

The Power of Earnest Prayer Notes

Acts 12:1-19

Rev. Brian Bill

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Main Point: God often does the unexpected when we're earnest in prayer.

God _____ persecution (vs. 1)

1. Agrippa I was quite a politician and worked hard to curry _____ with the Jews (vs.2)
2. Killed with the sword means James was _____.
 - James and John were known in the gospels as the "sons of _____" who along with Peter, made up the inner circle of Jesus.
 - At one point their mother requested positions of prominence for her sons in Jesus' kingdom (Matthew 20:20-22).
 - The word "cup" is a synonym for _____.
 - James was the _____ of the apostles to die and John was the last.
3. Having received praise for killing James, Herod decided to arrest Peter.
 - The Jews thought it profane to put someone to _____ during this 8-day celebration.
 - It would have caused a _____ (Matthew 26:5).
 - Herod wanted to wait until he had the Jews full _____ and celebrate his sinister deed.

God's people _____ (vs. 5)

1. When their leader was locked up and on death row, the church turned to the _____.
2. The word "earnest" means "_____, unceasing and diligent" and was used of an athlete "straining and stretching" to cross the finish line.
3. It was used to describe the prayer of _____ in Gethsemane (Luke 22:44).

God gives _____ (vs. 6)

1. Shackled between two soldiers and knowing he was going to be executed in the morning, Peter fell _____.
2. Psalm 4:8, Psalm 121:4, John 21:8.

God sends His _____ (vs. 7)

1. "Behold" is the idea of "_____."
2. Peter is sleeping so soundly the bright light of the glory of the Lord doesn't cause him to stir.
3. God's angels are _____ right next to you (Psalm 34:7).

God displays His _____ (vs 7-10)

1. Because Peter is sound asleep, the angel had to wake him up with some _____ (vs. 7).
2. The word "struck" means "a forceful blow."
3. The angel gives Peter some short and crisp instructions (vs. 8).
4. "Follow me" means "_____ on following me."
5. Peter obeyed even though he was still in a fog (vs. 9).

6. The angel leads him pass the guards and through the thick iron gate that opened on its own.
7. As soon as Peter was freed, the angel _____ left him (Hebrews 1:14).

God uses _____ people (vs 12)

1. The angel could have taken Peter to Mary's house, but let Peter find it on his own.
2. God only does the miraculous when it is absolutely _____.
3. Rhoda means "_____."
4. Rhoda immediately recognized Peter's _____.
5. "Joy" means "glad _____."
 - She was so excited she quickly _____ to communicate the good news that Peter was outside.
 - You'd think these prayer warriors would rejoice at this news, but instead they accuse her of being _____ (vs. 15).
 - She kept insisting means "vehemently asserted strongly"
 - They shouted back "It is his angel!"
6. The answer to their prayers was standing at the door, but they didn't have enough _____ to open the door and let him in.
7. They heard the sound of loud banging (vs. 16).
 - They opened the door and were amazed.
 - Amazed means "_____ and bewildered."
8. He explained what the Lord did and gave instructions to tell James and the brothers.
 - James here is the _____ - _____ of Jesus.
9. Peter departed and went to another place (vs. 17).
10. Six qualities
 - _____ serving.
 - Unusual discernment.
 - Unbounded _____.
 - Immediate obedience.
 - _____ criticism.
 - Exhibited _____.
11. The believers _____ believe God answered their fervent prayers.
12. God not only answers prayer, but His power is not dependent on our praying _____.

God's purposes _____ (vs. 18-19).

Life Lessons

1. Trust God's _____
 - Peter was released at the last-minute, in the hours right before he was slated to be executed.
2. _____ to God's sweet sovereignty.
 - God acts according to His plans and purposes and yet He commands us to pray (James 4:2).
3. Ask God to set you free from the prison of _____.
4. _____ earnestly for the persecuted (Hebrews 13:3).