

The Power of a
PRAYING[®]
Husband

STORMIE
OMARTIAN



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All the stories related in this book are true, but most of the names have been changed to protect the privacy of the people mentioned.

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Contents

A Word from Michael	9
The Power	13
1. Her Husband	29
2. Her Spirit	43
3. Her Emotions	51
4. Her Motherhood	59
5. Her Moods	71
6. Her Marriage	79
7. Her Submission	91
8. Her Relationships	99
9. Her Priorities	107
10. Her Beauty	115
11. Her Sexuality	123
12. Her Fears	131
13. Her Purpose	139
14. Her Trust	147
15. Her Protection	155
16. Her Desires	163
17. Her Work	171
18. Her Deliverance	177
19. Her Obedience	187
20. Her Need	195
21. Her Future	203
Prayer and Study Guide	213



A Word from Michael

Let's face it, men, by the time we marry we bring many years of experiences, habits, personality traits, memories, preconceived notions, and personal ambitions with us into the marriage. Suddenly we are joined, for a lifetime, with a mate who has also brought many years of experiences, habits, personality traits, memories, preconceived notions, and personal ambitions into the marriage with her. We are faced with the need to communicate, compromise, submit to one another, and be unselfish. A tall order, to be sure. Either God has a tremendous sense of humor, or a desire to keep us continually growing. Probably both.


God intends each of our marriages to be a way for us to be totally fulfilled, but we have to live as an example of Christ's love for us. That's why a man's communication with his wife is dependent upon his communication with the Father. Praying specifically for our wives is a powerful thing. God is always listening. He considers every word. Yes, the God of all creation has His ear inclined toward us, and in Him we have the opportunity to defuse bombs the enemy has planted that are set to destroy what God has joined together.

Are there things about our wives we would like to see changed? Praying for those changes invites God to do great things in our lives. Without prayer, the success of our marriages depends on our own wisdom and effort. But what a resource for success awaits us when we pray! We see not only answers to our prayers for our wives, but things happen in us as well.

Throughout my marriage to Stormie I have witnessed miraculous answers to prayer—everything from seeing bondage from her damaged past broken in her, to the saving of her life in a medical emergency, to the flourishing of her ministry as an author. The more I understand how my wife benefits directly from my prayers for her, the more I understand how God uses those prayers to build my faith and how He changes and blesses me in the process.

It is with this confidence in God's answering the prayers of a husband for a wife that I recommend this book to you. And I know you'll enjoy it, because I have been praying for my wife as she writes it.

Michael Omartian



*He who finds a wife finds a good thing,
And obtains favor from the LORD.*

PROVERBS 18:22



The Power

Thank you, sir, for reading this book. I'm sure that no one is holding a gun to your head to make you do it, but if she is, tell her to put it down because you intend to keep going.

I don't want to be presumptuous in any way, but I believe it is quite possible that you fit into one of the following categories. See if any of these are true about you:

1. You found this book mysteriously placed on the seat of your favorite chair, on the floor next to the commode, on the pillow on your side of the bed, inside your briefcase or lunch box or toolbox, on the front seat of the vehicle you drive to work, or on top of your desk, worktable, or TV remote.
2. Your praying wife bought this book for you so that you would never again have to feel guilty about not praying enough for her.
3. You bought this book yourself because you've wanted to pray effectively for your wife, but you didn't know where to begin.
4. You have longed to see meaningful and lasting changes happen in your wife, yourself, and your marriage, and you're hoping this book will help.
5. You are already a kind, thoughtful, loving, praying

husband, and you want to always be learning new and effective ways to further bless your wife.

6. A friend recommended this book, and although you're skeptical, you're willing to give it a try to see if anything will come of it.
7. Your life has been threatened, and reading this book seems like a small price to pay in order to preserve it.

Whatever the case may be, I salute you, I commend you. You are a giant among men. I say to you that your efforts in reading this book will be well spent, your time will not be wasted, and you will find great rewards ahead.

Why Her and Not Him?

You may be asking yourself at this very moment, *Why isn't Stormie's husband writing this book?* The answer is simple. He's just like you. He is a busy man, with places to go, people to see, work to do, a family to support, food to eat, a life to live, golf to play, ball games to watch, channels to flip, and a chronic lack of patience when it comes to writing. It's not that he doesn't pray. He does. It's just that he is a man of few words when it comes to prayer. (Quite opposite of the way he is when the Chicago Cubs are losing.) In fact, he has always had one direct response to people who ask him, "Why don't you write a book called *The Power of a Praying Husband?*"

"If I wrote it," he says matter-of-factly, "it would be a brochure."
Double-spaced.

With lots of pictures.

The brochure part doesn't really bother me. Brevity isn't the issue as long as I know he is praying. The truth is, a husband's prayers for his wife don't have to be long and detailed. Short and to-the-point prayers are also powerful. That's because God has given the husband authority in the spirit realm that is unequalled. Whether or not his prayers are answered, however, depends on how that authority is handled. (More about that in the next chapter.)

With the success of my book *The Power of a Praying Wife*, I was afforded the opportunity to travel the country speaking to thousands of women and talking one-on-one with hundreds of them in each city I visited. I heard about their deep longings to have better relationships with their husbands and to see their marriages work successfully and become a source of fulfillment and joy for all concerned. The encouraging part to me was that these wives had found great answers to prayer when they had learned to pray for their husbands the way God wanted them to.

In letters and in person, I was asked countless times by these women to write *The Power of a Praying Husband*. I didn't seriously consider doing it until men started bringing up the same question.

"When are you going to write *The Power of a Praying Husband*?" many of the husbands would ask me.

"Would you actually read it if I wrote it?" I always asked them in return.

"Yes, definitely!" each one of them responded strongly. "I *want* to pray for my wife, but I just don't know how."

I was surprised at the consistency of their responses and deeply touched by the honesty and sincerity with which they were spoken.

When I told my husband, Michael, about this repeated request from so many husbands as well as from the praying wives, without even taking his eyes off the TV he immediately suggested that I should write the book.

"Do you think maybe *you* should write it?" I asked him. His eyes glazed over and he gave me that same look I see every time I ask him if he wants to go shopping with me.

"No, you're the writer. I'm a musician," he said with finality, using the characteristically few words he spends on a subject he doesn't want to pursue—especially when he's in the middle of watching a game on television.

"GO, GO, GO, GO, GO," he screamed as he leaped up off the couch.

I was about to leave the room to begin writing immediately

when I realized he hadn't been shouting at me, but instead at one of the Chicago Cubs who had just made it to first base.

"What about you writing the foreword then?" I probed further after he sat back down.

"Yes, definitely," he answered while riveted to the screen. "WAIT, NO, NO NO! YOU IDIOT."

I wasn't sure how to respond.

Then turning to me he explained, "This umpire is an idiot! That guy was safe!"

Feeling great relief that his character analysis wasn't a commentary on *me*, I pursued the conversation further.

"In that case," I continued, "can you give me a list of all the times you can remember when you prayed for me and God answered your prayers?"

"Not now," he protested. "I'll do it between the seventh and eighth innings."

"I meant sometime in the next few *months*," I slowly explained.

"YEAH! YEAH! GOOD! GOOD!" he screamed at the top of his lungs, then looking at me said, "Did you say something?"

"Yes. Would you pray for me as I write this book?"

"Not now. Between the seventh and eighth innings."

"I meant throughout this year."

"Uh-huh."

"Is that a firm uh-huh?" I asked.

"Uh-huh," he replied.

So with my husband's enthusiastic endorsement and the encouragement of many husbands and wives, I have been unanimously elected to bring this book to you. I don't take this vote of confidence lightly. And even though my husband declined to write it, he did say he would be more than happy to orchestrate it if it were ever made into a musical.

Another Good Reason to Read This Book

When I asked God whether I was really the one to write this book or not, I received some interesting insight. I believe one of the main reasons the Lord wants *me* to write it is that there are ways I am suggesting you pray for your wife that might be viewed as self-serving or selfish if a man were to write them. But I'm inviting you to pray in these ways because I know it will be to your wife's greatest blessing as well as your own.

Also, as I thought about how many husbands had asked me to write this book, I began to see that, if I were taking a poll like they do during political campaigns, I could assume that the men I talked to were a good representation of *all* men. This means that my poll reflects *your* thoughts on the subject. Therefore, I'm sure you can see as well as I do that *THIS BOOK IS ACTUALLY YOUR IDEA!*

The Way We Were

During the first 14 of the 40 years Michael and I have been married, we experienced great strife and misery because we tried to do things in the flesh and not in the spirit. We each wanted the other to be a certain way, and we tried to *make* that happen ourselves instead of relying on the power of God to accomplish it. Our methods of forcing things to happen brought far less than satisfying results. Michael used anger as a weapon to control our lives, and I reacted to it by retreating mentally and emotionally.

Of course I had my favorite three-word prayer that I always prayed about the situation. You know the one. It's the "Change him, Lord!" prayer. But God never answered that prayer. Not even once. Then during a time of great strife between us, when I couldn't bear it anymore, I cried out to the Lord desperately for help. And God impressed upon my heart that, if I would be willing to lay down my life in prayer for Michael, He would use me to help Michael become all God had made him to be. In order to do that, however, I had to let God give me a new heart and begin to see Michael from

God's perspective. When I consented to that and learned to pray for Michael in the manner God was showing me, I began to understand the source of his misplaced anger.

Michael was raised by a mother who was overbearing, controlling, and too strict with him. She had expectations of him far beyond his capabilities, inclinations, giftings, or the call of God upon his life. She wanted an A student. He was an undiagnosed dyslexic. She wanted a doctor. He was a musician. She wanted success. He struggled in school. She didn't understand his problem. He didn't understand it either.

Whether it was fair or not, there was a good explanation for his mother's attitude toward him. Her family had lived in Armenia, where most of them had been killed by the brutally oppressive Turkish army. Her own mother, Michael's grandmother, had been forced to watch her children be tortured and murdered right in front of her, a situation so horrendous that I can't even bring myself to write out the details for you here. After the slaughter of her family, Michael's grandmother escaped to America and eventually started a new family, into which Michael's mother was born.

The terrifying memories of what had happened, and the dangers and consequences of being poor, uneducated, and part of a minority in a hostile country, permanently marked the heart of Michael's grandmother and ultimately his mother's as well. They believed it was crucial to study diligently and work hard to ensure that this kind of devastation would never happen again. As a result, any member of the family who didn't do well was an embarrassment. Being a musician was even worse since it was not considered a real job that had any kind of real future.

The struggles of the Depression only added to Michael's mother's fears. As she was raising him in the years after that time, she would speak in terms of "survival," "security," "diligence," "accomplishments," and "excellence." She didn't understand words like "learning disability," "artistic temperament," "musical giftedness," or "unique

calling of God.” She thought he was being difficult and uncooperative. But he was just being who he was, all the while struggling with the belief that it wasn’t enough.

I know all this is true because Michael’s mother told me so. I became close to her in the months prior to our marriage, and I adored her. She became the mother I never had for that brief time before the ravages of cancer took her life less than a year later. Her struggle to survive had dramatically changed her perspective. She shared that with me too.

“I was way too hard on him,” she said to me one day shortly after Michael and I were married. “I see now the mistakes I’ve made. Facing death makes you understand what is really important. I believe Michael suffers with anger and depression because of the way I was with him.”

“Nobody understood those things back then,” I tried to comfort her. “You were only doing what you thought was best.”

“No, I pushed him way too far. I was overcritical. I expected too much,” she answered, and proceeded to tell the same story Michael had told me before we were married.

Because Michael was raised under pressure to be what his mother expected him to be, he was always painfully aware of his inability to meet those expectations. As a result, when he was 19 he had a nervous breakdown. He had been attending college full-time during the day, which is pressure enough for someone with dyslexia, but in addition to that he was working full-time as a musician in clubs at night. The pressure became too much for him to bear. His mother took him to their family doctor, who made the decision to put Michael in a mental hospital because it was near to both the doctor’s office and the family’s home. He believed it would be a good place for Michael to rest and be medically treated for nervous exhaustion.

“The mental hospital was a big mistake,” his mother said to me with tears in her eyes. “He didn’t have anything wrong with him

that required that type of facility, and yet he was locked in a place where he observed the horrifying actions of those who did need it. The experience did more to damage Michael than it did to help him.”

The night before Michael went into the hospital, his cousin led him to receive the Lord. But even though he was then a believer, he still had little spiritual understanding. As a result, his experience in the mental hospital was extremely frightening to him. He thought there might be more wrong with him than there actually was. So what Michael carried with him *out* of that hospital a few weeks later was fear. One of his greatest fears was that he might end up in a mental hospital again. Even 15 years into our marriage, he would still have moments when, overtired and pressured, he would experience anxiety and depression about that very issue.

“The doctor himself later apologized to me,” his mother said sadly. “He told me he believed it had been a mistake to put Michael in the mental hospital. I know he was right, because Michael experienced great depression and anxiety from that time on.”

All that his mother shared helped me to understand the source of Michael’s anger. It even opened my eyes to why he took his anger and resentment toward his mother out on me. He was angry at her, and I was guilty by association. But I was not able to take it very well because of my own past.

I was raised by an abusive mother who was mentally ill and who locked me in a closet for much of my early childhood. Because of this I was filled with fear, depression, hopelessness, and anxiety even into adulthood. I grew up feeling like a failure because my mother repeatedly told me I would be. Her rejection of me made me supersensitive to anything Michael did that also seemed like rejection. Because of the insecurities I brought into the marriage, his harsh words would devastate me, and I would react by withdrawing from him. I viewed him as someone I couldn’t trust with my heart because I never knew when he was going to stab it with the knife of criticism or judgment.

When the pain in my marriage became too much for me to bear, I considered separation and divorce. It was at this point God told me that, if I would surrender my desire to escape and submit to His desire to make me an intercessor for Michael, then God would use me as an instrument of deliverance for him. If I would pray for him the way God instructed me to—which required a major change of heart on my part—God would answer my prayers. What I learned over the following years became the basis for my book *The Power of a Praying Wife*.

Even though I desired to do what God wanted, I still asked Him, “Why am *I* the only one who has to change? Doesn’t Michael need change too?”

But God spoke to my heart, saying, “It’s not a matter of who *needs* to change; it’s a matter of who is *willing* to change. If you’re willing to change, I can work through you right now.”

I don’t know if I was all that willing to change, but I *was* willing to do what God wanted me to do. And so I said “yes” to what He was asking of me. And from the time I began to pray for Michael from a right heart and in the way God was directing me to, I started to see changes in him. He became less and less angry. He began to gain a perspective on his past that he hadn’t had previously.

“I believe that if my father had covered us spiritually the way he should have, things would have been very different for our whole family,” Michael said to me one day. “My dad was a faithful father and husband, and he supported the family financially, but he didn’t have much input into my life. I knew he loved me. He wasn’t an ogre or anything. He was just very passive. He never took any active interest in who I was. For years I wasn’t able to see the situation from my mother’s perspective, but now I have new compassion for her. She had to do everything on her own. She had to carry so much weight in the family. He didn’t cover her spiritually. There wasn’t a balance in the house. She got cancer at 44 and died when she was barely 50, and I believe that was part of what ended up killing her.”

This realization has been instrumental in helping Michael to see the importance of praying for his own family. It has motivated him to pray for me. And I know I owe much of the success of my life to his prayers.

The Power and Authority

The power of a praying husband is not a means of gaining control over your wife. We all know that never really happens anyway. That's because God doesn't want us controlling other people. He wants us to let *Him* control *us*. When we humble ourselves before God and let *Him* control *us*, then He can work through us. God wants to work through you as an instrument of *His* power as you intercede for your wife.

The power in your prayer is God's. When you pray for your wife, you are inviting God to exercise His power in her life. Your prayer enables her to better hear God's voice and respond to God's leading. In spite of that, however, God will never override a person's strong will. If anyone is determined to live outside of God's will, He will let that person do it. So, although your prayers have the potential to be powerful in your wife's life, there is a limit to what they can accomplish if *her* will—or *your* will—is opposed to the will of *God*. "Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us" (1 John 5:14).

God wants us to pray about all things, but He wants us to pray according to His will. That's why it's important to ask God to reveal His will to you and help you pray accordingly. Once you have the mind of God as to how to pray, it's easier to pray fervently and persistently. Just as we can't force our spouses to do what we want them to do, we can't force God to do our bidding either. It's *His* will, not ours that will be done.

Your spiritual authority with regard to your wife and family is unequalled. Because your spiritual authority comes from God, it must be used the way God intended. It must be motivated by His

love and have His glory in mind. All God-given spiritual authority has as its foundation a humility that desires to serve God more than to control others. God wants you to serve Him by exerting your authority over the enemy. You have been given authority “over all the power of the enemy” (Luke 10:19), and you can devastate his plans on your wife’s behalf. If you see the enemy creeping into your marriage in any way, stand up and boldly say:

“I will not permit any plans of the enemy to prevail in our marriage.”

“I will not allow the enemy to drive a wedge between us.”

“I will not stand by and see my wife deceived by lies of the enemy.”

“I will not allow the enemy to attack my wife in any way.”

“I will not allow miscommunication to rule our relationship.”

“I will not permit the mistakes of our past, even yesterday’s, to control our future.”

Then pray, pray, pray. Because when you pray, no weapon formed against her or you will prosper (Isaiah 54:17).

Don’t Leave Your Marriage to Chance

Remember the scripture you read in the very beginning of the book? It says that God has already given you favor simply because you have a wife (Proverbs 18:22). There are certain blessings God has for you just because you are married. That’s because God has declared the two of you to be one in His sight (Matthew 19:4-6). This means that what happens to one of you will affect the other. If she is happy, you will be happy. If you are blessed, she will be blessed. And of course the reverse is also true. If she is not happy, you definitely won’t be either. Her problems are your problems, just as your problems are hers. That’s why *your* prayers for her are so crucial. They will affect you both.

Whatever you don’t pray about in your life you leave up to chance. And that’s not good enough when it comes to your marriage.

The problem with chance in a marriage is, chances are there will

be some difficult times. Chances are there will be disagreements. Chances are there will be misunderstandings and hurts. Chances are there will be selfishness and hardness of heart. That's because we are, after all, human. But if we leave the outcome of these things up to chance, we will wind up in trouble down the line. However, all of these things can be turned around through prayer.

If busyness, workaholism, unforgiveness, strife, child-rearing, careers, separate interests, boredom, or miscommunication has crept in between you and your wife, God can work through your prayers to bring down the wall that separates you, melt the armor that has been put on for self-protection, and mold you together in unity. It will give you a vision of hope for how God can redeem, restore, and make things right. Praying for your wife will not only soften her heart, but it will also soften yours as well.

You don't ever have to slip into marital deadness. Misery or divorce don't ever have to be your only two options. No matter what has happened between you, God can fix it. He is the God of wholeness and restoration. You have Him on your side. He has given you the power and the authority. Use them well.

How to Really Love Your Wife

Jesus said that the greatest act of love is to lay down your life for another (John 15:13). There are many ways to lay down your life for your wife without physically dying. One way is to lay down your life for her in prayer. It's sacrificing a relatively small amount of time for her greatest good, which is ultimately yours also.

There are many things a woman wants to hear from her husband. Three of the top four are probably "I love you," "You look beautiful," and "The bills are paid." But I know that one thing every woman wants to hear, the thing that will make her feel more loved than anything else, is "I'm praying for you today."

Whenever a wife hears that her husband is praying for her, it makes her feel loved and protected. It makes her feel she's important

to him. If you want to see God soften your wife's heart, or make things right between you, or enrich your life together, or cause your marriage to run more smoothly, then pray for her. If you want your wife to throw herself at your feet, ask her, "How do you want me to pray for you today?" (Don't let me down here, ladies. I know you're reading this.) Okay, maybe that's overstating it a bit. But she will love you for it. Those words speak of your commitment to her and the marriage. Of course, if you tell her you're praying for her and you don't actually do it, I wouldn't go out in any lightning storms if I were you.

What If She's Not a Believer?

Most women have a sense of their spiritual side—even those who have no professed religion or organized affiliation with a belief system. They have a recognition that there is a way of life that works and that it's wrapped up in the spiritual.

Prayer touches the heart of anyone for whom we pray. If your wife doesn't know the Lord, you can still pray all the prayers in this book for her and expect to see answers. The Bible says that "the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband" (1 Corinthians 7:14). You provide a covering over her. Of course, this doesn't substitute for her knowing the Lord, but it means that your prayers will have a positive and powerful effect on her. Just remember every time you pray for her, ask God to open her heart to the truth of His Word and give her a life-changing encounter with Him.

What Each Chapter Holds

Each of the 21 chapters in this book focuses on one area of prayer in a way I hope will be enlightening, encouraging, and motivating to you. I will share with you what I have learned from experience and what God has taught me. At the end of each chapter will be the following four sections:

1. She Says

This is the result of a personal survey I made of hundreds of women all over America. I asked them how they wanted their husbands to pray for them. The amazing thing about this is that the results were the same in every city and state I traveled to!

2. He Says

This is what a number of individual husbands said about how they pray for their wives and about the answers they have seen to their prayers. I was encouraged, amused, touched, and enlightened by their words, and I know you will be too.

3. Prayer Power

This is a suggested prayer on the subject of that chapter. You can pray it as it is, or include anything personal you want to add. It's there as a guide for you.

4. Power Tools

This page contains verses from the Bible that lend support to that area of prayer, which will be of great help to you as you pray in depth about it. You can speak these out loud in a declaration of truth over your situation or pray them over your wife.

One Prayer at a Time

Don't be overwhelmed by the many ways to pray for your wife. Simply take it one day and one prayer at a time. You can pray through a different chapter each day, or concentrate on praying one each week. I'm not saying how much you should pray, but the Bible says that "he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully" (2 Corinthians

9:6). The more you pray, the more benefits you will reap. If you want to make room for God to bring about big changes quickly in your wife, yourself, and your marriage, try praying one of these chapters each day for several weeks. See if something good doesn't start happening in your heart and in hers.

Sometimes I have been asked, "Does it really work to pray prayers that someone else has written? In order to truly pray from the heart, shouldn't you make up your own prayers?" My answer to that is, "Does it really work to sing praise songs that someone else has written?" I believe it does. It's good to make up your own praise song, and God delights in that, but the important thing is that what you're praying or singing resonates in your own heart. Is it a prayer that *you* would pray if *you* had thought of it? Do you believe it's a prayer God can answer? If the answer is yes to either of these questions, then that prayer has power. It doesn't matter who thought of it first.

Often when we pray for our mates, we pray about the most urgent need—which is right to do—but we neglect the "maintenance prayers." If you have a high-maintenance spouse, you definitely don't want to do that. Such prayers head off trouble before it happens. They put out small fires before they become roaring flames. Most of the prayers in this book are maintenance prayers. If you pray all of them for your wife a few times a year, you will keep your marriage healthy and enjoy a wife who is happy and fulfilled. They will remind you to pray in ways you might not have had time to think about.

Whether you pray the prayers I have suggested or pray your own, the bottom line is, keep praying and don't give up. Sometimes prayers are answered quickly, but many are not. Jesus said, "Men always ought to pray and not lose heart" (Luke 18:1). Keep praying and you *will* see God answer. And don't worry about how the answers will be manifested. You don't have to make them happen. It's *your* job to pray. It's *God's* work to answer. Trust Him to do His work in *His* way and time.