

# I Give Myself Unto Prayer

by Octavius Winslow

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of prayer in our lives, particularly in times of sorrow, and highlights its power to bring us closer to God and receive His blessings.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 34:18, Psalm 119:4, Matthew 7:7, Romans 8:26-27, 2 Corinthians 1:3-4, Philippians 4:6-7, 1 Thessalonians 5:17, Hebrews 4:16, James 5:16, Revelation 5:8

**Topics:** "The Power of Prayer", "Comfort in Sorrow"

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## Description

Octavius Winslow emphasizes the power and necessity of prayer, urging believers to bring their empty hearts to God, who transforms their sorrow into sweet incense through the sacrifice of Jesus. He encourages those in distress to approach the Lord with their burdens, assuring them that even the faintest prayers, mingled with grief, are precious to God and rise to Him as a fragrant offering. Winslow highlights that prayer not only comforts and calms the heart but also brings the presence of Jesus closer to the believer, especially in times of loneliness and adversity. He reassures that every sincere prayer, no matter how weak, is heard and valued by God, promising that blessings will return to the praying heart. Ultimately, he calls on Christians to dedicate themselves to prayer, especially in their darkest hours, to experience divine consolation.

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## Transcript

I give myself unto prayer. Psalm 119:4

OH, give yourself to prayer! Say not that your censer has nothing to offer; that it contains no sweet spices, no fire, no incense.

Repair with it, all empty and cold as it is, to the great High Priest, and as you gaze in faith upon Him who is the Altar, the slain Lamb, and the Priest, thus musing upon this wondrous spectacle of Jesus' sacrifice for you, His Spirit will cast the sweet spices of grace, and the glowing embers of love, into your dull, cold hearts, and there will come forth a cloud of precious incense, which shall ascend with the "much incense" of the Savior's merits, an "offering and a sacrifice to God of a sweet-smelling savor." Nor forget that there is evening as well as morning incense. "When Aaron lights the lamps at even, he shall burn incense." And thus, when the day-season of your prosperity and joy is passed, and the evening of adversity, sorrow, and loneliness draws its somber curtains around you, then take your censer and wave it before the Lord.

Ah! methinks at that hour of solemn stillness and of mournful solitude--that hour when all human support and sympathy fails--that then the sweetest incense of prayer ascends before God. Yes, there is no prayer so true, so powerful, so fragrant, as that which sorrow presses from the heart. Oh, betake yourself, suffering believer, to prayer. Bring forth your censer, sorrowful priest of the Lord! Replenish it at the altar of Calvary, and then wave it with a strong hand before God, until your person, your sorrows, and your guilt are all enveloped and lost in the cloud of sweet incense as it rises before the throne, and blends with the ascending cloud of the Redeemer's precious intercession.

Prayer will soothe you--prayer will calm you--prayer will unburden your heart--prayer will remove or mitigate your pain--prayer will heal your sickness, or make your sickness pleasant to bear--prayer will expel the tempter--prayer will bring Jesus sensibly near to your soul--prayer will lift your heart to heaven, and will bring heaven down into your heart. Mourning Christian, give but yourself unto prayer in the hour of your sorrow and loneliness, and your breathings, sent up to heaven in tremulous accents, shall return into your own disconsolate and desolate heart, all rich and redolent of heaven's sweet consolations.

The holy breathings which ascend from a believer's heart gather and accumulate in the upper skies, and when most he needs the refreshing, they descend again in covenant blessings upon his soul. That feeble desire, that faint breathing of the soul after God, and Jesus, and holiness, and heaven, shall never perish. It was, perhaps, so weak and tremulous, so mixed with grief and sorrow, so burdened with complaint and sin, that you could scarcely discern it to be real prayer, and yet, ascending from a heart inhabited by God's Holy Spirit, and touched by God's love, it rose like the incense-cloud before the throne of the Eternal, and blended with the fragrance of heaven.

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