

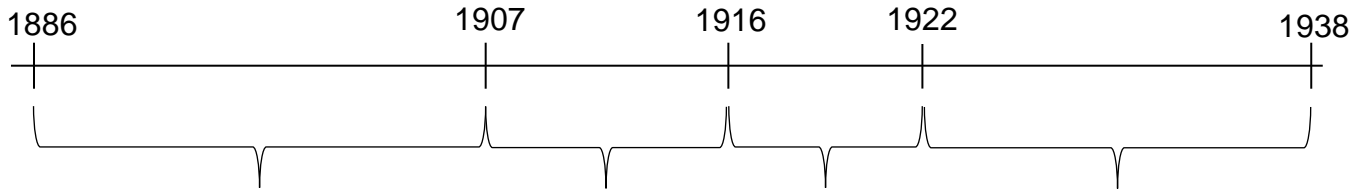
Session 6: Lessons from J.O. Fraser's Prayer Life

Six Men and Their Prayer Lives – Monday Night Bible Study 2025
Michael Garreau



Scan to watch session.

I. Synopsis of Fraser's Life



II. Fraser's Teaching on Prayer

A. *Prayer is an indispensable part of an effective ministry.*

1. From the very beginning of his ministry in China, Fraser understood the importance of prayer. He disciplined himself to pray.

a) *Why prayer is so indispensable we cannot say, but we had better recognize the fact even if we cannot explain it.¹*

b) *I am feeling more and more that it is, after all, just the prayers of God's people that call down blessing upon the work, whether they are directly engaged in it or not. Paul may plant and Apollos water, but it is God who gives the increase; and this increase can be brought down from heaven by believing prayer, whether offered in China or in England. ...Solid, lasting missionary work is done on our knees. What I covet more than anything else, is earnest, believing prayer, and I write to ask you to continue in prayer for me and the work here.²*

2. Years later, Fraser's view of prayer had only deepened.

a) *"I used to think that prayer should have the first place and teaching the second. I now feel it would be truer to give prayer the first, second, and third places, and teaching the fourth."³*

B. *The greater the spiritual opposition, the greater need there is for prayer.*

1. Fraser enjoyed a close relationship with his mother and wrote to her often, asking her to pray alongside him for his needs and the needs of the lost around him. But as he began to focus more of his attention on the Lisu and experienced the

¹ Fraser and Fraser, *Fraser and Prayer: A Memoir by Mrs. J.O. Fraser Combined with The Prayer of Faith*, 30.

² Fraser and Fraser, 26.

³ Fraser and Fraser, 46.

Session 6: Lessons from J.O. Fraser's Prayer Life

Six Men and Their Prayer Lives – Monday Night Bible Study 2025
Michael Garreau

devil's opposition to his message, he began sensing the need for greater support in prayer. He wrote to his mother:

a) *"I know you will never fail me in the matter of intercession, but will you think and pray about getting a group of like-minded friends, whether few or many, whether in one place or scattered, to join in the same petitions? If you could form a small prayer circle I would write regularly to the members."*⁴

2. After a long and difficult survey trip up in Lisu territory, he arrived back at his base and wrote:

a) *"...He would be a missionary simpleton who expected plain sailing in any work of God. I will not, by God's grace, let anything deter me from going straight ahead in the path to which He leads, but I shall feel greatly strengthened if I know of a definite company of pray-ers holding me up. I am confident that the Lord is going to do a work, sooner or later, among the Lisu here."*⁵

C. Victory over Satan both in one's inner life and in ministry comes through our definitely and persistently claiming the victory which Jesus Christ has won for us on the cross.

1. Fraser experienced many setbacks and discouragements in his ministry. In the midst of his struggles, a letter got through to him with an enclosed copy of a magazine called "the overcomer." Fraser writes:

a) *"I read it over and over... What it showed me was that deliverance from the power of the evil one comes through definite resistance on the ground of the cross. ...I felt like a man perishing of thirst, to whom some beautiful, clear cold water had begun to flow. ...The Lord Himself resisted the devil vocally: 'Get thee behind me Satan!' I, in humble dependence on him, did the same. I talked to Satan at that time, using the promises of Scripture as weapons. And they worked. Right then, the terrible oppression began to pass away."*⁶

2. On another occasion, Fraser was attacked with evil thoughts coming persistently to his mind to the point where he was becoming obsessed with these evil thoughts. He writes:

a) *"These thoughts were present with me even when I was preaching. I went out of the city to a hidden gully on the hillside and there voiced my determined resistance to Satan in this matter. I claimed deliverance on the ground of my Redeemer's victory on the cross. I even shouted my resistance*

⁴ Fraser and Fraser, 28.

⁵ Fraser and Fraser, 28–29.

⁶ Crossman, 51–52.

Session 6: Lessons from J.O. Fraser's Prayer Life

Six Men and Their Prayer Lives – Monday Night Bible Study 2025
Michael Garreau

to Satan and all his thoughts. The obsession collapsed then and there like a house of cards, to return no more. ...In times of conflict I still find deliverance through repeating Scripture out loud – appropriate Scripture brought to my mind through the Holy Spirit. It is like crashing through opposition. 'Resist the devil and he will flee from you.'"⁷

D. People's spiritual darkness ought to provoke us to prayer with great earnestness.

a) *"How else ought we to feel when we see all the ungodliness and unbelief round us on every hand? Would a light-hearted apathy become us under such circumstances? No, indeed! And I want you, please, to join me – or, rather, share with me-in the "provocation" which is daily with me in my work among the Lisu. Let the terrible power of evil spirits among them be a provocation to you. Let their sinfulness, their fears, their pitiful weakness and instability be a provocation to you. Ask God to lay the burden upon you, and that heavily – that it may press you down upon your knees. My prayer for you is that God will work such sorrow within you that you will have no alternative but to pray. I want you to be "sore provoked" as I am.*"⁸

b) *"An earnest desire in spiritual things is a bell ringing for prayer. Not that we should wait for such desires. We should pray at all seasons, whether we are prayer-hungry or not. If we have a healthy prayer-appetite, so much the better."*⁹

E. Trust God to at times lead you beyond general praying into definite requests made in definite faith for definite answers.

1. Fraser distinguished between general and specific praying:

a) *"There is a distinction between general prayer and definite prayer. ...In general prayer I am limited by my ignorance. But this kind of prayer is the duty of us all (1 Tim. 2:1, 2), however vague it has to be. I may know very little, in detail, about the object of my prayer, but I can at any rate commend it to God and leave it with Him. It is good and right to pray, vaguely, for all people, all lands, all things, at all times."*¹⁰

b) *"But definite prayer is a very different matter. It is in a special sense 'the prayer of faith.' A definite request is made in definite faith for a definite*

⁷ Mrs. Howard Taylor, *Behind the Ranges: The Story of J.O. Fraser* (Moody Press, 1964), 120.

⁸ Fraser and Fraser, 34.

⁹ Fraser and Fraser, 34.

¹⁰ Fraser and Fraser, 35.

Session 6: Lessons from J.O. Fraser's Prayer Life

Six Men and Their Prayer Lives – Monday Night Bible Study 2025
Michael Garreau

answer.”¹¹

2. Fraser called this definite kind of praying the prayer of faith and wrote a long letter to his prayer partners explaining the spiritual principles that make this sort of prayer possible. You can find the entire letter online at <https://levaire.com/the-prayer-of-faith-by-james-fraser/>. I would encourage you to read it when you have time.

F. Prayer must be properly balanced with action and hard work.

1. Fraser was a man who gave himself to prayer. But after he had prayed, he didn't sit back waiting passively for God to answer. He went out, he preached, he studies the language, he developed relationships. He writes:

a) *“I do not intend to be one of those who bemoan little results, while ‘resting in the faithfulness of God.’ My cue is to take hold of the faithfulness of God and use the means necessary to secure big results.”¹²*

b) *“God gives us the ground in answer to the prayer of faith but not the harvest. That must be worked for in co-operation with Him. Faith must be followed up by works, prayer-works. Salvation is of grace, but it must be worked out (Phil. ii. 12) if it is to become ours. And the prayer of faith is just the same. It is given to us by free grace, but it will never be ours till we follow it up, work it out. ‘Faith and works’ again. They must never be divorced; for indolence will reap no harvest in the spiritual world.”¹³*

c) *“The Cross is going to hurt – let it hurt! I am going to work hard and pray hard too, by God's grace.”¹⁴*

¹¹ Fraser and Fraser, 35.

¹² Fraser and Fraser, 23.

¹³ Crossman, *Mountain Rain*, 69.

¹⁴ Fraser and Fraser, *Fraser and Prayer: A Memoir by Mrs. J.O. Fraser Combined with The Prayer of Faith*, 25.