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## Facets of Prayer

Author(s): Truman G. Madsen

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**Abstract:** This article is an essay for youth about prayer, using Enos as the model.

Don't miss the  
companionship in

## Prayer



# Facets of prayer

by Truman G. Madsen

My point is simple. The "how" of prayer is both the hardest and the easiest thing in the world. Enos proves it.

My inspiration is simple: I know a lot of twentieth century lads just like Enos.

One afternoon Enos went "to hunt beasts in the forest." He was not long in the wilds before he forgot all about hunting. He forgot because he began remembering. Here is what he wrote:

*... the words which I had often heard my father speak concerning eternal life, and the joy of the saints, sunk deep into my heart. And my soul hungered. . . .*

He went to his knees and began to cry unto God for relief from his backlog of evasion and cover-up.

How long did he pray? All day long and on into the night. What could he possibly say in all that time? He tells us that his prayers were "many long strugglings," a searching and ex-





posing of his own depths, pouring out "my whole soul."

The answers (and they came in what a present-day apostle calls "finished sentences") overwhelmed him. "Enos, thy sins are forgiven thee. . . ." He prayed on, and still on, for those he loved, for reassurance about the future. And when testimony came, here, too, "I . . . knew that God could not lie; . . . wherefore my soul did rest."

And he returned home.

So what was unique about Enos' prayer?

### The Hidden Self

It was a "wrestle which I had before God," a pouring of his real self into the cups of his words. But it was more than that. At one level we all indulge the daily clichés and more or less "mean" them, e.g.: "Forgive us. . . . Help us overcome our weaknesses." At a deeper level we voice actual present feelings, even when they are raw, ugly, miserable ones. "Father, I am pained—troubled—racked with anxiety." But there is a deeper level, the inmost, which often defies words, even feeling-words. These thirsts may be likened to what the scriptures call "groanings which cannot be uttered." Turned upward they became the most powerful prayer thrust of all. There is a wordless center in us.

Such, we may be sure, was the tone of Enos' prayer through those long hours. He learned that when we break the veil to our deepest self we penetrate also the veil of heaven.

### Faith in Christ

Some might say, "Well, maybe Enos just had more faith than the rest of us; likely he was gifted that way, naturally religious."

Look more closely.

His words suggest that he was surprised to learn he had any faith. He knelt mostly convinced of one thing: a weighing mountain of his own great need. That kind of mountain, incidentally, only faith can move. After many hours of pleading, and receiving, he was in awe. "My guilt was swept away," he says. He did not doubt that it was gone. But marveling he cried out, "Lord, how is it done?"

Note the puzzling answer. "Because of thy faith in Christ, whom thou hast never before



heard nor seen." True enough. He had not seen Christ. But he had heard *of* him in the living words of his father.

But notice also that the instant he had a directing touch from the Lord, it brought a staggering inner influence. "... my faith began to be unshaken ..." he writes. Thus kneeling there, the mustard seed became a tree!

There is, in all of us, an eternity more of trust in Christ than we tap. Kneeling to reach for faith we may find we are reaching with it. That, Enos shows us, is another facet of real prayer.

Enos' response was total. He did not run away holding his ears. We have the hindsight (the record is clear) to know that Enos became a life-long dynamo, that he was "wrought upon by the power of God" unto the end of his days and that he "rejoiced in it above that of the world."

That was foresight for God. Surely the Lord knew the real Enos—that he had it in him to use divine power as he, the Lord, would use it. That enabled him, yes, enabled him, to answer Enos without reserve. It must be a different problem for the Lord to answer cool, bargaining, curious, all-talk-and-no-listen prayers.

And isn't it true that, unlike Enos, we pray for God to change everything—except us?

We hear much today about the "identity crisis" in typical teen-agers, the ache that comes when one begins to ask in a lonely, anguished way, "Who am I? What do I really want?" A lot of fuzzy answers can be given. But what is needed is a change of question. If you are, as I happen to know, an embryonic Enos, then you can kneel in some forest or other and ask from the center of you, "Whose am I?" And I testify that when you expose your hidden self and latent faith and when you honor the quiet voice with total response, you will make a double discovery—yourself and Jesus Christ.

That is what prayer is all about.

