reader of the Book of Mormon as to whom we should pray and in whose name the prayer should be offered. The emphasis to this aspect of prayer given by Jesus Christ should erase this doubt in anyone's mind.

The Nephite Twelve prayed to Jesus Christ on one occasion which is recorded in these words:

And behold, they began to pray; and they did pray unto Jesus, calling him their Lord and their God.¹

And it came to pass that when Jesus had thus prayed unto the Father, he came unto his disciples, and behold, they did still continue, without ceasing, to pray unto him; and they did not multiply many words, for it was given unto them what they should pray, and they were filled with desire.

And it came to pass that Jesus blessed them as they did pray unto him; and his countenance did smile upon them, and the light of his countenance did shine upon them, and behold they were as white as the countenance and also the garments of Jesus; and behold the whiteness thereof did exceed all the whiteness, yea, even there could be nothing upon earth so white as the whiteness thereof.²

And when Jesus had spoken these words he came again unto his disciples; and behold they did pray steadfastly, without ceasing, unto him; and he did smile upon them again; and behold they were white, even as Jesus.³

How can this be in view of Christ's teachings that we should pray to the Father in the name of Jesus Christ? The answer to this question as

¹III Ne. 19:18. ²III Ne. 19:24-25. ³III Ne. 19:30.
to why the Nephite Twelve prayed to Jesus Christ rather than to the Father in the name of Jesus Christ was given by Jesus Christ in III Nephi 19:22, when he said to the Father, "... and they [Nephite Twelve] pray unto me; and they pray unto me because I am with them." There can be no question but what Jesus approved the Nephite Twelve's prayer at this time, "And it came to pass that Jesus blessed them as they did pray unto him . . ."\(^{1}\)

On the basis of the writer's investigation one might ask the question, why do we find only two references made that we should pray to the Father in the name of Jesus Christ prior to Christ's actual visit in the flesh to the Nephite people? In the Book of Ether except for the one reference made by Moroni (19), as the abridger of the record, there is no mention made of praying to the Father in the name of Jesus Christ. Another question which needs an answer is just when did the Book of Mormon people become aware of the exact name of the Son of God, or when do we find references made to the Son of God as being called Jesus, or Christ, or Jesus Christ?

In search of an answer to these last questions an examination of the Book of Ether reveals that the brother of Jared knew the Son of God as Jesus Christ.

Behold, I am he who was prepared from the foundation of the world to redeem my people. Behold, I am Jesus Christ. I am the Father and the Son. In me shall all mankind have light, and that eternally, even they who shall believe on my name; and they shall become my sons and my daughters.\(^{2}\)

The name Jesus, Christ, or Jesus Christ appears in the Book of Ether in the following places: Ether 2:12; 3:14, 17, 19, 20; 4:1, 2, 3, 7, 8; 5:5; 12:7, 16, 19, 22, 38, 39, 41; 13:4. An examination of these references indicates that the name of Jesus, Christ, or Jesus Christ has

\(^{1}\)III Ne. 19:25. \(^{2}\)Ether 3:14.
been added by Moroni who abridged the present Book of Ether as found in the Book of Mormon. To the knowledge of the writer the name of Jesus Christ does not appear in the Book of Ether except as mentioned in Ether 3:14 and as has been added by the abridger, Moroni.

Why didn't the brother of Jared reveal the name of the Son of God after his glorious visitation with him? The answer to this question seems to be answered in a statement of the Lord to the brother of Jared:

And the Lord commanded the brother of Jared to go down out of the mount from the presence of the Lord, and write the things which he had seen; and they were forbidden to come unto the children of men until after that he should be lifted up upon the cross; and for this cause did king Mosiah keep them, that they should not come unto the world until after Christ should show himself unto his people.¹

Since the Book of Ether is an abridgement one cannot be justified in assuming that the Son of God was not known as Jesus Christ among the people.

The writer in tracing the name of Jesus Christ through the Nephite record found no mention made of the name Jesus Christ until Jacob's testimony in II Nephi 10:3, "Wherefore, as I said unto you, it must needs be expedient that Christ—for in the last night the angel spake unto me that this should be his name—should come among the Jews ..." The name of Jesus Christ is mentioned very few times until we come to the testimony of Nephi in II Nephi 25:19:

For according to the words of the prophets, the Messiah cometh in six hundred years from the time that my father left Jerusalem; and according to the words of the prophets, and also the word of the angel of God, his name shall be Jesus Christ the Son of God.

From this point on in the Book of Mormon the name of Jesus Christ appears very frequently. Reference has already been made to the fact

¹Ether 4:1.
that it was in II Nephi 32:9 that the first account was given of praying to the Father in the name of Jesus Christ.

It is the feeling of the writer that the righteous throughout the entire Book of Mormon understood the proper salutation and closing of a prayer, but that Christ placed greater emphasis upon this subject when he came in the flesh. That people in the Book of Mormon did pray in the name of Jesus is supported by II Nephi 32:9 and II Nephi 33:12.

From the beginning of man's existence upon this earth the Lord has requested that all prayers be addressed to God in His name. In the Pearl of Great Price, Moses 6:52 we find the following:

And he also said unto him: If thou wilt turn unto me, and hearken unto my voice, and believe, and repent of all thy transgressions, and be baptized, even in water, in the name of mine Only Begotten Son, who is full of grace and truth, which is Jesus Christ, the only name which shall be given under heaven, whereby salvation shall come unto the children of men, ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, asking all things in his name, and whatsoever ye shall ask, it shall be given you.

Prayer can very easily become a matter of routine and habit, and as we close our prayers in the name of Jesus Christ it may become only so many words. The writer feels that it is the teacher's responsibility to impress upon his listeners the importance of praying in the name of Jesus Christ, and that our requests should be for the glory of Jesus Christ and his work. With this understanding a student will be able to better understand the relationship of Christ to his daily life.

The Proper Attitude Towards Prayer

If man's actions are to change his attitudes must also change, since attitudes are the settled patterns of behavior or conduct of the individual. People who deny the power of prayer or see no value in prayer lack the proper attitude towards prayer and therefore may not pray with the proper attitude.
The attitude we maintain towards prayer will determine whether or not we pray and the answers we will receive. There is a definite attitude which should be cultivated by all who seek the Lord in Prayer. It is this attitude that the following references speak of:

1. *I Ne. 7:17* Nephi I . . . I prayed unto the Lord, saying: O Lord, according to my faith which is in thee, wilt thou deliver me from the hands of my brethren; . . .

2. *I Ne. 11:1* Nephi I . . . believing that the Lord was able to make them known unto me, . . .

3. *I Ne. 15:11* Nephi I . . . If ye will not harden your hearts, and ask me in faith, believing that ye shall receive, with diligence in keeping my commandments, surely these things shall be made known unto you.

4. *II Ne. 4:35* Nephi I Yea, I know that God will give liberally to him that asketh. Yea, my God will give me if I ask not amiss; . . .

5. *II Ne. 26:15* Nephi I . . . the prayers of the faithful shall be heard, . . .

6. *II Ne. 32:8* Nephi I . . . For if ye would hearken unto the Spirit which teacheth a man to pray ye would know that ye must pray; . . .

7. *II Ne. 33:3* Nephi I . . . and I cry unto my God in faith, and I know that he will hear my cry.

8. *Jacob 3:1* Jacob . . . Look unto God with firmness of mind, and pray unto him with exceeding faith, and he will console you in your afflictions, and he will plead your cause, . . .

9. *Enos Vs. 4* Enos And my soul hungered; and I kneeled down before my Maker, and I cried unto him in mighty prayer . . .

10. *Enos Vs. 12* Enos . . . after I had prayed and labored with all diligence, the Lord said unto me: I will grant unto thee according to thy desires, because of thy faith.

11. *Enos Vs. 15* Enos . . . Whatsoever thing ye shall ask in faith, believing that ye shall receive in the name of Christ, ye shall receive it.
12. Enos 18:15
And the Lord said unto me: ... it shall be done unto them [Prophets before Enos] according to their faith; for their faith was like unto thine.

13. Mosiah 4:3
... the Spirit of the Lord came upon them, ... because of the exceeding faith which they had in Jesus Christ who should come, ...

14. Mosiah 4:11
... I would that ye should remember, and always retain in remembrance, the greatness of God, and your own nothingness, and his goodness and long suffering towards you, unworthy creatures, and humble yourselves even in the depths of humility, calling on the name of the Lord daily, ...

15. Mosiah 4:21
And now, if God, ... doeth grant unto you whatsoever ye ask that is right in faith, believing that ye shall receive, ...

16. Mosiah 21:14
And they did humble themselves even in the depths of humility; and they did cry mightily to God; ...

17. Mosiah 27:14
And again, the angel said: Behold, the Lord hath heard the prayers of his people, and also the prayers of his servant, Alma, who is thy father; for he has prayed with much faith concerning thee that thou mightest be brought to the knowledge of the truth; therefore, for this purpose have I come to convince thee of power and authority of God, that the prayers of his servants might be answered according to their faith.

18. Alma 2:30
... Alma, being a man of God, being exercised with much faith, cried, saying: O Lord, have mercy and spare my life, that I may be an instrument in thy hands to save and preserve this people.

19. Alma 13:28
But that ye would humble yourselves before the Lord, and call on his holy name, and watch and pray ... 

20. Alma 14:26
And Alma cried saying: ... O Lord, give us strength according to our faith which is in Christ ...
21. Alma 15:17 Alma's People ... the people were checked as to the pride of their hearts, and began to humble themselves before God, and began to assemble themselves together at their sanctuaries to worship God before the altar, watching and praying ...

22. Alma 17:9 Sons of Mosiah ... they fasted and prayed much that the Lord would grant unto them a portion of his Spirit to go with them, ... that they might be an instrument in the hands of God ...

23. Alma 26:22 Ammon Yea, he that repenteth and exerciseth faith, and bringeth forth good works and prayeth ... unto such it is given to know the mysteries of God; ...

24. Alma 31:38 Alma II And the Lord provided for them. ... Now this was according to the prayer of Alma; and this because he prayed in faith.

25. Alma 33:8 Zenos Yea, thou art merciful unto thy children when they cry unto thee, to be heard of thee and not of men, and thou wilt hear them.

26. Alma 33:11 Zenos And thou didst hear me because of mine afflictions and my sincerity; and it is because of thy Son that thou hast been thus merciful unto me, ...

27. Alma 34:19 Amulek Yea, humble yourselves, and continue in prayer unto him.

28. III Ne. 13:5 Jesus Christ And when thou prayest thou shalt not do as the hypocrites, for they love to pray, standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward.

29. III Ne. 13:7 Jesus Christ But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen, for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.

30. III Ne. 18:20 Jesus Christ And whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, which is right, believing that ye shall receive, behold it shall be given unto you.
31. III Ne. 19:24 Nephite Twelve

... and they did not multiply many words, for it was given unto them what they should pray, and they were filled with desire.

32. Mormon 5:21 Mormon

And also the Lord will remember the prayers of the righteous, which have been put up unto him for them [Lamanites].

33. Mormon 9:21 Moroni II

Behold, I say unto you that whoso believeth in Christ, doubting nothing, whatsoever he shall ask the Father in the name of Christ it shall be granted him; and this promise is unto all, even unto the ends of the earth.

34. Mormon 9:27 Moroni II

O then despise not, and wonder not, but hearken unto the words of the Lord, and ask the Father in the name of Jesus for what things soever ye shall stand in need. Doubt not, but be believing, and begin as in times of old, and come unto the Lord with all your heart, ...

35. Mormon 9:37 Moroni II

And may the Lord Jesus Christ grant that their prayers may be answered according to their faith; ...

36. Ether 3:2 Brother of Jared

... O Lord, thou hast given us a commandment that we must call upon thee, that from thee we may receive according to our desires.

37. Ether 3:4-5 Brother of Jared

And I know, O Lord, that thou hast all power, and can do whatsoever thou wilt for the benefit of man; therefore touch these stones, O Lord, with thy finger, and prepare them that they may shine forth in darkness.

... Behold, O Lord, thou canst do this. ...

38. Ether 4:15 Jesus Christ

Behold, when ye shall rend that veil of unbelief ... --yea, when ye shall call upon the Father in my name, with a broken heart and a contrite spirit, then shall ye know that the Father hath remembered the covenant which he made unto your fathers, O house of Israel.
The attitude needed most and which is emphasized in the Book of Mormon is an attitude of faith. The faith which the Book of Mormon speaks of is faith in Jesus Christ. It is not the purpose of this thesis to present in detail what the Book of Mormon teaches concerning faith. Faith in Jesus Christ for this study is believing in the testimony of Jesus Christ, relying wholly on his merits, and our submitting to his will as revealed to us by the Holy Ghost. A person led by the Holy Ghost would be sincere in his prayers and feel a need to overcome sin and perfect his life. He would also recognize the mission of Christ and his indebtedness to him and would pray in an attitude of humility.

The attitude that should be cultivated in prayer is a complete faith in Jesus Christ and when properly understood one would realize it includes the items discussed in the previous references.

In teaching prayer the teacher should recognize a need to teach the following attitudes as expressed in the Book of Mormon:

1. Having faith in Jesus Christ—1, 3, 4, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 17, 18, 20, 23, 24, 35, 39 and 41.¹

¹All numbers refer back to the preceding list of references.
2. Believing that we will receive an answer--2, 3, 11, 15, 30, 33, 34, 37, and 39.

3. Desiring that which is good as directed by the spirit--4, 15, 22, 30, 34, 37, and 40.

4. Obedience towards all of God's commandments--3, 23, and 32.

5. Sincerity and real intent--25, 26, 28, 40, and 41.

6. Humility and repentance--14, 16, 19, 21, 22, 27, and 38.

7. Remembering that it is the Spirit that teacheth a man to pray and we should pray according to the Spirit--6, 29, and 31.

8. Being an instrument to further the work of God--18 and 22.


It is important as was previously expressed in the section entitled "Pray to the Father in the Name of Jesus Christ" that we recognize our nothingness and the need to humble ourselves and become teachable and submissive. We find expressed in the following references the need to kneel in prayer perhaps as an outward expression of our submissiveness to Christ and God. It seems as though our physical body becomes more subjected to our spiritual desires when we kneel in prayer.

1. Enos Vs. 4 Enos And my soul hungered, and I kneeled down before my Maker, and I cried unto him in mighty prayer . . .

2. Alma 19:14 Ammon . . . he fell upon his knees, and began to pour out his soul in prayer . . .

3. III Ne. 17:15 Jesus Christ . . . he himself also knelt upon the earth; and behold he prayed unto the Father, . . .

4. III Ne. 19:6 Nephite Twelve . . . they did cause that the multitude should kneel down upon the face of the earth, and should pray . . .

5. III Ne. 19:8 Nephite Twelve And when they had ministered those same words which Jesus had spoken-- . . . behold, they knelt again and prayed . . .
And it came to pass that he spake unto the multitude, and commanded them that they should kneel down again upon the earth, . . . when they had all knelt down . . . he commanded his disciples that they should pray.

Pray Always

The writer has been asked many times by his seminary students just how often do we need to pray? This is an important question and should be answered according to what the Lord has revealed.

The teacher and student can learn a great deal about how often one should pray by a careful examination of the following references which reveal how often the Book of Mormon people prayed and what their prophets taught.

1. I Ne. 18:3 Nephi I And I, Nephi, . . . did pray oft unto the Lord . . .
2. II Ne. 5:1 Nephi I Behold, . . . I, Nephi, did cry much unto the Lord . . .
3. II Ne. 9:52 Jacob Behold, . . . remember the words of your God; pray unto him continually by day, and give thanks unto his holy name by night . . .
4. II Ne. 32:9 Nephi I But behold, I say unto you that ye must pray always and not faint; that ye must not perform any thing unto the Lord save in the first place ye shall pray . . .
5. II Ne. 33:3 Nephi I . . . For I pray continually for them by day, and mine eyes water my pillow by night, . . .
6. Enos Vs. 4 Enos . . . all the day long did I cry unto him; yea, and when the night came I did still raise my voice high that it reached the heavens.
7. Enos Vs. 15 Enos . . . I cried unto him continually, for he had said unto me: Whatsoever thing ye shall ask in faith, believing that ye shall receive in the name of
And again I say unto you . . . humble yourselves even in the depths of humility, calling on the name of the Lord daily. . . .

And he commanded them that . . . every day they should give thanks to the Lord their God.

. . . and they did cry mightily to God; yea, even all the day long did they cry unto their God . . .

And they did admonish their brethren; . . . being commanded of God to pray without ceasing . . .

. . . after they had fasted and prayed for the space of two days and two nights, the limbs of Alma received their strength, . . .

. . . I have fasted and prayed many days that I might know these things of myself. . . . That they are true; . . .

Nevertheless the children of God were commanded that they should gather themselves together oft, and join in fasting and mighty prayer . . .

call on his holy name, and watch and pray continually, . . .

. . . watching and praying continually, . . .

. . . and they fasted much and prayed much . . .

. . . and prayeth continually without ceasing—. . .

. . . and a time of much fasting and prayer.

. . . after the days of fasting, and mourning, and prayer; . . .

Neither would they observe the performances of the church, to continue
22. Alma 34:19 Amulek  in prayer and supplication to God daily...

23. Alma 34:21 Amulek  ... continue in prayer unto him.

24. Alma 34:27 Amulek  Cry unto him ... both morning, midday, and evening.

25. Alma 34:39 Amulek  Yea, and when you do not cry unto the Lord, let your hearts be full, drawn out in prayer unto him continually for your welfare, ...

26. Alma 37:36-37 Alma II  Yea, and I also exhort you, my brethren, that ye be watchful unto prayer continually, ...

27. Alma 45:1 Nephites  ... and they did fast much, and pray much, ...

28. Alma 62:51 Nephites  And they did pray unto the Lord their God continually, ...

29. He. 3:35 Nephites  ... they did fast and pray oft, ...

30. III Ne. 1:12 Nephi III  ... he cried mightily unto the Lord, all the day; ...

31. III Ne. 18:15 Jesus Christ  Verily, Verily, I say unto you, ye must watch and pray always, ...

32. III Ne. 18:18 Jesus Christ  I say unto you, ... ye must watch and pray always ...

33. III Ne. 19:24 Nephite Twelve  ... they did still continue, without ceasing, to pray unto him; and they did not multiply many words, for it was
given unto them what they should pray; . . .

34. III Ne. 20:1 Jesus Christ . . . he commanded the multitude that they should cease to pray, and also his disciples. And he commanded them that they should not cease to pray in their hearts.

35. IV Ne. Vs. 12 Nephites . . . they did walk after the commandments which they had received from their Lord . . . continuing in fasting and prayer, and in meeting together oft both to pray and to hear the word of the Lord.

36. Ether 1:43 Brother of Jared . . . thus I [Jesus Christ] will do unto thee because this long time ye have cried unto me.

37. Ether 2:14, 15 Jesus Christ and Brother of Jared And it came to pass at the end of four years that the Lord came again unto the brother of Jared, and stood in a cloud and talked with him. And for the space of three hours did the Lord talk with the brother of Jared, and chastened him because he remembered not to call upon the name of the Lord. And the brother of Jared repented of the evil which he had done, and did call upon the name of the Lord for his brethren who were with him. And the Lord said unto him: I will forgive thee and thy brethren of their sins; but thou shalt not sin any more, for ye shall remember that my spirit will not always strive with man . . .

38. Ether 6:9 Jaredites . . . they did sing praises unto the Lord; yea, the brother of Jared . . . did thank and praise the Lord all the day long, and when night came they did not cease to praise the Lord.

39. Moroni 6:4 Moroni II And after they had been received unto baptism, . . . their names were taken, that they might be remembered and nourished by the good word of God, . . . to keep them continually watchful unto prayer . . .

40. Moroni 6:5 Moroni II And the church did meet together oft, to fast and to pray, . . .
41. Moroni 8:3  Mormon  I am mindful of you always in my prayers, continually praying ...

The above references reveal that the word continual or a form of this word is used 15 times; oft, 5 times; much, 4 times; by day, all the day long, every day, many days, days of, and daily, 12 times; by night, when the night came, and nights, 4 times; always, 3 times; without ceasing, should not cease, and did not cease, 5 times; and long time, 1 time. The witness of the Book of Mormon is that we should never cease to pray.

An objection to the teaching that we should never cease to pray may be that it is not possible. How can we possibly pray continually to God when he has said we are not to use vain repetitions? The Book of Mormon explains how one can pray and not use vain repetitions when it states that the Nephite Twelve "did not multiply many words, for it was given unto them what they should pray" (33). In other words they prayed under the direction of the Holy Ghost. Christ, in commanding the multitude to cease praying vocally, gave a very significant commandment to them when he said, "they should not cease to pray in their hearts" (34). What does it mean to pray in one's heart? The writer feels that it means for a person to so order his life under the direction of the Spirit that his thoughts are always lifted towards God and are expressions of thanks for what he has been given. A person who prays in his heart is also one who is listening and waiting for direction by the Holy Ghost. God certainly doesn't expect us to be praying vocally continuously, but he would like us to be thinking and living with the realization that Christ is standing at our side waiting to help us.

Man cannot serve two masters and the one to whom he dedicates his thoughts is the one whom he will serve. Reference 26, of the preceding

1 III Ne. 13:7.
list of scriptures, points out that if one were living as he should he would pray constantly, and indicates that to pray always means to let all his thoughts be directed unto the Lord at all times concerning every phase of his life. The Lord knows the thoughts of our hearts and will reward them.¹

One of the most important accounts bearing testimony of the need for continual communication with God is number 37. The writer is not aware of any other account where Jesus Christ himself has chastened a person, so severely, for not calling upon the name of the Lord in prayer. It should be remembered that Jesus Christ himself carried on a conversation with the brother of Jared for three hours during which time it was made plain to him concerning the need of frequent personal communication with God. The lesson taught is that Jesus desires us to seek his counsel diligently and unceasingly. Few people live close enough to the Lord to be given a special reminder when they fail to pray as frequently as they should; therefore, this experience of the brother of Jared should be remembered. We should remember that the Lord has made it very plain that prayer should be the constant thought of those who live by the Spirit, and that never a day should pass without a vocal prayer being offered.

The concept that we should pray always is mentioned throughout the Book of Mormon. It is important that students understand what it means to pray always as well as in times of great need.

The Place of Prayer

The writer feels the Book of Mormon makes an important contribu-
tion in pointing out that God can and does hear our prayers regardless

¹Mosiah 24:12.
of where we may be. Most of what has been written on this subject in the Book of Mormon resulted from the conditions found by Alma among the apostate Zoramites. The Zoramite people had fallen into a state of apostasy and were teaching that a written prayer was to be offered one day of the week upon their holy stand called Rameumptom.

The poor people had been cast out of the Zoramite places of worship; therefore, they felt that they couldn't pray to God, since they did not have access to their religious buildings and the Rameumptom. It was at this time that Alma and Amulek took the opportunity to teach the Zoramites as well as all readers of the Book of Mormon that it does not matter where one might be when he prays.

The Book of Mormon explains the place of prayer as follows:

1. Mosiah 24:12 Alma's People

And Alma and his people did not raise their voices to the Lord their God, but did pour out their hearts to him; and he did know the thoughts of their hearts.

2. Alma 33:4 Zenos

... O God, for thou hast heard my prayer even when I was in the wilderness;...

3. Alma 33:5 Zenos

Yea, O God, and thou wast merciful unto me when I did cry unto thee in my field; when I did cry unto thee in my prayer, and thou didst hear me.

4. Alma 33:6 Zenos

And again, O God, when I did turn to my house thou didst hear me in my prayer.

5. Alma 33:7 Zenos

And when I did turn unto my closet, O Lord, and prayed unto thee, thou didst hear me.

6. Alma 33:9 Zenos

Yea, O God, thou hast been merciful unto me, and heard my cries in the midst of thy congregations.

7. Alma 34:20 Amulek

Cry unto him when ye are in your fields, ...

8. Alma 34:21 Amulek

Cry unto him in your houses ...
The above references teach that answers to prayers are not dependent upon where one is when he prays. In fact, the teaching of the Book of Mormon is that it would be wrong for us to pray only at church. We must pray in secret, in the wilderness, in our homes, and in our fields, meaning wherever we may be. Prayer is not to be participated in vocally during only one day a week but many times and in various places.

Satan would greatly reduce the power of prayer in our lives if he could convince us that the church is the only place where we can pray and expect an answer.

Alma and his people were forbidden to pray vocally to the Lord, but despite this fact they still prayed silently in their hearts and God did hear them, as pointed out in reference 1.

It is a wonderful thing to know that God does hear our prayers whether they are vocal or silent regardless of where we may be.

**Formal Written Prayers**

One can find in the many churches of our day many written and formal prayers which are to be given at specified times by the individual.

The Book of Mormon in no way supports the concept that formal written prayers should be repeated, but rather that prayer is an individual matter. As mentioned previously the Zoramites had a prayer which was
repeated one day a week which was as follows:

Holy, holy God; we believe that thou art God, and we believe that thou art holy, and that thou wast a spirit, and that thou art a spirit, and that thou wilt be a spirit forever.

Holy God, we believe that thou hast separated us from our brethren; and we do not believe in the tradition of our brethren, which was handed down to them by the childishness of their fathers; but we believe that thou hast elected us to be thy holy children; and also thou hast made it known unto us that there shall be no Christ.

But thou art the same yesterday, today, and forever; and thou hast elected us that we shall be saved, whilst all around us are elected to be cast by thy wrath down to hell; for the which holiness, O God, we thank thee; and we also thank thee that thou hast elected us, that we may not be led away after the foolish traditions of our brethren, which doth bind them down to a belief of Christ, which doth lead their hearts to wander far from thee, our God.

And again we thank thee, O God, that we are a chosen and a holy people. Amen.¹

One can observe from the words of this prayer that the Zoramites had apostatized from the truthfulness of the gospel and the order of prayer. This prayer expresses an idea common in the world today that God is and will be a spirit forever. Even more serious than this corrupt idea of God is that they were converted that there was to be no Christ. Something that we need to be aware of in our prayers is pointed out in this Zoramite prayer. Upon careful examination we find expressed in this prayer an attitude of pride, of boasting, a lack of humility, and a lack of personal interest in our brother or those around us, all of which are attitudes we should avoid in our prayers. In praying we should be expressive and interested in everyone and not express a feeling of superiority or only interest in self.

The failure of the Book of Mormon to record any approved written prayers indicates to the writer that prayers written for the purpose of being repeated by different people are not acceptable and are not to be used.

¹Alma 31:15-18.
CHAPTER III

WHY PEOPLE PRAY AND FOR WHAT

Experience is a great teacher and the scriptures have been prepared for us that we may profit from the spiritual experiences of others. Certainly the experiences of others as related to prayer become a valuable tool in bringing students to an understanding of why people pray and what they can and should pray for. God is interested in helping us in all phases of our lives as shown by the prayers of the people in the Book of Mormon.

The Book of Mormon in the following references answers the questions as to why people pray and for what:

1. I Ne. 1:5 Lehi ... Lehi, ... prayed unto the Lord ... in behalf of his people.

2. I Ne. 2:16 Nephi I ... and also having great desires to know of the mysteries of God, wherefore I did cry unto the Lord; ...

3. I Ne. 2:18 Nephi I ... being grieved because of the hardness of their hearts I cried unto the Lord for them [Laman and Lemuel].

4. I Ne. 7:17 Nephi I But it came to pass that I prayed unto the Lord saying: ... wilt thou deliver me from the hands of my brethren; yea, even give me strength that I may burst these bands with which I am bound.

5. I Ne. 11:1 Nephi I ... I had desired to know the things my father had seen ... .

6. I Ne. 15:3 Nephi I For he [Lehi] truly spake many great things unto them, which were hard to be understood save a man should inquire of the Lord; ...
... And I said unto my father: Whither shall I go to obtain food? And it came to pass that he [Lehi] did inquire of the Lord, ...

... I did return to our tents, bearing the beasts which I had slain; ... they did humble themselves before the Lord, and did give thanks unto him.

... the voice of the Lord came unto me saying; Arise and get thee into the mountain. ...

... neither did I build the ship after the manner of man; but I did build it after the manner which the Lord had shown unto me; ...

... I, Nephi, did cry much unto the Lord my God, because of the anger of my brethren.

But I, Nephi have written what I have written, and I esteem it as of great worth, and especially unto my people. For I pray continually for them by day, ...

And my soul hungered; ... I cried ... for mine own soul ...

... I began to feel a desire for the welfare of my brethren, the Nephites; wherefore I did pour out my whole soul unto God for them.

... and I prayed unto him ... for my brethren, the Lamanites ... I will grant unto thee according to thy desires, ... This was the desire which I desired of him—that if it should so be, that my people the Nephites, should fall into transgression, and by any means be destroyed, and the Lamanites should not be destroyed, that the Lord God would preserve a record of my people, the Nephites; even if it so be by the power of his holy arm, that it might be brought forth at some future day unto the Lamanites, that, perhaps, they might be brought unto salvation—
16. Enos Vs. 16 Enos
And I had faith, and I did cry unto God that he would preserve the records ...

17. Words of Mormon Vs. 11 Mormon
And they [records] were handed down from king Benjamin. ... And I, Mormon, pray to God that they may be preserved from this time henceforth. And I know that they will be preserved; ...

18. Mosiah 9:17 Zeniff
... for I and my people did cry mightily to the Lord that he would deliver us out of the hands of our enemies: ...

19. Mosiah 21:14 Limhi's People
... and they did cry mightily to God; yea, even all the day long did they cry unto their God that he would deliver them out of their afflictions.

20. Mosiah 23:28 Alma's People
... and began to cry unto the Lord that he would soften the hearts of the Lamanites, that they would spare them, ...

21. Mosiah 24:10 Alma's People
... so great were their afflictions that they began to cry mightily to God.

22. Mosiah 24:21 Alma's People
Yea, and in the valley of Alma they poured out their thanks to God because he had been merciful unto them, ...

23. Mosiah 24:22 Alma's People
And they gave thanks to God, yea, all their men and all their women and all their children that could speak lifted their voices in the praises of their God.

24. Mosiah 26:13 Alma I
... and he went and inquired of the Lord what he should do concerning this matter for he feared he should do wrong in the sight of God.

25. Mosiah 27:14 Alma I
... the Lord hath heard the prayers of his people, and also the prayers of his servant, Alma, who is thy father; for he has prayed with much faith concerning thee [Alma II] that thou might-est be brought to a knowledge of the truth, ...

26. Mosiah 28:6 Mosiah II
And king Mosiah went and inquired of the Lord if he should let his sons go
up among the Lamanites to preach the
word of God.

27. Alma 2:28 Nephites... having prayed... that he
would deliver them out of the
hands of their enemies, ...

28. Alma 2:30 Alma II... cried saying: O Lord, have mercy
and spare my life, that I may be an
instrument in thy hands to save and
preserve this people.

29. Alma 5:46 Alma II... Behold I have fasted and prayed
many days that I might know these
things of myself...

30. Alma 8:10 Alma II Nevertheless Alma labored much in the
spirit, wrestling with God in mighty
prayer, that he would pour out his
spirit upon the people who were in the
city; that he would also grant that he
might baptize them unto repentance.

31. Alma 14:26 Alma II And Alma cried saying... give us
strength... even unto deliverance...

32. Alma 15:10 Alma II And then Alma cried unto the Lord,
saying: O Lord our God have mercy
on this man, and heal him...

33. Alma 15:17 Alma's People... watching and praying continually,
that they might be delivered from Satan,
and from death, and from destruction--

34. Alma 16:5, 6 Zoram... desired of him [Alma II] to know
whether the Lord would that they
should go... in search of their
brethren, who had been taken captive
by the Lamanites... Alma inquired
of the Lord concerning the matter...

35. Alma 17:9 Sons of Mosiah... they fasted much and prayed much
that the Lord would grant unto them a
portion of his Spirit to go with them,
... that they might be an instru-
ment in the hands of God to bring, if
it were possible, ... the Lamanites,
to the knowledge of the truth...

36. Alma 18:41 Lamoni... have mercy; according to thy
abundant mercy which thou hast had upon
the people of Nephi, have upon me,
and my people.
37. Alma 19:29 Lamoni's Wife...

38. Alma 24:21 People of Anti-Nephi-Lehi...

39. Alma 27:7 Ammon And Ammon said: I will go and inquire of the Lord, and if he say unto us, go down unto our brethren, will ye go?

40. Alma 28:6 People of Nephi And now surely this was a sorrowful day; yea, a time of solemnity, and a time of much fasting and prayer.

41. Alma 30:2 Nephites...

42. Alma 30:54 Korihor...

43. Alma 31:30-35 Alma II 0 Lord God, how long wilt thou suffer that such wickedness and iniquity shall be among this people? O Lord, wilt thou give me strength, that I may bear with mine infirmities. For I am infirm, and such wickedness among this people doth pain my soul. O Lord, my heart is exceeding sorrowful; wilt thou comfort my soul in Christ. O Lord, wilt thou grant unto me that I may have strength, that I may suffer with patience these afflictions which shall come upon me, because of the iniquity of this people. O Lord, wilt thou comfort my soul, and give unto me success, and also my fellow laborers who are with me—yea, Ammon, and Aaron, and Omner, and also Amulek and Zeesrom and also my two sons—yea, even all these wilt thou comfort, O Lord. Yea, wilt thou comfort their souls in Christ. Wilt thou grant unto them that they may have...
strength, that they may bear their afflictions which shall come upon them because of the iniquities of this people. O Lord, wilt thou grant unto us that we may have success in bringing them again unto thee in Christ. Behold, O Lord, their souls are precious, and many of them are our brethren; therefore, give unto us, O Lord, power and wisdom that we may bring these, our brethren, again unto thee.

44. Alma 33:4 Zenos ... when I prayed concerning those who were mine enemies, and thou didst turn them to me.

45. Alma 33:11 Zenos ... I will cry unto thee in all mine afflictions, for in thee is my joy; ...

46. Alma 38:8 Alma II And it came to pass that I ... was in the most bitter pain and anguish of soul; ... I did cry unto the Lord Jesus Christ for mercy, ...

47. Alma 43:23 Moroni I ... sent certain men unto him [Alma II], desiring him that he should inquire of the Lord whither the armies of the Nephites should go to defend themselves against the Lamanites.

48. Alma 43:49 Nephites ... they cried with one voice unto the Lord their God, for their liberty and their freedom from bondage.

49. Alma 45:1 Nephites ... because the Lord had again delivered them out of the hands of their enemies; therefore they gave thanks unto the Lord their God; ...

50. Alma 46:13 Moroni I ... he prayed ... for the blessings of liberty to rest upon his brethren.

51. Alma 46:16 Moroni I ... Moroni prayed that the cause of the Christians, and the freedom of the land might be favored.

52. He. 7:7 Nephi II Oh that I could have had my days in the days when my father Nephi first came out of the land of Jerusalem, ... then were his people easy to be entreated, firm to keep the commandments
of God and slow to be led to do iniquity; . . . quick to hearken unto the . . . Lord.

53. He. 11:4  Nephi II  . . . do not suffer that this people shall be destroyed . . . rather let there be a famine in the land, to stir them up in remembrance of the Lord . . .

54. He. 11:10-16  Nephi II  Oh Lord, behold this people repenteth; . . . wilt thou turn away thine anger, . . . cause that this famine may cease in this land. . . . Send forth rain . . . hearken unto my words, for thou saidst that: if this people repent I will spare them. . . . They have repented, . . . try again if they will serve thee . . .

55. He. 13:39  Samuel  . . . I pray that the anger of the Lord be turned away from you, and that you would repent and be saved.

56. III Ne. 1:11  Nephi III  . . . cried mightily to his God in behalf of his people, yea, those who were about to be destroyed because of their faith in the tradition of their fathers.

57. III Ne. 3:12  Lachoneus  . . . he did cause that his people should cry unto the Lord for strength against the time that the robbers should come down against them.

58. III Ne. 3:25  Nephites  . . . they did put up their prayers . . . that he would deliver them in the time that their enemies should come down against them to battle.

59. III Ne. 4:8  Nephites  . . . did lift their cries to the Lord . . . that he would spare them and deliver them out of the hands of their enemies.

60. III Ne. 4:10  Nephites  . . . they did fear their God and did supplicate him for protection; . . .

61. III Ne. 4:31  Nephites  . . . they did break forth . . . singing, and praising their God for the great thing which he had done for them, in preserving them from falling into the hands of their enemies.

62. III Ne. 17:21  Jesus  . . . and he took their little children,
one by one, and blessed them, and prayed unto the Father for them.

63. III Ne. 19:9 Nephite Twelve

And they did pray for that which they most desired; and they desired that the Holy Ghost should be given unto them.

64. III Ne. 19:24 Nephite Twelve

... they did not multiply many words, for it was given unto them what they should pray ...

65. Mormon 8:25 Moroni II

And behold, their prayers were also in behalf of him [Joseph Smith] that the Lord should suffer to bring these things forth.

66. Mormon 9:6 Moroni II

... ye unbelieving, ... cry mightily unto the Father ... that perhaps ye may be found spotless, pure, fair, and white, having been cleansed ...

67. Mormon 9:36 Moroni II

And behold, these things which we have desired concerning our brethren, yea, even their restoration to the knowledge of Christ, are according to the prayers of all the saints who have dwelt in the land.

68. Ether 1:34, 35 Jared

And the brother of Jared being a large and mighty man, and a man highly favored of the Lord, Jared, his brother, said unto him: Cry unto the Lord, that he will not confound us that we may not understand our words ... The brother of Jared did cry unto the Lord, ...

69. Ether 1:36, 37 Jared

Then Jared said unto his brother: Cry again unto the Lord, and it may be that he will turn away his anger from them who are our friends, that he confound not their language ... The brother of Jared did cry unto the Lord, ...

70. Ether 1:38, 39 Jared

... Jared spake again unto his brother, saying: Go and inquire of the Lord whether he will drive us out of the land and, ... whither we shall go. ... The brother of Jared did cry unto the Lord according to that which had been spoken by the mouth of Jared.
71. Ether 2:18, 19 Brother of Jared ... the brother of Jared cried unto the Lord saying: ... I have made the barges according as thou hast directed me. ... In them there is no light; whither shall we steer? And also we shall perish, for in them we cannot breathe, save it is the air which is in them; ...

72. Ether 2:22 Brother of Jared And he cried again ... 0 Lord, behold I have done as thou hast commanded me; ... behold there is no light in them ... wilt thou suffer that we shall cross this great water in darkness?

73. Ether 3:3, 4 Brother of Jared ... turn away thine anger from this thy people, and suffer not that they shall go forth ... in darkness. ... And I know, Lord, that thou hast all power, ... therefore touch these stones, 0 Lord, with thy finger, and prepare them that they may shine forth in darkness; ... that we may have light while we shall cross the sea.

74. Ether 9:34 Jaredites ... when the people saw that they must perish they began to repent. ... and cry unto the Lord.

75. Ether 12:36 Moroni II ... I prayed ... that he would give unto the Gentiles grace, that they might have charity.

76. Moroni 6:5 Moroni II And the church did meet together oft, to fast and to pray, and to speak one with another concerning the welfare of their souls.

77. Moroni 8:3 Mormon I am ... continually praying unto God ... that he ... will keep you through the endurance of faith on his name to the end.

78. Moroni 8:5, 7 Mormon For, ... there have been disputations among you concerning the baptism of your little children. ... After I had learned these things of you I inquired of the Lord ... 

79. Moroni 8:26 Mormon ... which comforter filleth with hope and perfect love, which love endureth by diligence unto prayer, ...
... I pray unto God that he will spare thy life, to witness the return of his people unto him.

The foregoing references reveal that prayers were or should be offered for:

2. Deliverance from enemies—18, 19, 20, 21, 27, 31, 34, 38, 39, 44, 47, 48, 50, 51, 57, 58, 59, and 60.
3. Personal protection, strength, guidance, and welfare—4, 7, 10, 11, 13, 24, 26, 28, 31, 39, 43, 66, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, and 76.
4. A knowledge of the things of God—2, 5, 6, 13, 25, 29, 35, and 78.
5. Offering thanks—8, 22, 23, 49, and 61.
7. Comfort in sorrow—40, 41, 43, 45, 46, and 52.
9. Healing—32 and 42.
10. Overcoming Satan and temptation—33.

The testimony of the Book of Mormon is that not only can we pray about many things, but that the Lord expects us to pray about many things; and that we can and will receive answers and assistance as a result of prayer.

Since we live in a world of rapid scientific progress, man generally is feeling more self sufficient and less dependent upon God. Man is still dependent upon God and the writer feels these references should be helpful to the teacher in pointing out to students areas where man is dependent upon God.

Admonitions to Pray

The purpose of this section is to bring together the admonitions
in the Book of Mormon to pray that we may be able to see the approach used by Jesus Christ and the prophets and leaders in teaching their people the necessity of prayer. It is hoped this may help all teachers in their efforts to convince their students of the need to pray.

The following admonitions have been selected:

1. II Ne. 9:52 Jacob
   Behold, my beloved brethren, remember the words of your God; pray unto him continually by day, and give thanks unto his holy name by night. Let your hearts rejoice.

2. II Ne. 32:4 Nephi I
   Wherefore, now after I have spoken these words, if ye cannot understand them it will be because ye ask not, neither do ye knock; therefore, ye are brought into the light, but must perish in the dark.

3. II Ne. 32:8, 9 Nephi I
   And now, my beloved brethren, I perceive that ye ponder still in your hearts; and it grieveth me that I must speak concerning this thing. For if ye would hearken unto the Spirit which teacheth a man to pray ye would know that ye must pray; for the evil spirit teacheth not a man to pray, but teacheth him that he must not pray.
   But behold, I say unto you that ye must pray always, and not faint; that ye must not perform any thing unto the Lord save in the first place ye shall pray unto the Father in the name of Christ, that he will consecrate thy performance unto thee, that thy performance may be for the welfare of thy soul.

4. Jacob 3:1 Jacob
   But behold, I, Jacob, would speak unto you that are pure in heart. Look unto God with firmness of mind, and pray unto him with exceeding faith, and he will console you in your afflictions, and he will plead your cause, and send down justice upon those who seek your destruction.

5. Jacob 4:10 Jacob
   Wherefore, brethren, seek not to counsel the Lord, but to take counsel from his hand. For behold, ye
yourselves know that he counseleth in wisdom, and in justice, and in great mercy, over all his works.

6. Mosiah 4:10 Benjamin And again, believe that ye must repent of your sins and forsake them, and humble yourselves before God; and ask in sincerity of heart that he would forgive you; and now, if you believe all these things see that ye do them.

7. Mosiah 11:25 Abinadi And except they repent in sackcloth and ashes, and cry mightily to the Lord their God, I will not hear their prayers. neither will I deliver them out of their afflictions; and thus saith the Lord, and thus hath he commanded me.

8. Mosiah 18:23 Alma I And he commanded them that they should observe the sabbath day, and keep it holy, and also every day they should give thanks to the Lord their God.

9. Mosiah 26:39 Alma I and Companions And they did admonish their brethren; and they were also admonished, every one by the word of God, according to his sins, or to the sins which he had committed, being commanded of God to pray without ceasing, and to give thanks in all things.

10. Alma 6:6 Alma II Nevertheless the children of God were commanded that they should gather themselves together oft, and join in fasting and mighty prayer in behalf of the welfare of the souls of those who knew not God.

11. Alma 7:23 Alma II And now I would that ye should be humble, and be submissive and gentle; easy to be entreated; full of patience and long-suffering; being temperate in all things; being diligent in keeping the commandments of God at all times; asking for whatsoever things ye stand in need, both spiritual and temporal; always returning thanks unto God for whatsoever things ye do receive.

12. Alma 13:28 Alma II But that ye would humble yourselves before the Lord, and call on his holy name, and watch and pray continually, that ye may not be tempted above that
which ye can bear, and thus be led by the Holy Spirit, becoming humble, meek, submissive, patient, full of love and all long suffering;

Yea, he that repenteth and exerciseth faith, and bringeth forth good works, and prayeth continually without ceasing — unto such it is given to know the mysteries of God; yea, unto such it shall be given to reveal things which never have been revealed; yea, and it shall be given unto such to bring thousands of souls to repentance, even as it has been given unto us to bring these our brethren to repentance.

Neither would they observe the performances of the church, to continue in prayer and supplication to God daily, that they might not enter into temptation.

Yea, cry unto him for mercy; for he is mighty to save.
Yea, humble yourselves, and continue in prayer unto him.
Cry unto him when ye are in your fields, yea, over all your flocks.
Cry unto him in your houses, yea, over all your household, both morning, mid-day, and evening.
Yea, cry unto him against the power of your enemies.
Yea, cry unto him against the devil, who is an enemy to all righteousness.
Cry unto him over the crops of your fields, that ye may prosper in them.
Cry over the flocks of your fields, that they may increase.
But this is not all; ye must pour out your souls in your closets, and your secret places, and in your wilderness.

Yea, and I also exhort you, my brethren, that ye be watchful unto prayer continually, that ye may not be led away by the temptation of the devil, that he may not overpower you, that ye may not become his subjects at the last day; for behold, he rewardeth you no good thing.

O, remember, my son, and learn wisdom
in thy youth; yea, learn in thy youth to keep the commandments of God. Yea, and cry unto God for all thy support; yea, let all thy doings be unto the Lord, and whithersoever thou goest let it be in the Lord; yea, let thy thoughts be directed unto the Lord; yea, let the affections of thy heart be placed upon the Lord forever. Counsel with the Lord in all thy doings, and he will direct thee for good; yea, when thou liest down at night lie down unto the Lord, that he may watch over you in your sleep; and when thou risest in the morning let thy heart be full of thanks unto God; and if ye do these things, ye shall be lifted up at the last day.

18. III Ne. 12:44 Jesus Christ
But behold I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them who despitefully use you and persecute you;

19. III Ne. 13:9-13 Jesus Christ
After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

20. III Ne. 14:7-8 Jesus Christ
Ask, and it shall be given unto you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened.

21. III Ne. 17:3 Jesus Christ
Therefore, go ye unto your homes, and ponder upon the things which I have said, and ask of the Father, in my name, that ye may understand, and prepare your minds for the morrow, and I come unto you again.

22. III Ne. 18:15, 16 Jesus Christ
Verily, verily, I say unto you, ye must watch and pray always, lest ye be tempted by the devil, and ye be led away captive by him.
And as I have prayed among you even so shall ye pray in my church, among my people who do repent and are baptized in my name. Behold I am the light; I have set an example for you.

23. III Ne. 18:18 Jesus Christ

Behold, verily, verily, I say unto you, ye must watch and pray always lest ye enter into temptation; for Satan desireth to have you, that he may sift you as wheat.

24. III Ne. 18:21 Jesus Christ

Pray in your families unto the Father, always in my name, that your wives and your children may be blessed.

25. III Ne. 18:22-24 Jesus Christ

And behold, ye shall meet together oft; and ye shall not forbid any man from coming unto you when ye shall meet together, but suffer them that they may come unto you and forbid them not; But ye shall pray for them, and shall not cast them out; and if it so be that they come unto you oft ye shall pray for them unto the Father, in my name.

Therefore, hold up your light that it may shine unto the world. Behold I am the light which ye shall hold up—that which ye have seen me do. Behold ye see that I have prayed unto the Father, and ye all have witnessed.

26. III Ne. 19:16, 17 Jesus Christ

And it came to pass that he spake unto the multitude, and commanded them that they should kneel down again upon the earth, and also that his disciples should kneel down upon the earth. And it came to pass that when they had all knelt down upon the earth, he commanded his disciples that they should pray.

27. III Ne. 20:1 Jesus Christ

And it came to pass that he commanded the multitude that they should cease to pray, and also his disciples. And he commanded them that they should not cease to pray in their hearts.

28. Mormon 9:6 Moroni II

O then ye unbelieving, turn ye unto the Lord; cry mightily unto the Father in the name of Jesus, that perhaps ye may be found spotless, pure, fair, and white, having been cleansed by the
blood of the Lamb, at that great and last day.

29. Mormon 9:27, Moroni II 28

O then despise not, and wonder not, but hearken unto the words of the Lord, and ask the Father in the name of Jesus for what things soever ye shall stand in need. Doubt not, but be believing, and begin as in times of old, and come unto the Lord with all your heart, and work out your own salvation with fear and trembling before him.

Be wise in the days of your probation; strip yourselves of all uncleanness; ask not, that ye may consume it on your lusts, but ask with a firmness unshaken, that ye will yield to no temptation, but that ye will serve the true and living God.

30. Moroni 2:2 Jesus Christ

And he called them by name, saying:
Ye shall call on the Father in my name, in mighty prayer; and after ye have done this ye shall have power that to him upon whom ye shall lay your hands, ye shall give the Holy Ghost; and in my name shall ye give it, for thus do mine apostles.

31. Moroni 7:26 Mormon

And after that he came men also were saved by faith in his name; and by faith, they become the sons of God. And as sure as Christ liveth he spake these words unto our fathers, saying: Whatsoever thing ye shall ask the Father in my name, which is good, in faith believing that ye shall receive, behold, it shall be done unto you.

32. Moroni 7:48 Mormon

Wherefore, my beloved brethren, pray unto the Father with all the energy of heart, that ye may be filled with this love, which he hath bestowed upon all who are true followers of his Son, Jesus Christ; that ye may become the sons of God; that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is; that we may have this hope; that we may be purified even as he is pure. Amen.

33. Moroni 8:28 Moroni II

Pray for them, my son, that repentance may come unto them. But behold I fear lest the Spirit hath ceased striving
with them; and in this part of the
land they are also seeking to put down
all power and authority which cometh
from God; and they are denying the
Holy Ghost.

34. Moroni 10:4 Moroni II And when ye shall receive these things,
I would exhort you that ye would ask
God, the Eternal Father, in the name of
Christ, if these things are not true;
and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart,
with real intent, having faith in Christ,
he will manifest the truth of it unto
you, by the power of the Holy Ghost.

The Lord in giving unto us the commandment that we should pray
did not do so without a promise. People are not prone to do things unless
they have some idea as to the possible result. It is not enough to pray
just because it is a commandment. It seems to the writer that the Lord
wants us to understand why it is a commandment to pray or put another way,
why it is necessary to pray. Prayer does not become meaningful just because
it is a commandment and we obey it. Prayer becomes meaningful as we
experience the results of it in our lives.

The foregoing list of references, besides establishing the fact
that God has commanded us to pray, establishes the following reasons for
praying that we may:

1. Overcome Satan and temptation—12, 14, 15, 16, 19, 22, 23, and 29.
2. Come unto repentance and obtain forgiveness of sin—6, 15, 19, 28,
   32, and 33.
3. Obtain wise counsel, understanding, and comfort—2, 3, 4, 5, 13,
   20, 21, and 34.
4. Receive what we need for our temporal and spiritual welfare—3, 4,
   7, 11, 12, 15, 17, 20, and 29.
5. Recognize the source of all blessings and give thanks for them—
   1, 8, 9, 11, and 17.
6. Become conscious of the needs of others—10, 18, and 25.
CHAPTER IV

WORDS THAT EXPRESS A PRAYER WAS OFFERED

In the Book of Mormon it is apparent that there is more than the word prayer, or a form of this word, used to convey to the reader the idea that a prayer was offered to God. The various expressions or words used are interesting and the writer feels in many cases much more expressive and helpful in conveying to the reader the sincerity and intent of the person praying.

As the writer thinks of his past prayers and discussions he has heard on the subject of prayer, it indicates to him that there seems to be a tendency to often pray out of habit and not with real feeling and sincerity of heart. It will be seen from the following references that some words and expressions used convey that a prayer was offered with more intense feeling, spirit, and sincerity.

1. I Ne. 1:5 Lehi ... as he went forth prayed unto the Lord, yea, even with all his heart, ...

2. I Ne. 2:16 Nephi I ... I did cry unto the Lord; ...

3. I Ne. 2:18 Nephi I ... I cried unto the Lord for them.

4. I Ne. 7:17 Nephi I ... I prayed unto the Lord, saying: ...

5. I Ne. 16:24 Lehi ... he did inquire of the Lord, ...

6. I Ne. 17:7 Nephi I ... I arose and went up into a mountain, and cried unto the Lord.

7. I Ne. 18:3 Nephi I ... and I did pray oft unto the Lord; ...
8. I Ne. 18:16  Nephi I  
... I did look unto my God, and I did praise him all the day long; ... 

9. I Ne. 18:21  Nephi I  
... I prayed unto the Lord; ... 

10. II Ne. 4:24  Nephi I  
And by day have I waxed bold in mighty prayer ... 

11. II Ne. 4:35  Nephi I  
... I will lift up my voice unto thee; yea, I will cry unto thee, my God. ... Behold, my voice shall forever ascend up unto thee, ... 

12. II Ne. 5:1  Nephi I  
... I, Nephi, did cry much unto the Lord ... 

13. Jacob 2:11  Jacob  
... as I inquired of the Lord, ... 

14. Enos Vs. 4  Enos  
And my soul hungered; and I kneeled down before my Maker, and I cried unto him in mighty prayer and supplication for mine own soul; and all the day long did I cry unto him; yea, and when the night came I did still raise my voice high that it reached the heavens. 

15. Enos Vs. 9  Enos  
... I did pour out my whole soul unto God ... 

16. Enos Vs. 10  Enos  
And while I was thus struggling in the spirit, ... 

17. Enos Vs. 11  Enos  
... and I prayed unto him with many long strugglings ... 

18. Enos Vs. 12  Enos  
... I had prayed and labored with all diligence, ... 

19. Enos Vs. 15  Enos  
... I cried unto him continually, ... 

20. Enos Vs. 16  Enos  
... and I did cry unto God ... 

21. Mosiah 4:2  Benjamin  
... And they all cried aloud with one voice, ... 

22. Mosiah 9:17  Zeniff  
... for I and my people did cry mightily to the Lord ... 

23. Mosiah 21:14  Limhi's People  
And they did humble themselves even in the depths of humility; and they did cry mightily to God; yea, even all the day long ...
Therefore they hushed their fears, and began to cry unto the Lord . . .

... they began to cry mightily to God.

And Alma and his people did not raise their voices to the Lord their God, but did pour out their hearts to him; . . .

... they poured out their thanks to God . . .

... and he went and inquired of the Lord . . .

... after he had poured out his whole soul to God . . .

... for he has prayed with much faith . . .

... Mosiah went and inquired of the Lord . . .

... the Nephites . . . having prayed mightily to him . . .

... Alma, being a man of God, being exercised with much faith, cried saying; . . .

... Alma labored much in the spirit, wrestling with God in mighty prayer, . . .

And Alma cried saying: . . .

And Alma cried unto the Lord, saying: . . .

... the people . . . began to humble themselves before God, . . . watching and praying continually, that they might be delivered from Satan, and from death, and from destruction--

... Alma inquired of the Lord concerning the matter. . . .

And he began to cry unto the Lord, . . .
40. Alma 19:14  Ammon  he fell upon his knees, and began to pour out his soul in prayer and thanksgiving to God ...

41. Alma 19:15  Servants of Lamoni  they also began to cry unto God, ...

42. Alma 19:16  Servants of Lamoni  they did call on the name of the Lord, in their might, even until they had fallen to the earth, ...

43. Alma 19:29  Lamoni's Wife  stood upon her feet, and cried with a loud voice, saying: 0 blessed Jesus, ...

44. Alma 24:21  People of Anti-Nephi-Lehi  prostrated themselves before them to the earth, and began to call on the name of the Lord; ...

45. Alma 27:11  Ammon  Ammon went and inquired of the Lord, ...

46. Alma 31:26  Alma II  And he lifted up his voice to heaven, and cried saying ...

47. Alma 33:4  Zenos  thou hast heard my prayer, even when I was in the wilderness; ...

48. Alma 33:5  Zenos  thou wast merciful unto me when I did cry unto thee in my field; when I did cry unto thee in my prayer, ...

49. Alma 33:6  Zenos  when I did turn to my house thou didst hear me in prayer.

50. Alma 33:7  Zenos  I did turn unto my closet, and prayed unto thee, thou didst hear me.

51. Alma 33:9  Zenos  thou hast ... heard my cries in the midst of thy congregations.

52. Alma 33:10  Zenos  when I have been cast out and have been despised by thine enemies; yea, thou didst hear my cries, ...

53. Alma 38:8  Alma II  I did cry out unto the Lord ... I did cry unto him ...

54. Alma 43:49  Nephites  they cried with one voice unto the Lord their God, ...

55. Alma 45:1  Nephites  they gave thanks unto the Lord their God; ...
... and he bowed himself to the earth, and he prayed mightily unto his God.

... when he had poured out his soul to God.

And they did pray unto the Lord their God continually.

... his heart was swollen with sorrow within his breast; and he did exclaim in the agony of his soul.

... certain men passing by saw Nephi as he was pouring out his soul unto God upon the tower.

... did cry unto the Lord saying:

... when Nephi saw that the people had repented he cried again unto the Lord.

... and I pray that the anger of the Lord be turned away from you.

... he went out and bowed himself down upon the earth, and cried mightily to his God.

... he cried mightily unto the Lord, all the day.

... he did cause that his people should cry unto the Lord.

... they did put up their prayers unto the Lord.

... had all fallen to the earth, and did lift their cries to the Lord their God.

... they did break forth, all as one, in singing, and praising their God.

Yea, they did cry: Hosanna to the Most High God.

... he himself also knelt upon the earth; and behold he prayed unto the Father.
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And they did sing praises unto the Lord; ... he did thank and praise the Lord all the day long; and when the night came they did not cease to praise the Lord.

... and when they had set their feet upon ... the promised land they bowed themselves down upon the face of the land, and did humble themselves before the Lord, and did shed tears of joy ...

... I prayed unto the Lord ...

... I inquired of the Lord concerning the matter ...

The following words or expressions, in the opinion of the writer, indicate a prayer was offered to God:

431 "Cry--cries--cried"
29 "Pray--prayed--praying--prayer"2
8 "Pour--pours--pouring--poured ... soul--hearts--thanks"
9 "Kneel--knelt--kneeled--bowed ... down--upon the earth--to the earth--face of the land"
7 "Inquire--inquired"
3 "Call"
5 "Voice ... sent up--lift up--ascend--raise"
2 "Praise"
1 "Look ... God"
2 "In singing--in praising"
1 "Struggling in the Spirit"

1 This column of numbers indicates the approximate number of times these words or expressions are used in the Book of Mormon to indicate a prayer was offered.

2 This total does not include the 13 references where prayer and fasting are mentioned together nor does it include the several references to prayer where Jesus Christ prayed to the Father in III Nephi, chapters 17 and 19.
In order to emphasize the point that prayer should convey intense desires, faith, and feelings as well as express words, let us look again and see how the great men of the Book of Mormon prayed and how they recorded their ideas that prayer consisted of more than just mere words. The writer feels that in most cases when the word cry or a form of this word was used as expressive of prayer that it was used because it conveyed a more intense meaning and feeling than the word prayer.

We find that in references 10, 14, 22, 23, 25, 32, 34, 42, 56, 64, and 65 the words might, mighty or mightily are associated with prayer, meaning that the person or persons were praying with great force, conviction, energy, and earnestness, and certainly not merely expressing words to fulfill the commandment to pray.

The word pour is associated with references 15, 26, 27, 29, 40, 57, 61, and 79 indicating that their prayer was continual, complete, and that they prayed with all the energy they possessed.

References 1, 10, 11, 14, 17, 18, 30, 33 34, 67, and 78 contain other phrases which seem to indicate that prayer is more than the mere utterance of words. The writer feels that the testimonies of the Book of Mormon prophets are that contact with God is not as easy as turning on or off a tap, but that it is dependent upon whether or not we want to pray as they have prayed.

As one reads the descriptions given of the Book of Mormon people praying, it would seem to be an excellent opportunity to impress upon the student the concept of praying as expressed by Enos, when he said, "And my soul hungered; . . . and I cried unto him in mighty prayer" (14).
CHAPTER V

HOW ANSWERS TO PRAYER WERE GIVEN

How a person's prayer is answered is determined in part by what one prays for as well as how he prays. Let us examine how the Book of Mormon people received answers to their prayers:

1. I Ne. 1:6 Lehi ... as he prayed unto the Lord, there came a pillar of fire and dwelt upon a rock before him; and he saw and heard much; ...

2. I Ne. 2:16 Nephi I ... I did cry unto the Lord; and behold he [Jesus Christ] did visit me ...

3. I Ne. 2:19 Nephi I ... the Lord spake unto me, saying ...

4. I Ne. 7:18 Nephi I ... when I said these words, behold, the bands were loosed from off my hands and feet, and I stood before my brethren, ...

5. I Ne. 11:1, 2 Nephi I ... I was caught away in the Spirit of the Lord, yea, into an exceeding high mountain. ... And the Spirit said unto me: ...

6. I Ne. 11:8 Nephi I ... the Spirit said unto me: ...

7. I Ne. 11:11 Nephi I ... I knew it was the Spirit of the Lord; and he spake unto me as man speaketh with another.

8. I Ne. 11:13 Nephi I ... I looked and beheld the great city of Jerusalem, ... Nazareth; ... virgin, ... (This vision continues through I Nephi, chapter 14)

9. I Ne. 11:14 Nephi I ... an angel came down. ... and he said unto me: ... (This conversation with an angel continues through I Nephi, chapter 14)
10. I Ne. 16:25 Nephi I  ... the voice of the Lord came unto my father; ...

11. I Ne. 16:26 Nephi I  ... the voice of the Lord said unto him [Lehi]: Look upon the ball, and behold the things which are written.

12. I Ne. 17:8 Nephi I  ... the Lord spake unto me saying: ...

13. I Ne. 17:10 Nephi I  ... the Lord told me whither I should go ...

14. I Ne. 17:14 Nephi I  ... the Lord said also that: ...

15. I Ne. 18:3 Nephi I  ... I did pray oft unto the Lord; wherefore the Lord showed unto me great things.

16. I Ne. 18:21 Nephi I  ... after I had prayed the winds did cease, and the storm did cease, and there was a great calm.

17. II Ne. 4:24 Nephi I  ... I waxed bold in mighty prayer ...

18. II Ne. 4:25 Nephi I  ... upon the wings of his Spirit hath my body been carried. ... And mine eyes have beheld great things, ...

19. II Ne. 5:5 Nephi I  ... the Lord did warn me that I, Nephi, should depart from them and flee into the wilderness and all those who would go with me.

20. Jacob 2:11 Jacob  ... as I inquired of the Lord, thus came the word unto me, saying: ...

21. Enos Vs. 5, 6 Enos  And there came a voice unto me saying: Enos thy sins are forgiven thee, and thou shalt be blessed. And I, Enos, knew that God could not lie, wherefore my guilt was swept away.

22. Enos Vs. 10 Enos  ... the voice of the Lord came into my mind saying: ...

23. Enos Vs. 12 Enos  ... the Lord said unto me: ...

24. Enos Vs. 16 Enos  ... and he [Jesus Christ] convenanted with me that he would bring them [records] forth unto the Lamanites
And the Lord said unto me: . . .

... after they had spoken these words
the Spirit of the Lord came upon them,
...

... we did go forth in his might;
. . . and in one day and a night we did
slay three thousand and forty-three;
we did slay them even until we had
driven them out of our land.

... nevertheless the Lord did hear
their cries, and began to soften the
hearts of the Lamanites . . . that they
began to prosper by degrees in the land,
and began to raise grain more abundant-
ly, . . . they did not suffer with hunger.

... the Lord did hear my cries . . .
and has made me an instrument in his
hands in bringing so many of you to a
knowledge of his truth.

... the voice of the Lord came to
them in their afflictions, saying:
... I will covenant with my people
and deliver them out of bondage.

... yea, the Lord did strengthen
them that they could bear up their
burdens with ease, . . .

... the voice of the Lord came unto
them again saying: . . . on the morrow
I will deliver you out of bondage.

... the voice of the Lord came to
him saying:

... as they were going about rebelling
against God, behold, the angel of the
Lord appeared unto them; . . . the
angel said: Behold the Lord hath
heard the prayers of his people, and
also the prayers of his servant, Alma,
who is thy father; for he has prayed .
. . that thou mightest be brought to
the knowledge of the truth; therefore,
for this purpose have I come to con-
vince thee . . .
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55. III Ne. 1:12, Nephi III... the voice of the Lord came unto him saying: Lift up your head and be of good cheer,... on this night shall the sign be given, and on the morrow come I into the world,...

56. III Ne. 4:10 Nephites... when the armies of Giddionhi did rush upon them they were prepared to meet them; yea, in the strength of the Lord they did receive them.

57. III Ne. 27:2 Nephite Twelve... they were praying unto the Father in his name; and Jesus came and stood in the midst of them,...

58. Ether 1:35 Jared & Brother... the Lord had compassion upon Jared; therefore he did not confound the language of Jared... and his brother...

59. Ether 1:37 Jared's Friends... the Lord had compassion upon their friends and their families also, that they were not confounded.

60. Ether 1:40 Brother of Jared... the Lord did hear the brother of Jared,... and said unto him:...

61. Ether 2:15, 16 Brother of Jared And the brother of Jared... did call upon the name of the Lord for his brethren,... And the Lord said unto him: I will forgive thee and thy brethren of their sins,... Go to work and build, after the manner of barges which ye have hitherto built...

62. Ether 2:20 Brother of Jared... the Lord said unto the brother of Jared: Behold, thou shalt make a hole in the top, and also in the bottom; and when thou shalt suffer for air thou shalt unstop the hole and receive air...

63. Ether 3:6; 6:2 Brother of Jared... when the brother of Jared had said these words, behold the Lord stretched forth his hand and touched the stones one by one with his finger,... he [Brother of Jared] did put forth the stones into the vessels... and behold they did give light unto the vessels.

64. Ether 6:7 Jaredites... when they were encompassed about
by many waters, they did cry unto the Lord, and he did bring them forth again upon the top of the waters.

65. Ether 9:35 Jaredites ... when they had humbled themselves sufficiently before the Lord he did send rain upon the face of the earth; and the people began to revive ... .

66. Moroni 8:7 Mormon ... I inquired of the Lord. ... And the word of the Lord came to me by the power of the Holy Ghost saying:

67. Moroni 10:4 Moroni II ... if ye shall ask ... he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost.

One should keep in mind that God always answers the man who prays even though he may not grant the specific request of the man's prayer.

The writer believes that the majority of our prayers are answered through the power of the Holy Ghost, as were many of the prayers in the Book of Mormon. The name Holy Ghost appears in references 66 and 67. It is the opinion of the writer that in references 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 29, 30, 32, 33, 35, 38, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 47, 48, 52, 66, and 67 that the Holy Ghost revealed the answer to the respective prayers. The writer realizes that in reference 7 some people feel that "he" refers to the pre-existent Christ, and not the Holy Ghost.¹

References 22 and 66 describe the role of the Holy Ghost in answering prayer when they state, "the voice of the Lord came into my mind saying" and "the word of the Lord came to me by the power of the Holy Ghost." It would seem to the writer that in many of the references which state "the Lord said, the Lord spoke, the Lord did warn me," etc, that the

¹Dr. Sidney B. Sperry affirms the viewpoint that the Holy Ghost appeared to Nephi in his discussion of "Nephi's Vision of the Spirit of the Lord"; see The Book of Mormon Testifies (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1952), pp. 50-54.
Holy Ghost is the means of communicating the answer to men on the earth.

The Book of Mormon points out that Jesus Christ, himself, can and does on occasion personally reveal the answers to prayer. Reference 1 speaks of Lehi as he was praying, having a pillar of fire rest upon a rock before him, at which time "he saw and heard much, and because of the things he saw and heard he did quake and tremble exceedingly." There seems to be a possible parallel here with Moses and the burning bush when Moses was called by Jesus Christ to lead Israel out of Egypt. Perhaps at this time Lehi was given the call by Jesus Christ to lead the way to the promised land. Many people are of the opinion that Lehi did not in actual fact talk with Jesus Christ and so the writer has classified this answer as coming through the Holy Ghost. In reference 2, Nephi has made it plain that it was Jesus Christ who appeared to him to answer his request.

In reference 55, Nephi prays with all his might to find out if Christ was to be born as the prophets had indicated. Again we find evidence to support the belief either that Jesus Christ personally spoke or that the answer came through the Holy Ghost speaking for Christ.

It is clearly stated in reference 57 that Jesus Christ made a personal visit in answer to the prayers of the Nephite Twelve.

According to the written record, the brother of Jared had more direct personal contact with Jesus Christ than did any other prophet spoken of in the Book of Mormon excluding, of course, those who Christ visited after his resurrection. The writer feels that in reference 60, 61, 62, and 63 that Jesus Christ personally spoke with the brother of Jared. Ether 2:14 reveals a conversation between the brother of Jared and Jesus Christ. It is because of this statement in Ether 2:14, "And it came to pass at the end of four years that the Lord came again . . ." that the
writer feels that Christ personally revealed the answer in reference 60. The brother of Jared was rewarded because of continual prayer and exceeding great faith.

References 4, 27, 31, 36, 37, 39, 40, 41, 46, 49, 50, 51, and 56 speak of answers to prayer coming as increased physical strength, as given to various people; and also we see how the Lord exerts his power that the righteous may be protected from their enemies. God will destroy or allow the wicked to be destroyed in answer to the prayers of the righteous.

The control of the natural elements is shown in references 16, 28, 53, 54, 64, and 65 as means of answering prayer.

Angels may be sent to answer prayers as shown in references 8, 9, 17, and 34.

The important thing to learn from these testimonies is that God does hear and answer prayers in various ways. It is important to live close enough to the Lord to recognize the answers when given in order that we may accept them, and live according to the answer. We should not expect the spectacular but be constantly working to help bring about the answers to our prayers. If we are to receive and understand the answers to our prayers we should strive to obtain the Holy Ghost, since this seems to be the means of communicating many of these answers to men on the earth.

It may be well to keep in mind the oneness of God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost as one attempts to determine whether it is Jesus Christ or the Holy Ghost who reveals the answers to prayer.

Miraculous Answers to Prayer

The purpose of this section of the study is to present in more detail some of the answers given so that we can come to know better and understand the great powers afforded us through prayer; and that when the
Lord promises certain answers to prayers that we can expect to receive those answers. There should be no question in the minds of the faithful Latter-day Saint as to whether or not a miraculous answer to prayer could be given. It is hoped that by calling special attention to these miraculous answers that it will bring to the reader a greater conviction of the power of prayer.

1. I Ne. 2:16 Nephi I And it came to pass that I, Nephi, being exceeding young, nevertheless being large in stature, and also having great desires to know of the mysteries of God, wherefore, I did cry unto the Lord; and behold he did visit me, and did soften my heart that I did believe all the words which had been spoken by my father; wherefore, I did not rebel against him like unto my brothers.

2. Enos Vs. 4-6 Enos And my soul hungered; and I kneeled down before my Maker, and I cried unto him in mighty prayer and supplication for mine own soul; and all the day long did I cry unto him; yea, and when the night came I did still raise my voice high that it reached the heavens. And there came a voice unto me, saying: Enos, thy sins are forgiven thee, and thou shalt be blessed. And I, Enos, knew that God could not lie; wherefore, my guilt was swept away. And while I was thus struggling in the spirit, behold, the voice of the Lord came into my mind again, saying: I will visit thy brethren according to their diligence in keeping my commandments. I have given unto them this land, and it is a holy land; and I curse it not save it be for the cause of iniquity; therefore, I will visit thy brethren according as I have said; and their transgressions will I bring down with sorrow upon their own heads. And after I, Enos, had heard these words, my faith began to be unshaken in the Lord; and I prayed unto him with many long strugglings for my brethren, the Lamanites. And it came to pass that after I had prayed and labored with all diligence,
the Lord said unto me: I will grant unto thee according to thy desires, because of thy faith. And now behold, this was the desire which I desired of him—that if it should so be, that my people, the Nephites, should fall into transgression, and by any means be destroyed, and the Lamanites should not be destroyed, that the Lord God would preserve a record of my people, the Nephites; even if it so be by the power of his holy arm, that it might be brought forth at some future day unto the Lamanites that, perhaps, they might be brought unto salvation—And I had faith, and I did cry unto God that he would preserve the records; and he covenanted with me that he would bring them forth unto the Lamanites in his own due time.

3. Mosiah 9:17-19 Zeniff

Yea, in the strength of the Lord did we go forth to battle against the Lamanites; for I and my people did cry mightily to the Lord that he would deliver us out of the hands of our enemies, for we were awakened to a remembrance of the deliverance of our fathers. And God did hear our cries and did answer our prayers; and we did go forth in his might; yea, we did go forth against the Lamanites, and in one day and a night we did slay three thousand and forty-three; we did slay them even until we had driven them out of our land. And I, myself, with mine own hands, did help to bury their dead. And behold, to our great sorrow and lamentation, two hundred and seventy-nine of our brethren were slain.

4. Mosiah 27:14 Angel

And again, the angel said: Behold, the Lord hath heard the prayers of his people, and also the prayers of his servant, Alma, who is thy father; for he has prayed with much faith concerning thee that thou mightest be brought to the knowledge of the truth; therefore, for this purpose have I come to convince thee of the power and authority of God, that the prayers of his servants might be answered according to their faith.
And King Mosiah went and inquired of the Lord if he should let his sons go up among the Lamanites to preach the word. And the Lord said unto Mosiah:

Let them go up, for many shall believe on their words, and they shall have eternal life; and I will deliver thy sons out of the hands of the Lamanites.

And it came to pass that Mosiah granted that they might go and do according to their request.

Now, one of them, whose brother had been slain with the sword of Ammon, being exceeding angry with Ammon, drew his sword and went forth that he might let it fall upon Ammon, to slay him; and as he lifted the sword to smite him, behold, he fell dead.

Now we see that Ammon could not be slain, for the Lord had said unto Mosiah, his father: I will spare him, and it shall be unto him according to thy faith—therefore, Mosiah trusted him unto the Lord.

And Alma cried, saying: How long shall we suffer these great afflictions, 0 Lord? 0 Lord, give us strength according to our faith which is in Christ, even unto deliverance. And they broke the cords with which they were bound; and when the people saw this, they began to flee, for the fear of destruction had come upon them.

And it came to pass that I was three days and three nights in the most bitter pain and anguish of soul; and never, until I did cry out unto the Lord Jesus Christ for mercy, did I receive a remission of sins. But behold, I did cry unto him and I did find peace to my soul.

And it came to pass that he went out and bowed himself down upon the earth, and cried mightily to his God in behalf of his people, yea, those who were about to be destroyed because of their faith in the tradition of their fathers.

And it came to pass that he cried mightily unto the Lord, all the day:
and behold, the voice of the Lord came unto him, saying:
Lift up your head and be of good cheer; for behold, the time is at hand, and on this night shall the sign be given, and on the morrow come I into the world, to show unto the world that I will fulfill all that which I have caused to be spoken by the mouth of my holy prophets. Behold, I come unto my own, to fulfill all things which I have made known unto the children of men from the foundation of the world, and to do the will, both of the Father and of the Son—of the Father because of me, and of the Son because of my flesh. And behold, the time is at hand, and this night shall the sign be given.
And it came to pass that the words which came unto Nephi were fulfilled, according as they had been spoken; for behold, at the going down of the sun there was no darkness; and the people began to be astonished because there was no darkness when the night came.

9. III Ne. 19:25 Nephite And it came to pass that Jesus blessed them as they did pray unto him; and his countenance did smile upon them, and the light of his countenance did shine upon them, and behold they were as white as the countenance and also the garments of Jesus; and behold the whiteness thereof did exceed all the whiteness, yea, even there could be nothing upon earth so white as the whiteness thereof.

10. Ether 1:35, 37 Brother of Jared And it came to pass that the brother of Jared did cry unto the Lord, and the Lord had compassion upon Jared; therefore he did not confound the language of Jared; and Jared and his brother were not confounded.
And it came to pass that the brother of Jared did cry unto the Lord, and the Lord had compassion upon their friends and their families also, that they were not confounded.

11. Ether 3:6, 25, 26 Brother of Jared And it came to pass that when the brother of Jared had said these words, behold, the Lord stretched forth his hand and touched the stones one by one with his
finger. And the veil was taken from off the eyes of the brother of Jared, and he saw the finger of the Lord; and it was as the finger of a man, like unto flesh and blood; and the brother of Jared fell down before the Lord, for he was struck with fear.

And because of the knowledge of this man he could not be kept from beholding within the veil; and he saw the finger of Jesus; which, when he saw, he fell with fear; for he knew that it was the finger of the Lord; and he had faith no longer, for he knew nothing doubting. And when the Lord had said these words, he showed unto the brother of Jared all the inhabitants of the earth which had been, and also all that would be; and he withheld them not from his sight, even unto the ends of the earth. For he had said unto him in times before, that if he would believe in him that he could show unto him all things--it should be shown unto him; therefore the Lord could not withhold anything from him, for he knew that the Lord could show him all things.
CHAPTER VI

WHY GOD MAY NOT ANSWER OUR PRAYERS AS DESIRED

The writer has heard seminary students say "it doesn't do any good to pray since God doesn't hear or answer prayers," or "I have prayed many times and I have never received an answer to prayer," or "I can solve my own problems without help." One problem students may have is that they feel the only way a prayer can be answered is the way they have already decided it should be answered, and if it is not answered in this way they cannot accept that their way was wrong and that the Lord has spoken.

The Book of Mormon discusses some points worth keeping in mind as we analyze the problem as to why God may not answer our prayers as desired. Let us examine what the Book of Mormon has to say:

1. II Ne. 4:35 Nephi I
   Yea, I know that God will give liberally to him that asketh. Yea, my God will give me, if I ask not amiss; therefore I will lift up my voice unto thee; yea, I will cry unto thee, my God, . . .

   And it shall come to pass that except this people repent and turn unto the Lord their God, they shall be brought into bondage; and none shall deliver them, except it be the Lord the Almighty God.
   Yea, and it shall come to pass that when they shall cry unto me I will be slow to hear their cries; yea, and I will suffer them that they be smitten by their enemies.
   And except they repent in sackcloth and ashes, and cry mightily to the Lord their God, I will not hear their prayers, neither will I deliver them out of
And now the Lord was slow to hear their cry because of their iniquities; nevertheless the Lord did hear their cries.

Now when he had said this, he besought that Alma should pray unto God, that the curse might be taken from him. But Alma said unto him: If this curse should be taken from thee thou wouldst again lead away the hearts of this people; therefore, it shall be unto thee even as the Lord will.

... if ye turn away the needy, and the naked, and visit not the sick and afflicted, and impart of your substance if ye have, to those who stand in need--I say unto you, if ye do not any of these things, behold, your prayer is vain, and availeth you nothing, and ye are as hypocrites who do deny the faith.

Do not pray as the Zoramites do, for ye have seen that they pray to be heard of men, and to be praised for their wisdom.

Do not say: O God, I thank thee that we are better than our brethren, but rather say: O Lord, forgive my unworthiness, and remember my brethren in mercy--yea, acknowledge your unworthiness before God at all times.

And in the days of your poverty ye shall cry unto the Lord; and in vain shall ye cry, for your desolation is already come upon you, and your destruction is made sure; . . . and then shall ye lament and say: O that I had repented, . . .

Now the people said unto Gidgiddoni: Pray unto the Lord, and let us go up upon the mountains and the wilderness, that we may fall upon the robbers and destroy them in their own lands.

But Gidgiddoni saith unto them: The Lord forbid; . . .

And when thou prayest thou shalt not do as the hypocrites, for they love to
pray, standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward.

10. III Ne. 13:9-15  
Jesus Christ  
After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen. For if ye forgive men their trespasses your heavenly Father will also forgive you; But if ye forgive not men their trespasses neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

11. Moroni 7:9  
Moroni II  
And likewise also it is counted evil unto a man, if he shall pray and not with real intent of heart; yea, and it profiteth him nothing, for God receiveth none such.

The writer feels that anyone who stops to consider why his prayers have not been answered as he desired should meditate upon these questions. Why am I praying for it? How will I use it if it is granted? Would it be for the furtherance of Christ's work? Answers to these questions should help us to realize that it is not so much the thing we pray for but why we want it and how we will use it. We may ask for things that are good, but the reason for asking may not be good; hence, God may not answer our prayers as we would desire. References 4, 6, 8, and 9 would seem to stress the importance of making our requests for the right reason. Alma's prayer is a good example of asking for something for the right reason:

1The reader should keep in mind that all reference numbers refer only to the immediately preceding list of references.
And it came to pass that Alma, being a man of God, being exercised with much faith, cried, saying: O Lord, have mercy and spare my life, that I may be an instrument in thy hands to save and preserve this people.

Now when Alma had said these words he contended again with Amlici; and he was strengthened, insomuch that he slew Amlici with the sword.¹

If Alma's reason for living had been a selfish one, his prayer may have been answered differently.

Our prayers should be a plea for the ability to serve and not for self-gratification.

References number 2, 3, 4, 6, and 8 indicate that repentance or a change of life may be in order before we can expect the Lord to answer our prayers as we desire. It should be remembered that repentance entails the overcoming of sins of omission as well as sins of commission. Too many of us try to get along without God's help and feel we are self-sufficient, and when something goes wrong then we turn to the Lord. The Lord may answer us as in references 2 and 3 and be slow to hear our cries.

Korihor, in reference 4, knowing he was not worthy, asked Alma to pray, but Alma refused since he knew to pray for such a request would be improper as did Gidgiddoni in reference 8. We must learn to pray by the Spirit; and if we are told by the Spirit that to make a certain request would be wrong, we should refrain from making the request. To go contrary to the dictates of the Spirit is sin.

Reference 7 points out we may postpone our prayers to a point that when we do pray we cannot be saved, since our desolation or destruction is already made sure because of our wickedness. In other words, one cannot expect the Lord to grant us what we want and when we want it regardless of how we live.

¹Alma 2:30-31.
Another pre-requisite of receiving answers to our prayers, as pointed out in reference 4, is that we must be willing to share our substance with the needy and visit the sick and afflicted. If we are not willing to give aid and assistance to those in need when we have the means, then we cannot expect God to assist us.

Prayer is not something which is to be done as a method of bringing social acceptance or praise, and anyone who prays with such an attitude will receive the reward of men as indicated by references 6 and 9.

As individuals we fail to receive the full benefit that could come from prayer because we have a tendency to pray out of habit and a feeling of sense of duty. Moroni points out in reference 11 that if we do not pray with "real intent of heart" that our prayers profit us nothing.

As has been pointed out before in this study we should also recognize our unworthiness and that it is through the power of God and Jesus Christ that our requests are granted (6, 10).

As one approaches the Lord requesting forgiveness of sin one can be assured, as stated in reference 10, that such forgiveness will be granted upon our forgiveness of others.

It is the opinion of the writer that one needn't look beyond these 11 references to find the answer as to why our prayers are not answered as desired. Even though all of our prayers have not been answered as desired we should remember they have been answered.

Let us keep firmly in our mind the testimony of Nephi:

Yea, I know that God will give liberally to him that asketh. Yea my God will give me, if I ask not amiss; therefore I will lift up my voice unto thee, . . ."  

\(^1\) II Ne. 4:35.
Prayer and Material Riches

We live in a materialistic world and people to a large degree measure their success in life by the material things they surround themselves with. When a person dies the obituary often lists the accomplishments of the person in the business world but pays little attention to the spiritual values attained by that person and instilled within his family and associates.

This concept of false values was brought forcefully to the writer's attention when he asked his five year old daughter what was the most important thing in all the world? Without hesitation, she answered "money." Money certainly has its place as we move forward toward our celestial goals but must be placed in proper perspective.

Money, wealth, riches,—or whatever name we may give to our material possessions—often, though it need not be the case, leads us from spiritual things and hence, away from close and daily communion with God.

The writer feels that with the great onward rush of many people to gain material possessions that it is within the realm of this study to search out and include the Book of Mormon's teachings concerning riches in order that we may learn the proper use of riches and maintain constant communion with God.

The Lord has made it very plain that our use of riches and our attitude toward them will affect the answers to our prayers.

And now behold, my beloved brethren, I say unto you, do not suppose that this is all; for after ye have done all these things, if ye turn away the needy, and the naked, and visit not the sick and afflicted, and impart of your substance, if ye have, to those who stand in need— I say unto you, if ye do not any of these things, behold, your prayer is vain, and availeth you nothing, and ye are as the hypocrites who do deny the faith.¹

¹Alma 34:28,
No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.¹

The following references have been selected to express the Lord's teaching concerning material riches.

1. II Ne. 9:30 Jacob  
But wo unto the rich, who are rich as to the things of the world. For because they are rich they despise the poor, and they persecute the meek, and their hearts are upon their treasures; wherefore, their treasure is their God. And behold, their treasure shall perish with them also.

2. II Ne. 26:29, 31 Nephi I  
He commandeth that there shall be no priestcrafts; for, behold, priestcrafts are that men preach and set themselves up for a light unto the world, that they may get gain and praise of the world; but they seek not the welfare of Zion. But the laborer in Zion shall labor for Zion; for if they labor for money they shall perish.

3. Jacob 2:13-19 Jacob  
And the hand of providence hath smiled upon you most pleasingly, that you have obtained many riches; and because some of you have obtained more abundantly than that of your brethren ye are lifted up in the pride of your hearts, and wear stiff necks and high heads because of the costliness of your apparel, and persecute your brethren because ye suppose that ye are better than they.
And now, my brethren, do ye suppose that God justifieth you in this thing? Behold, I say unto you, Nay. But he condemneth you, and if ye persist in these things his judgments must speedily come unto you. O that he would show you that he can pierce you, and with one glance of his eye he can smite you to the dust! O that he would rid you from this iniquity and abomination. And, 0 that ye would listen unto the word of his commands, and let not this pride of

¹III Ne. 13:24
your hearts destroy your souls!
Think of your brethren like unto yourselves, and be familiar with all and free with your substance, that they may be rich like unto you.
But before ye seek for riches, seek ye for the kingdom of God.
And after ye have obtained a hope in Christ, ye shall obtain riches, if ye seek them; and ye will seek them for the intent to do good—to clothe the naked, and to feed the hungry, and to liberate the captive, and administer relief to the sick and the afflicted.

Perhaps thou shalt say: The man has brought upon himself his misery; therefore I will stay my hand, and will not give unto him of my food, nor impart unto him of my substance that he may not suffer, for his punishments are just—But I say unto you, O man, whatsoever doeth this the same hath great cause to repent; and except he repenteth of that which he hath done he perisheth forever, and hath no interest in the kingdom of God.

For behold, are we not all beggars? Do we not all depend upon the same Being, even God, for all the substance which we have, for both food and raiment, and for gold, and for silver, and for all the riches which we have of every kind? And behold, even at this time, ye have been calling on his name, and begging for a remission of your sins. And has he suffered that ye have begged in vain? Nay; he has poured out his Spirit upon you, and has caused that your hearts should be filled with joy, and has caused that your mouths should be stopped that ye could not find utterance, so exceeding great was your joy.

And now, if God, who has created you, on whom you are dependent for your lives and for all that ye have and are, doth grant unto you whatsoever ye ask that is right, in faith, believing that ye shall receive, O then, how ye ought to impart of the substance that ye have one to another.
And if ye judge the man who putteth up his petition to you for your substance that he perish not, and condemn him, how
much more just will be your condemnation for withholding your substance, which doth not belong to you but to God, to whom also your life belongeth; and yet ye put up no petition, nor repent of the thing which thou hast done. I say unto you, wo be unto that man, for his substance shall perish with him; and now, I say these things unto those who are rich as pertaining to the things of this world. And again, I say unto the poor, ye who have not and yet have sufficient, that ye remain from day to day; I mean all you who deny the beggar, because ye have not; I would that ye say in your hearts that: I give not because I have not, but if I had I would give. And now, if ye say this in your hearts ye remain guiltless, otherwise ye are condemned; and your condemnation is just for ye covet that which ye have not received. And now, for the sake of these things which I have spoken unto you—that is, for the sake of retaining a remission of your sins from day to day, that ye may walk guiltless before God—I would that ye should impart of your substance to the poor, every man according to that which he hath, such as feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and administering to their relief, both spiritually and temporally, according to their wants. And again Alma commanded that the people of the church should impart of their substance, everyone according to that which he had; if he have more abundantly he should impart more abundantly; and of him that had but little, but little should be required; and to him that had not should be given. And thus they should impart of their substance of their own free will and good desires towards God, and to those priests that stood in need, yea, and to every needy, naked soul. And this he said unto them, having been commanded of God; and they did walk uprightly before God, imparting to one another both temporally and spiritually according to their needs and their wants.
And they did impart of their substance, every man according to that which he had, to the poor, and the needy, and the sick, and the afflicted; and they did not wear costly apparel, yet they were neat and comely.

And thus they did establish the affairs of the church; and thus they began to have continual peace again, notwithstanding all their persecutions.

And now, because of the steadiness of the church they began to be exceeding rich, having abundance of all things whatsoever they stood in need—and abundance of flocks and herds, and fatlings of every kind, and also abundance of grain, and of gold, and of silver, and of precious things, and abundance of silk and fine-twined linen, and all manner of good homely cloth.

And thus, in their prosperous circumstances, they did not send away any who were naked, or that were hungry, or that were athirst, or that were sick, or that had not been nourished; and they did not set their hearts upon riches; therefore they were liberal to all, both old and young, both bond and free, both male and female, whether out of the church or in the church, having no respect to persons as to those who stood in need.

And thus they did prosper and become far more wealthy than those who did not belong to their church.

And it came to pass in the eighth year of the reign of the judges, that the people of the church began to wax proud because of their exceeding riches, and their fine silks, and their fine-twined linen, and because of their many flocks and herds, and their gold and their silver, and all manner of precious things which they had obtained by their industry; and in all these things were they lifted up in the pride of their eyes, for they began to wear very costly apparel.

Now this was the cause of much affliction to Alma, yea, and to many of the people whom Alma had consecrated to be teachers, and priests, and elders over the church; yea, many of them were sorely grieved.
for the wickedness which they saw had begun to be among their people. For they saw and beheld with great sorrow that the people of the church began to be lifted up in the pride of their eyes, and to set their hearts upon riches and upon the vain things of the world, that they began to be scornful, one towards another, and they began to persecute those that did not believe according to their own will and pleasure.

And now my beloved brethren, I say unto you, can ye withstand these sayings; yea, can ye lay aside these things, and trample the Holy One under your feet; yea, can ye be puffed up in the pride of your hearts; yea, will ye persist in the wearing of costly apparel and setting your hearts upon the vain things of the world, upon your riches? Yea, will ye persist in supposing that ye are better one than another; yea, will ye persist in the persecution of your brethren, who humble themselves and do walk after the holy order of God, wherewith they have been brought into this church, having been sanctified by the Holy Spirit, and they do bring forth works which are meet for repentance—

Yea, and will you persist in turning your backs upon the poor, and the needy, and in withholding your substance from them? And finally, all ye that will persist in your wickedness, I say unto you that these are they who shall be hewn down and cast into the fire except they speedily repent.

And there was no inequality among them; the Lord did pour out his Spirit on all the face of the land to prepare the minds of the children of men, or to prepare their hearts to receive the word which should be taught among them at the time of his coming—

Seek not after riches nor the vain things of this world; for behold, you cannot carry them with you.
And the people of Nephi began to prosper again in the land, and began to multiply and to wax exceeding strong again in the land. And they began to grow exceeding rich.

But notwithstanding their riches, or their strength, or their prosperity, they were not lifted up in the pride of their eyes; neither were they slow to remember the Lord their God; but they did humble themselves exceedingly before him.

Yea, they did remember how great things the Lord had done for them, that he had delivered them from death, and from bonds, and from prisons, and from all manner of afflictions, and he had delivered them out of the hands of their enemies.

And they did pray unto the Lord God continually, insomuch that the Lord did bless them, according to his word, so that they did wax strong and prosper in the land.

Now this great loss of the Nephites, and the great slaughter which was among them, would not have happened had it not been for their wickedness and their abomination which was among them; yea, and it was among those also who professed to belong to the church of God.

And it was because of the pride of their hearts, because of their exceeding riches, yea, it was because of their oppression to the poor, withholding their food from the hungry, withholding their clothing from the naked, and smiting their humble brethren upon the cheek, making a mock of that which was sacred, denying the spirit of prophecy and of revelation, murdering, plundering, lying, stealing, committing adultery, rising up in great contentions, and deserting away into the land of Nephi, among the Lamanites—

And because of this their great wickedness, and their boastings in their own strength, they were left in their own strength; therefore they did not prosper, but were afflicted and smitten, and driven before the Lamanites, until they had lost possession of almost all their lands.
And it came to pass that they became exceeding rich, both the Lamanites and the Nephites; and they did have an exceeding plenty of gold, and of silver, and of all manner of precious metals, both in the land south and in the land north. For behold, the Lord had blessed them so long with the riches of the world that they had not been stirred up to anger, to wars, nor to bloodshed; therefore they began to set their hearts upon their riches; yea, they began to seek to get gain that they might be lifted up one above another; therefore they began to commit secret murders, and to rob and to plunder, that they might get gain.

0, how could you have forgotten your God in the very day that he has delivered you? But behold, it is to get gain, to be praised of men, yea, and that ye might get gold and silver. And ye have set your hearts upon the riches and the vain things of this world, for the which ye do murder, and plunder, and steal, and bear false witness against your neighbor, and do all manner of iniquity. Yea, wo shall come unto you because of that pride which ye have suffered to enter your hearts, which has lifted you up beyond that which is good because of your exceeding great riches! Yea, wo be unto you because of your wickedness and abominations! And except ye repent ye shall perish; yea, even your lands shall be taken from you, and ye shall be destroyed from off the face of the earth.

Behold ye, the people of this great city, and hearken unto my words; yea, hearken unto the words which the Lord saith; for behold, he saith that ye are cursed because of your riches, and also are your riches cursed because ye have set your hearts upon them, and have not hearkened unto the words of him who gave them unto you. Ye do not remember the Lord your God in the things with which he hath blessed you, but ye do always remember your riches, not to thank the Lord your God.
for them; yea, your hearts are not drawn out unto the Lord, but they do swell with great pride, unto boasting, and unto great swelling, envyings, strifes, malice, persecutions, and murders, and all manner of iniquities. For this cause hath the Lord God caused that a curse should come upon the land, and also upon your riches, and this because of your iniquities. Yea, behold, the anger of the Lord is already kindled against you; behold, he hath cursed the land because of your iniquity. And behold, the time cometh that he curseth your riches, that they become slippery, that ye cannot hold them; and in the days of your poverty ye cannot retain them. And in the days of your poverty ye shall cry unto the Lord; and in vain shall ye cry, for your desolation is already come upon you, and your destruction is made sure; and then shall ye weep and howl in that day saith the Lord of Hosts. And then shall ye lament, and say: O that I had repented, and had not killed the prophets, and stoned them, and cast them out. Yea, in that day ye shall say: O that we had remembered the Lord our God in the day that he gave us our riches, and then they would not have become slippery that we should lose them; for behold, our riches are gone from us. But behold, your days of probation are past; ye have procrastinated the day of your salvation until it is everlastingly too late, and your destruction is made sure; yea, for ye have sought all the days of your lives for that which ye could not obtain; and ye have sought for happiness in doing iniquity, which thing is contrary to the nature of that righteousness which is in our great and Eternal Head.

Now the cause of this iniquity of the people was this—Satan had great power, unto the stirring up of the people to do all manner of iniquity, and to the puffing them up with pride, tempting them to seek for power, and authority, and riches, and the vain things of the world.
17. III Ne. 27:32 Jesus Christ
But behold, it sorroweth me because of the fourth generation from this generation for they are led away captive by him even as was the son of perdition;
for they will sell me for silver and for gold, and for that which moth doth corrupt and which thieves can break through and steal. And in that day will I visit them, even in turning their works upon their own heads.

18. IV Ne. 3 Nephi III
And they had all things common among them; therefore there were not rich and poor, bond and free, but they were all made free, and partakers of the heavenly gift.

19. IV Ne. 23-26 Mormon
And now I, Mormon would that ye should know that the people had multiplied, insomuch that they were spread upon all the face of the land, and that they had become exceeding rich, because of their prosperity in Christ.
And now, in this two hundred and first year there began to be among them those who were lifted up in pride, such as the wearing of costly apparel, and all manner of fine pearls, and of the fine things of the world.
And from that time forth they did have their goods and their substance no more common among them.
And they began to be divided into classes; and they began to build up churches unto themselves to get gain, and began to deny the true church of Christ.

20. Mormon 8:36-39 Moroni II
And I know that ye do walk in the pride of your hearts; and there are none save a few only who do not lift themselves up in the pride of their hearts, unto the wearing of very fine apparel, unto envying, and strifes, and malice, and persecutions, and all manner of iniquities; and your churches, yea, even every one, have become polluted because of the pride of your hearts.
For behold, ye do love money, and your substance, and your fine apparel, and the adorning of your churches, more then ye love the poor and the needy, the sick and the afflicted.
O ye pollutions, ye hypocrites, ye teachers, who sell yourselves for that
which will canker, why have ye polluted the holy church of God? Why are ye ashamed to take upon you the name of Christ? Why do ye not think that greater is the value of an endless happiness than that misery which never dies—because of the praise of the world? Why do ye adorn yourselves with that which hath no life, and yet suffer the hungry, and the needy, and the naked, and the sick and the afflicted to pass by you, and notice them not?

The evils that may result from material riches, if one has an improper attitude towards riches, are many. References 1, 3, 7, 8, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, and 20 seem to point out the evils as being despising and oppressing the poor; withholding food and clothing from the poor and naked; persecuting the meek; making mockery of things that are sacred; setting their hearts upon riches and making it their God; boasting in their own strength; failing to pray and thank God who is the giver of all material riches; using the church to get gain; and being lifted up in the pride of their own hearts.

The rewards promised those who persist in setting their hearts upon riches are pointed out in references 1, 3, 4, 8, 12, 14, 15, 17, and 20. We should be interested in the eternal effects of material riches and their use and know that happiness is not found in doing iniquity (15).

The proper attitude towards material riches should be one of sharing as expressed in references 3, 4, and 5. Men are to use what they have in serving and helping others and in doing so they are in the service of their God. The results that can come from sharing are pointed out in references 9 and 19. The problem of with whom should one share his wealth is dealt with in reference 4; and we are told to share with all who have

1Mosiah 2:17.
need. It is not for us to judge the worthiness of the person. Even people who do not have material riches will be judged by their attitude towards riches as if they did have them.

Perhaps the greatest danger of becoming prosperous is that one feels less and less dependent upon God and more dependent upon his own strength. One then forgets that God is the source of our material riches as was pointed out in references 3, 11, 12, 13, 15, and 18. As a result of this independent feeling the course often taken is one of less and less communication with God unless he takes away the material riches as he did many times in the Book of Mormon. In the opinion of the writer, when a person fails to recognize the source of his blessings and his debt to God and Jesus Christ that is the time when prayer will cease to be an important part of his life.

To seek for riches is not wrong if your intent is to do good (3), and one can have both material and spiritual riches (6,11). The important thing to remember is that we seek the Kingdom of God first and if we should obtain material riches we will use these riches as the Spirit would direct us.

The writer feels very strongly in view of the specific teachings in the Book of Mormon concerning riches, that one of the greatest threats to a life of prayer is a life of material prosperity.
Prayer—A Part of Repentance and Forgiveness

The atonement of Jesus Christ has made possible the forgiveness of individual sins, if we are willing to repent. The Book of Mormon points out that forgiveness of sin is partially dependent upon our willingness to go to the Father in sincerity to confess our sins and ask for forgiveness.

1. Enos 4, 5, 6
   And my soul hungered; and I kneeled down before my Maker, and I cried unto him in mighty prayer and supplication for mine own soul; and all the day long did I cry unto him; yea, and when the night came I did still raise my voice high that it reached the heavens. And there came a voice unto me saying: Enos, thy sins are forgiven thee, and thou shalt be blessed.
   And I, Enos, knew that God could not lie; wherefore, my guilt was swept away.

2. Mosiah 4:10
   And again, believe that ye must repent . . . and humble yourselves before God; and ask in sincerity of heart that he would forgive you; . . .

3. Mosiah 26:29
   . . . and if he confess his sins before thee and me, and repenteth in the sincerity of his heart, him shall ye forgive, and I will forgive him also.

4. Mosiah 26:35, 36
   And whosoever repented of their sins and did confess them, them he did number among the people of the church; And those that would not confess their sins and repent of their iniquity, the same were not numbered among the people of the church, and their names were blotted out.
5. Alma 17:4 Sons of Mosiah ... yea, by the power of their words many were brought before the altar of God, to call on his name and confess their sins before him.

6. Alma 38:8 Alma II And it came to pass that I was three days and three nights in the most bitter pain and anguish of soul; and never, until I did cry out unto the Lord Jesus Christ for mercy, did I receive a remission of my sins. But behold, I did cry unto him and I did find peace to my soul.

7. Moroni 6:8 Moroni II But as oft as they repented and sought forgiveness, with real intent, they were forgiven.

Although the Book of Mormon does not have a long list of references concerning the confession of sin to God as a necessary step in forgiveness of sin, we can see from the above references that confession of sin to God was taught. This confession is made through prayer, thus making true repentance and prayer inseparable companions.

References 1 and 6 indicate that Enos and Alma did not receive a forgiveness of sin until they had requested such in mighty prayer.

The writer feels that the story of Enos in reference 1 is an excellent place for the teacher to help the student appreciate the power of prayer in bringing him to a realization that he can be forgiven and also that his guilt feeling can be swept away. This reference is also helpful in pointing out that it may take more than the ordinary prayer that we usually offer to bring about this feeling of forgiveness.

Prayer and Fasting

The writer found 13 references in the Book of Mormon tying fasting and prayer together:

1. Omni Vs. 26 Amaleki Yea, come unto him [Jesus Christ], and offer your whole souls as an offering unto him, and continue in
fasting and praying, and endure to the end; and as the Lord liveth ye will be saved.

2. Mosiah 27:22, Alma I 23 and Alma II
And he caused that the priests should assemble themselves together; and they began to fast, and to pray to the Lord their God that he would open the mouth of Alma, that he might speak, and also that his limbs might receive their strength—that the eyes of the people might be opened to see and know of the goodness and glory of God.

And it came to pass after they had fasted and prayed for the space of two days and nights, the limbs of Alma received their strength, and he stood up and began to speak unto them, bidding them to be of good comfort;

3. Alma 5:46 Alma II
... I have fasted and prayed many days that I might know these things of myself. And now I do know of myself that they are true; for the Lord God hath made them manifest unto me by his Holy Spirit; ...

4. Alma 6:6 Alma II
Nevertheless the children of God were commanded that they should gather themselves together oft, and join in fasting and mighty prayer in behalf of the welfare of the souls of those who knew not God.

5. Alma 17:3 Sons of Mosiah
... they had given themselves to much prayer and fasting; therefore they had the spirit of prophecy, and the spirit of revelation, and when they taught, they taught with power and authority of God.

6. Alma 17:9 Sons of Mosiah
... and they fasted much and prayed much that the Lord would grant unto them a portion of his spirit to go with them, and abide with them, that they might be an instrument in the hands of God to bring, ... the Lamanites to the knowledge of the truth, ...

7. Alma 28:6 Nephites
... this was a sorrowful day, ... a time of much fasting and prayer.

8. Alma 30:2 Nephites
... also after the days of fasting,
and mourning, and prayer . . .

9. Alma 45:1  Nephites  . . . the people of Nephi were exceedingly rejoiced, because the Lord had again delivered them out of the hands of their enemies; . . . and they did fast much and pray much . . .

10. He. 3:35  Nephites  Nevertheless they did fast and pray oft, and did wax stronger and stronger in their humility, and firmer and firmer in the faith of Christ, unto the filling their souls with joy and consolation, yea, even to the purifying and the sanctification of their hearts which sanctification cometh because of their yielding their hearts unto God.

11. III Ne. 27:1  Nephite Twelve . . . the disciples were gathered together and were united in mighty prayer and fasting.

12. IV Ne. Vs. 12  Nephites  . . . they did walk after the commandments . . . continuing in fasting and prayer . . .

13. Moroni 6:5  Moroni  And the church did meet together oft, to fast and to pray, and to speak one with another concerning the welfare of their souls.

It is important when teaching the principle of fasting to emphasize the value of prayer and its relationship to fasting, and that to be of the most benefit it should be accompanied by prayer. Students should realize that this practice can help us achieve the real spirit of prayer. It is interesting to note that in almost every instance in the Book of Mormon when the principle of fasting is mentioned that prayer accompanied their fasting.

The Book of Mormon teaches the following concerning fasting and prayer:

1. Praying and fasting may need to cover an extended period of time—2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9.

2. One should pray and fast often—1, 4, 5, 10, 12, and 13.

3. Fasting and prayer is a commandment of God—1, 4, and 12.

4. People should join together in fasting and praying—2, 4, 11, and 13.
CHAPTER VIII

WHY PEOPLE DO NOT PRAY

Why is it that men, women, and children fail in their privilege and opportunity to pray to God? Let us examine the answer given by Nephi:

... For if ye would hearken unto the Spirit which teacheth a man to pray ye would know that ye must pray; for the evil spirit teacheth not a man to pray, but teacheth him that he must not pray.1

Why is it then that we do not pray? Perhaps it is because we follow Satan rather than Jesus Christ. One other example from the Book of Mormon in this regard is the case of the Zoramites:

But they had fallen into great errors, for they would not observe to keep the commandments of God, and his statutes, according to the law of Moses.

Neither would they observe the performances of the church, to continue in prayer and supplication to God daily, that they might not enter into temptation.2

The Zoramites observed the commandment to pray but denied the Spirit in their prayers. As a result they faltered in keeping God's commandments.

The witness of the Book of Mormon, it seems, is that there is one basic reason as to why people do not pray as they should. They have not overcome Satan, but still listen to him and follow him. We must put off the natural man and yield to the enticings of the Holy Spirit and become a saint through Jesus Christ to find the true Spirit of prayer.3

1II Ne. 32:8. 2Alma 31:9-10. 3Mosiah 3:19.
Can We Afford Not to Pray?

As we near the end of this study it is felt it would be worthwhile to pursue the question—Can we afford not to pray? In the light of this study it would seem that the answer would be, no.

The testimonies of the Book of Mormon prophets are that if man is to enter again into the presence of God he must accept Jesus Christ and be born again and thereby be given the power to overcome Satan.1

Satan's desire is that we partake of the temptations that confront us and thereby lose our reward. If we do not pray we cannot expect to be able to follow the path that would bring us into Christ's presence. Satan's desire to have us enter into temptation is expressed in the following scriptures:

But that ye would humble yourselves before the Lord, and call on his holy name, and watch and pray continually, that ye may not be tempted above that which ye can bear, and thus be led by the Holy Spirit, becoming humble, meek, submissive, patient, full of love and all long-suffering;

Having faith on the Lord; having a hope that ye shall receive eternal life; having the love of God always in your hearts, that ye may be lifted up at the last day and enter into his rest.2

Neither would they observe the performances of the church, to continue in prayer and supplication to God daily, that they might not enter into temptation.3

Yea, and I also exhort you, my brethren, that ye be watchful unto prayer continually, that ye may not be led away by the temptation of the devil, that he may not overpower you, that ye may not become his subjects at the last day; for behold, he rewardeth you no good thing.4

Verily, verily, I say unto you, ye must watch and pray always, lest ye be tempted by the devil, and ye be led away captive by him. Behold, verily, verily, I say unto you, ye must watch and pray always lest ye enter into temptation; for Satan desireth to have you that he may sift you as wheat.5

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1Mosiah 5; Alma 5. 2Alma 13:28, 29. 3Alma 31:10. 4Alma 34:39. 5III Ne. 18:15, 18.
The promise stated in the preceding scriptures is that if we fail to pray continually we can expect to be led captive by Satan. Can we then afford not to pray? We should realize that to ignore prayer is to invite Satan to have greater power in our lives. All men should be brought to a careful study of this question, that they may more fully realize the relationship between prayer, temptation, and sin. Nephi certainly understood the relationship between sincere prayer, temptation, and sin when he said:

... the evil spirit teacheth not a man to pray, but teacheth him that he must not pray.

But behold, I say unto you that ye must pray always, and not faint; that ye must not perform any thing unto the Lord save in the first place ye shall pray unto the Father in the name of Christ, that he will consecrate thy performance unto thee, that thy performance may be for the welfare of thy soul.¹

King Benjamin, in his last address to his people, made a statement which, in the opinion of the writer, can be applied to any of the teachings of Christ, and when applied to the Book of Mormon's teaching concerning prayer leaves little doubt as to the importance of prayer.

And now, I say unto you, my brethren, that after ye have known and have been taught all these things, if ye should transgress and go contrary to that which has been spoken, that ye do withdraw yourselves from the Spirit of the Lord, that it may have no place in you to guide you in wisdom's paths that ye may be blessed, prospered, and preserved—

I say unto you, that the man that doeth this, the same cometh out in open rebellion against God; therefore he listeth to obey the evil spirit, and becometh an enemy to all righteousness; therefore, the Lord has no place in him, for he dwelleth not in unholy temples.²

To paraphrase the words of King Benjamin, if after we have been taught all these things from the Book of Mormon concerning prayer, and if we should go contrary to these teachings, we withdraw ourselves from the Spirit of the Lord that it may have no place in us to guide us. The same comes out in open rebellion against God and we desire to obey the evil

¹II Ne. 32:8-9. ²Mosiah 2:36, 37.
spirit, which teaches a man not to pray, and become an enemy to all righteousness; therefore, the Lord has no place in us. Can we afford not to pray?

In the opinion of the writer, anyone who has read and studied the Book of Mormon and still refuses to pray has placed himself in a state of rebellion against God.

The testimony of the Book of Mormon concerning those who are in rebellion against God and their fate if they persist in this rebellious state is:

But wo, wo unto him who knoweth that he rebelleth against God! For salvation cometh to none such except it be through repentance and faith on the Lord Jesus Christ.

But behold, and fear, and tremble before God, for ye ought to tremble; for the Lord redeemeth none such that rebel against him and die in their sins; yea, even all those that have perished in their sins ever since the world began, that have wilfully rebelled against God, that have known the commandments of God, and would not keep them; these are they that have no part in the first resurrection.

Therefore ought ye not to tremble? For salvation cometh to none such; for the Lord hath redeemed none such; yea, neither can the Lord redeem such; for he cannot deny himself; for he cannot deny justice when it has its claim.

But remember that he that persists in his own carnal nature, and goes on in the ways of sin and rebellion against God, remaineth in his fallen state and the devil hath all power over him. Therefore, he is as though there was no redemption made, being an enemy to God; and also is the devil an enemy to God.

Yea, and I know that good and evil have come before all men; he that knoweth not good from evil is blameless; but he that knoweth good and evil, to him it is given according to his desires, whether he desireth good or evil, life or death, joy or remorse of conscience.

Yea, I did remember all my sins and iniquities, for which I was tormented with the pains of hell; yea, I saw that I had rebelled against my God, and that I had not kept his holy commandments.

But behold, ye have rejected the truth, and rebelled against

1 Mosiah 3:12. 2 Mosiah 15:26, 27. 3 Mosiah 16:5. 4 Alma 29:5. 5 Alma 36:13.
your holy God; and even at this time, instead of laying up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where nothing doth corrupt, and where nothing can come which is unclean, ye are heaping up for yourselves wrath against the day of judgment.¹

Now they did not sin ignorantly, for they knew the will of God concerning them, for it had been taught unto them; therefore they did willfully rebel against God.

And they did enter into a covenant one with another, yea, even into that covenant which was given by them of old, which covenant was given and administered by the devil, to combine against all righteousness.²

And it came to pass that they who rejected the gospel were called Lamanites, and Lemuelites, and Ishmaelites; and they did not dwindle in unbelief, but they did willfully rebel against the gospel of Christ; and they did teach their children that they should not believe, even as their fathers, from the beginning, did dwindle.³

Jesus Christ becomes our Master by invitation and constant communication with our Father. The choice, as to whether or not we pray, is ours and no one can make the decision for us. In making the choice, however, we should weigh carefully the end results of our decision. Do we want the reward given to those who would follow Satan?

And thus we see the end of him who perverteth the ways of the Lord; and thus we see that the devil will not support his children at the last day, but doth speedily drag them down to hell.⁴

The emphasis of the Book of Mormon is that we need to pray always and that at no time during our mortal existence will we reach a point where we can cast off the power of Satan without the aid of a greater power than ourselves.

¹He. 8:25. ²III Ne. 6:18, 28. ³IV Ne. 38. ⁴Alma 30:60.
CHAPTER IX

JESUS CHRIST PRAYS

Jesus Christ not only told the people that they should pray but bowed himself to the earth and prayed unto the Father. Thus Christ revealed the will of our Father in Heaven and showed the way by his obedience.

The Book of Mormon records the following concerning Jesus praying:

And it came to pass that when they had knelt upon the ground, Jesus groaned within himself, and said: Father, I am troubled because of the wickedness of the people of the house of Israel. And when he had said these words, he himself also knelt upon the earth; and behold he prayed unto the Father, and the things which he prayed cannot be written, and the multitude did bear record who heard him.

And after this manner do they bear record: The eye hath never seen, neither hath the ear heard, before, so great and marvelous as we saw and heard Jesus speak unto the Father; And no tongue can speak, neither can there be written by any man, neither can the hearts of men conceive so great and marvelous things as we both saw and heard Jesus speak; and no one can conceive of the joy which filled our souls at the time we heard him pray for us unto the Father.

And it came to pass that when Jesus had made an end of praying unto the Father, he arose; but so great was the joy of the multitude that they were overcome.1

And it came to pass that Jesus departed out of the midst of them, and went a little way off from them and bowed himself to the earth, and he said:

Father, I thank thee that thou hast given the Holy Ghost unto these whom I have chosen; and it is because of their belief in me that I have chosen them out of the world.

Father, I pray thee that thou wilt give the Holy Ghost unto all them that shall believe in their words.

Father, thou hast given them the Holy Ghost because they believe in me; and thou seest that they believe in me because thou hearest

1III Ne. 17:14-18.
them, and they pray unto me; and they pray unto me because I am with them.

And now Father, I pray unto thee for them, and also for all those who shall believe on their words, that they may believe in me, that I may be in them as thou, Father, art in me, that we may be one.

And it came to pass that when Jesus had thus prayed unto the Father, he came unto his disciples . . .

And he turned from them again, and went a little way off and bowed himself to the earth; and he prayed again unto the Father, saying:

Father, I thank thee that thou hast purified those whom I have chosen, because of their faith, and I pray for them, and also for them who shall believe on their words, that they may be purified in me, through faith on their words, even as they are purified in me.

Father, I pray not for the world, but for those whom thou hast given me out of the world, because of their faith, that they may be purified in me, that I may be in them as thou, Father, art in me, that we may be one, that I may be glorified in them.

And when Jesus had spoken these words he came again unto his disciples; and behold they did pray steadfastly, without ceasing, unto him; and he did smile upon them again; and behold they were white, even as Jesus.

And it came to pass that he went again a little way off and prayed unto the Father;

And tongue cannot speak the words which he prayed, neither can be written by man the words which he prayed.

And the multitude did hear and do bear record; and their hearts were open and they did understand in their hearts the words which he prayed.

Nevertheless, so great and marvelous were the words which he prayed that they cannot be written, neither can they be uttered by man.

The fact that Jesus Christ felt a need to pray should help to bring all men to a realization that they also need to pray.

The testimony of the Book of Mormon is that the words of Christ were so marvelous that man could not write nor speak them. This experience alone may have been the reason why none of the people who were present ever fell away from the teachings of Jesus Christ.

In III Nephi 19 we have recorded part of Christ's prayer which was an expression of thanks for what God had done. The prayers also

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1III Ne. 19:19-24. 2III Ne. 19:27-34. 3III Ne. 27:30-31.
reveal that Christ has a personal interest in us as he prays for all to accept his words and come out of the world. Christ's plea is also one for unity that the people will accept him so that he may abide in us as the Father is in him.

It is also pointed out that the Holy Ghost is given to those who believe in Jesus Christ, and Christ prays that the Holy Ghost will be given to all those who believe in him through the words of the Nephite Twelve.

Christ used prayer as a means of expressing thanks to his Father and made a plea for people to become united and purified by accepting him and receiving the Holy Ghost.

Let us listen to Jesus Christ speak as he gives his reason for praying.

And as I have prayed among you even so shall ye pray in my church, among my people who do repent and are baptized in my name. Behold I am the light; I have set an example for you.

Therefore, hold up your light that it may shine unto the world. Behold I am the light which ye shall hold up—that which ye have seen me do. Behold ye see that I have prayed unto the Father, and ye all have witnessed.

And ye see that I have commanded that none of you should go away, but rather have commanded that ye should come unto me, that ye might feel and see; even so shall ye do unto the world; and whosoever breaketh this commandment suffereth himself to be led into temptation.¹

¹III Ne. 18:16, 24, 25.
CHAPTER X

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

What Prayer Is

The Book of Mormon is replete with answers to the question, what is prayer?

It is possible for words to have different meaning to different people. Likewise, the word prayer could take on different meanings to various people depending on the experiences of the individual.

A careful study of the Book of Mormon provides the reader with an explanation of the meaning of prayer. It is not possible to turn to any one chapter of this thesis to obtain the answer, but one must consider the many parts of the whole to understand the real meaning of prayer.

The definition given in chapter one of this thesis, that "prayer is communication with God, either vocally or by the forming of thoughts in the mind," is true if one understands how the communication with God is brought about. To the writer this is where the Book of Mormon makes a real contribution in bearing witness as to the meaning of real prayer.

Prayer in its fullest meaning entails communion with God not on an occasional basis or when difficulties arise but on a daily and continual basis. If one has the true spirit of prayer he will do as the Book of Mormon suggests and pray always. Prayer consists of constant contact with God through the Spirit as suggested by Jesus' words when he said, "they
should not cease to pray in their hearts."

The Book of Mormon expresses the need of the individual to make spiritual contact with God. With some men, as pointed out in the Book of Mormon, it took many hours before this contact was made. Prayer must be constant and one must devote all of his thoughts to the matters which concern him in his prayers. Prayer is the communication of our thoughts and desires and not the mere mouthing of words. We need to realize that we must pray with force, conviction, energy, and great earnestness to communicate our thoughts properly.

Prayer is communicating with God in secret, in public, vocally, and in one's soul as he meditates and submits his thoughts to God.

When one is asking that certain requests be granted it is important to remember to ask for the right thing for the right reason. The writer has attempted in this thesis to stress the importance of praying under the direction of the Holy Ghost since it is felt that the Holy Ghost directs people to pray for the right thing and for the right reason. The link between God and the individual is welded together by the Holy Ghost as we pray by the Spirit. The Lord expects us to do more than ask for things when we pray. We should realize that prayer is offering thanks for all God has given us and a recognition of our dependence upon him. Prayer also is a time when we can confess our sins and weaknesses. The description of Enos praying, which has been quoted many times in this thesis, describes what prayer is as it operates in one's life.

**Importance of Prayer in a Person's Life**

The writer has attempted to explain the Book of Mormon's teaching

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1. III Ne. 20:1.
concerning the importance of prayer in a person's life in chapters three, seven, eight, and nine. This teaching is that after one has made a choice to serve Jesus Christ then prayer is of the utmost importance. It is the evil spirit or Satan that tries to persuade men not to pray, while it is the Spirit or Holy Ghost that teaches a man that he must pray in order that the things he does will be for the good of all concerned. The reason why Satan is so interested in having men refuse to pray was mentioned in chapters three and eight. Christ was very specific in pointing out in III Nephi 18:15, 18 that without prayer we will enter into temptation to the point we become captives of Satan.

Prayer can keep one in contact with God and Jesus Christ which is important if one is to have the power to do all the good he can and overcome sin. Mormon has said:

Wherefore, all things which are good cometh of God; and that which is evil cometh of the devil; for the devil is an enemy unto God, and fighteth against him continually, and inviteth and enticeth to sin, and to do that which is evil continually.

But behold, that which is of God inviteth and enticeth to do good continually; wherefore, every thing which inviteth and enticeth to do good, and to love God, and to serve him, is inspired of God.

But whatsoever thing persuadeth men to do evil, and believe not in Christ, and deny him, and serve not God, then ye may know with a perfect knowledge it is of the devil; for after this manner doth the devil work, for he persuadeth no man to do good, no, not one; neither do his angels; neither do they who subject themselves unto him.

For the individual that has decided he wants to overcome Satan there can be no question as to the relative importance of prayer in his life. Prayer must become meaningful and a part of his daily life. Prayer should have its origin in the heart or soul of the person.

One should remember that prayer filled an important need in Christ's life even after his resurrection as shown when he prayed among the Book of

1II Ne. 32:8, 9.  
2Moroni 7:12, 13, 17.
Mormon people,¹ Certainly if Christ, being holy, had need to pray then we, being unholy, have need to make prayer an important part of our lives.

A person could reap great spiritual dividends by concentrating upon improving his attitude towards prayer, thus making prayer a more meaningful experience.

The Repetition of the Teaching of Prayer
in The Book of Mormon

The findings of the writer indicate that prayer is an oft repeated subject of the Book of Mormon writers. William E. Berrett, a noted writer in the church, has said:

Perhaps none of our scriptures are so full of instructions to mankind regarding prayer as is the Book of Mormon. The first page relates a prayer of the Prophet Lehi for his people, and the last chapter contains the admonition of the Prophet Moroni to test the truthfulness of the book by prayer. Between those opening and closing pages is a unique record of a praying people, prayer which literally opened the heavens and brought blessing after blessing upon the faithful.²

The frequency and number of incidents in the Book of Mormon about prayer may escape the average reader. This frequency is shown in table one.

On the basis of this study, table one reveals that only the Book of Jarom in the Book of Mormon fails to make direct reference to the subject of prayer, and this probably because, as was mentioned by Jarom, that the plates were small.³ The most interesting fact revealed by this table is that prayer is mentioned in almost 40% of all the chapters in the Book of Mormon. This would indicate its importance in the lives of the Book of Mormon writers.

¹III Ne. 17; 18; 19.
³Jarom Vs. 2.
### TABLE 1

**FREQUENCY OF THE SUBJECT OF PRAYER IN THE BOOK OF MORMON**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Books of the Book of Mormon</th>
<th>Verses or Portions of Verses Quoted</th>
<th>Percentage of Total Verses Quoted</th>
<th>Total Chapters</th>
<th>Total Chapters Where Subject of Prayer is Mentioned</th>
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*Less than 1%.*
Concerning Prayer

The Book of Mormon from the writer's viewpoint is valuable in teaching the concept of prayer as it attempts to answer the following questions as found throughout this thesis:

1. Why do we pray in the name of Jesus Christ?
2. To whom should we pray?
3. What does it mean to pray in the name of Jesus Christ?
4. Do answers to prayer come as a direct result of our righteousness?
5. What is the proper attitude towards prayer?
6. What is the proper attitude while praying?
7. Why is it important to pray under the direction of the Holy Ghost?
8. Why do we kneel on occasions when praying?
9. How often do we need to pray?
10. How can one pray for extended periods of time and not use vain repetitions?
11. What does it mean to pray continuously or always?
12. Where is the place of prayer?
13. Should we pray in secret?
14. Should we pray in public?
15. How does the Lord feel about written prayers?
16. What should we pray about or for?
17. Why do people pray?
18. Is prayer a commandment?
19. Should prayer consist of more than the speaking of words?
20. How may answers to prayer be revealed?
21. Why are not our prayers answered as we desire?
22. How can material riches reduce the power of prayer in our lives?
23. What is the relationship of prayer to the principle of repentance and forgiveness?

24. What is the relationship of prayer to fasting?

25. Why do we fail to pray as we should?

26. Can we afford not to pray?

27. Did Jesus Christ pray?

28. Can we expect answers to our prayers?

Recommendations in Teaching Prayer

Using the Book of Mormon

As stated before, one of the purposes of this thesis is to aid the teacher by bringing together and quoting the verses or portions of verses that apply to the various aspects of prayer. An attempt has also been made to indicate some of the important points revealed by these verses. It is hoped that the approach used in this thesis will enable the teacher to gain a complete concept of what the Book of Mormon teaches concerning prayer and the emphasis given.

It is the recommendation of the writer that prayer as explained in the Book of Mormon could be taught best by taking several days and discussing the various aspects of prayer and tying together all of the verses relating to its practice. It is believed that this approach would help the student gain a greater understanding and testimony of prayer and its relative importance in his life.

Moroni challenged all readers to pray and determine for themselves the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon. It would seem that a study of the Book of Mormon could begin with a lesson concerning the Book of Mormon's teachings on prayer. The student would then be better qualified to put Moroni's promise to the test, and have a meaningful prayer experience.
Conclusions

The writer has been impressed by the comprehensive coverage of prayer in the Book of Mormon and on the basis of this study has arrived at the following conclusions:

1. An understanding of the teachings of prayer in the Book of Mormon should give added light and faith to the teacher who would strive to obtain the Spirit that he may teach as the Spirit directs.

2. Prayer is a commandment of God.

3. The Book of Mormon prophets believed in and taught the subject of prayer.

4. Prayer is a significant teaching in the Book of Mormon.

5. One should pray always.

6. Prayers are to be offered to God in the name of Jesus Christ.

7. One should strive to pray under the direction of the Holy Ghost.

8. Satan teaches man not to pray.

9. Prayer is very important if one is to overcome Satan and temptation.

10. The condition of the mind or heart is very important when one prays.

11. Places of worship are not the only places where one can pray.

12. Man needs to rely more upon prayer.

13. Secret prayer is very necessary.

14. Family prayer is important.

15. Jesus Christ has personally appeared in answer to prayer.

16. People can help to bring about great changes in another person's life by praying for him.

17. True repentance involves prayer.

18. An improper attitude towards material riches can reduce the power of prayer in our lives.

19. There are times when prayer needs to be for long periods of time.

20. Fasting should be accompanied by prayer.

21. God cannot answer all prayers as we desire.
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Other

THE BOOK OF MORMON AS AN INSTRUMENT IN TEACHING
THE CONCEPT OF PRAYER

An Abstract of a Thesis
Presented to the
Department of Religious Education
Brigham Young University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Religious Education

by
John H. Mabey
August 1963
ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to determine and present as completely and as clearly as possible what the Book of Mormon teaches concerning prayer in order that one may gain a greater understanding of prayer and become more conscious of the need to make prayer a part of his life. It is also the purpose of this study to show how the Book of Mormon can aid the teacher by pointing out the many scriptural passages that could be used in teaching prayer. These teachings on prayer have been classified under the following chapter headings: Some Basic Essentials of Prayer, Why People Pray and for What, Words that Express a Prayer Was Offered, How Answers to Prayer Were Given, Why God May Not Answer Our Prayers as Desired, The Relationship of Prayer to Gospel Principles, Why People Do Not Pray, and Jesus Christ Prays.

In the various chapters will be found lists of references. The place where the verse or portions of verses are located will be cited first; then the name of who is speaking or writing, or who the reference is about; and finally the verses or portions of verses are quoted.

It was found that prayer may consist of asking for specific things, expressing thanks for the things we receive, and confessing sin.

Prayer was found to be important in a person's life because:
(1) Christ, during his personal ministry, spoke often of the need we have to pray. (2) We must pray to obtain power to overcome temptation. (3) We need to express thanks to God for what he has given us. (4) We need to show an interest in others. (5) We need direction in making decisions.
The findings of this study indicate that prayer was taught frequently in the Book of Mormon. Approximately 331 verses refer to prayer and 39% of all the chapters speak of prayer in some way. The Book of Jarom is the only book that fails to make direct reference to the subject of prayer.

The study further indicates that some important teachings of the Book of Mormon concerning prayer are: prayer is a commandment of God; we should pray always; prayers are to be addressed to God in the name of Jesus Christ; we should strive to pray under the direction of the Holy Ghost; Satan teaches we should not pray; prayer is very important in overcoming Satan and temptation; we should pray from the heart; secret prayer is important; we should pray with our families; repentance involves prayer; we should not only ask for things but express sincere thanks for the blessings God has given us; fasting should be accompanied by prayer; God cannot answer all our prayers as we desire; and prayer may be offered vocally or within one's heart.

APPROVED:

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