

## Praying With The Prayers Of The Bible:

### Praying the Prayer of Forgiveness:

Numbers 12:13, 'O God, heal her, I pray.' These six words are Moses' prayer for his sister Miriam. They tell us a lot about Moses and a lot about prayer. For some time Miriam and her brother Aaron had been simmering with anger against Moses. They protested that he had married a Cushite woman (v.1), but the real cause of their animosity was jealousy. 'Has the Lord spoken only through Moses?' (v.2). Don't we have a ministry as well? Hasn't God also spoken through us? Why does everyone look to Moses? Why are we overlooked? Jealousy is a powerful and deadly emotion. God had given ministries and honour to Miriam (Exodus. 15:20,21) and Aaron had become the chief priest (Num. 3:1-3), but neither of them were satisfied with that. It looks as if Miriam fomented and took the lead in criticising Moses. Suddenly the Lord intervened (v.4). He called Moses, Aaron and Miriam together and defended his servant Moses. Moses is faithful in all my house! (v.7) Whereas the Lord had often spoken to other prophets in dreams and visions, He speaks to Moses 'mouth to mouth' (v.8). How dare Aaron and Miriam question Moses whom the Lord called 'my servant' (v.8). Having so strongly defended Moses and rebuked his critics, the Lord departed and then the divine judgement fell. Suddenly Miriam, the leader of the conspiracy, was struck down with the dreaded leprosy.

Aaron immediately cried out to Moses, confessing his own and his sister's sin and foolishness (vv. 11,12). Then Moses demonstrated why the Lord honoured him so highly. He expressed no anger, no vindictiveness, no spirit of 'settling scores' against his brother and sister. In spite of their antagonism and jealousy, Moses loved them both and 'cried to the Lord' on behalf of Miriam. He prayed one of the shortest prayers found in the Bible. 'O God, heal her, I pray' (v.13). He was grieved and full of compassion to see his sister so terribly afflicted. The prayer was prompted by the love that forgives, the love that overlooks what others have done to us, the love that wants God's best for them. And only God's grace can make us like that. The prayer is so short, so simple, so direct, so personal. 'O God, heal her, I pray.' And God heard and answered. As a warning to others who might challenge Moses' authority, Miriam was quarantined for seven days, then fully healed and restored (vv.14, 15). How does this incident help us in our prayer life? First, true prayer is born in compassion. The lips express the deep feelings of the heart. Second, God will not hear our prayers if our hearts are not right with him and with one another. While we cherish resentments and grudges, our praying is powerless. Third, while there are many times when prayer needs to be persistent, there are also times when it is a simple, deep cry from the heart.

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**Even if you are on the right track,  
you'll get run over if you just sit there.**

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