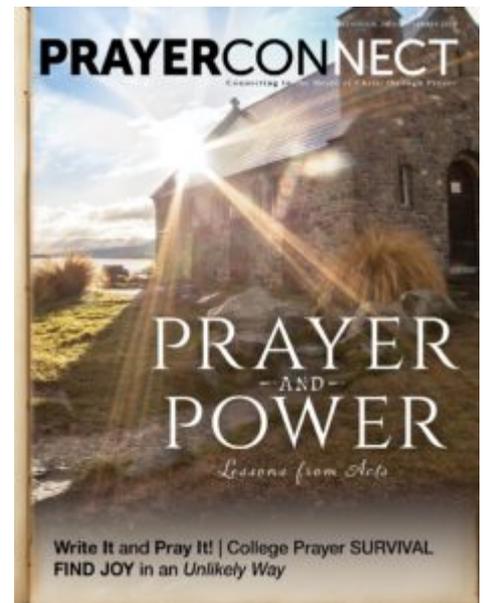


Theme Introduction

Prayer and Power: Lessons from Acts

By Carol Madison

When the editorial staff of Prayer Connect decided to do an issue of the magazine on the topic of prayer in the Book of Acts, I took the summer of 2017 to pray my way through Acts. I sat on my porch many evenings while I outlined every instance of prayer I found. Then I journaled my personal prayer responses to everything related to the way God advances His Kingdom through the faithful prayers of ordinary people.



This journey deepened my faith and my longing to see the same power demonstrated in my own prayer life. Of course, as I prayed, I had surges of great confidence but also times of momentary wavering. That seems to be a pattern in my prayer life whenever I ask God for supernatural breakthroughs. But I pray on!

Natural Benefits

Acts is loaded with prayer principles for those who, like the early Christians, live a prayer lifestyle. This sample of truths both encourages me and challenges me:

- We need to know Jesus intimately if we are to lead well in the Kingdom (1:21–22)
- Scripture is a wonderful way to frame our prayers in

appealing to the character of God. The apostles often quoted the Word to express their hope and expectation for breakthrough, based on what they knew to be true of God (2:14–36).

- The apostles prayed and trusted the Spirit to lead and direct them in every move they made, even with the casting of lots to determine new leadership! (1:24–26).
- The power of repentance invites the refreshing work of the Spirit (2:38).
- The greatest prayer we can offer someone is for healing in the name of Jesus—both for their soul health and their physical health (3:4–6).
- Prayer empowers God’s people to boldly speak the truth of Jesus (3:12–16).
- When we share intimacy with Jesus in prayer, people will notice (4:13).
- Opposition fueled the early believers’ prayers. They did not focus on escape from persecution but rather invited the Spirit to fill them with greater boldness to speak of Jesus. Persecution is a catalyst for the gospel (4:29–31).

As you can see, I only have space here to write my impressions from chapters 1–4. The other 24 chapters are also packed with faith-filled prayer, the Holy Spirit’s power, and earth-shaking manifestations of God’s Kingdom!

Supernatural Power

In this issue, we try to capture some prayer lessons in Acts. Dick Eastman explains many of the supernatural components of prayer, including empowerment, courage, unity, and generosity. As a global ministry leader, he believes the advancement of the gospel comes through embracing the supernatural. Daniel Henderson devotes his ministry to training pastors to pray, preach, and lead with the kind of power found in Acts. He

writes about the need to “sit there” and listen to the Spirit before making any moves or decisions. And Sue Detweiler reminds us that Spirit-led prayer will disrupt the status quo, challenge boundaries of faith, and turn the world’s system upside down!

After working my way through Acts, I came to the closing verses that sum up Paul’s ministry—always fueled by prayer. Imagine this kind of supernatural breakthrough:

For two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him. He proclaimed the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ—with all boldness and without hindrance! (28:30–31).

It’s summer again. How about if we all sit on our porches and pray through Acts? I could use another round of hope and expectation for supernatural empowerment!

CAROL MADISON is editor of *Prayer Connect*.