Moving Mountains: Praying with Passion, Confidence, & Authority

The other day I found myself commenting to a friend about the significant contribution that John Eldredge continues to make to our understanding of what it means to follow Christ. His big-league batting average rises several more ticks with *Moving Mountains: Praying With Passion, Confidence, and Authority*. At once, you will find it biblically reliable and personally hopeful, but most of all, it will provide a challenge that most of us need as Kingdom leaders.

Title: ***Moving Mountains: Praying with Passion, Confidence, and Authority***

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Book Description:

How would it feel to enter into prayer with confidence and assurance—certain that God heard you and that your prayers would make a difference?

It would likely feel amazing *and* unfamiliar. That's because often our prayers seem to be met with silence or don't appear to change anything. Either response can lead to disappointment or even despair in the face of our ongoing battles and unmet longings—especially when we don't know if we're doing something wrong or if some prayers just don't work.

New York Times bestselling author John Eldredge confronts these issues directly in *Moving Mountains* by offering a hopeful approach to prayer that is effective, relational, and rarely experienced by most Christians.

In a world filled with danger, adventure, and wonder, we have at our disposal prayers that can transform the events and issues that matter most to us and to God. *Moving Mountains* shows you how to experience the power of daily prayer, learn the major types of prayers—including those of intervention, consecration, warfare, and healing—and to discover the intimacy of the cry of the heart prayer, listening prayer, and praying Scripture.

Things can be different, and you personally have a role to play with God in bringing about that change through prayer. It may sound too good to be true, but this is your invitation to engage in the kind of prayers that can move God's heart as well as the mountains before you.

Book Quotes:

God is going to come through alright, but he insists on involving Elijah's prayers. It reminds me of Augustine's line, "Without God, we cannot, and without us, he will not." We find ourselves in the sort of universe where prayer plays a crucial role, sometimes, the deciding role. Our choices matter. LOCATION: 175

I'm not going to try and convince you that you ought to pray. If the struggles of those you love, the heartache of the world, or your own dreams, desires, and afflictions do not move you, nothing I say here would be more compelling. LOCATION: 210

Look—you may not like the story you find yourself in, but your displeasure doesn't make it go away. If the execution of children by ISIS extremists doesn't clarify matters, I just don't know how much more evidence it is going to take to convince the church that we are at war. The dragon has declared war on all those who align themselves with Jesus. The moment we were born, we found ourselves in the midst of a fierce battle. LOCATION: 360

The Cry of the Heart is a beautiful and precious form of prayer. But there is a danger to it (just as romance and friendship have their dangers). The honest release of emotion can at times become a whirlpool that sucks you in. I'm trying to keep you from making agreements while you give yourself permission to have a full, emotional life with God. "I feel forsaken!" is very, very different from "I am forsaken!" "I feel overcome" is much different than "I am overcome." LOCATION: 535

Before we can learn the Prayer of Intervention, we must clarify who we are, and Who we are praying to—or with. For as we saw with Elijah, effective prayer is far more a partnership with God than it is begging him to do something. LOCATION: 607

But now look at things from the father's point of view: How can he see his son from "a long way off" unless he was first looking for his son? He can't see the boy from inside the house, behind a closed door; he must have been out on the porch, searching the horizon for the first glimpse of the returning boy. Do you come to prayer knowing that God is already expecting you, looking for you with longing? LOCATION: 770

Not only a son or daughter, you are also a friend of God—his confidant, his ally in bringing about his work on this earth. LOCATION: 797

The God of four hundred billion billion suns could certainly just give Paul back his sight—zap. But he insisted on using Ananias. What I love about the story is not only the miracle but the relationship Ananias has with Jesus—notice his comfort level in arguing with Jesus about the plan(!). You get the impression Ananias and Jesus are friends, comrades, partners in this young revolution called Christianity. LOCATION: 827

You are not the orphaned child, sitting out in the hall hoping your busy Father will see one of the notes you have pushed under his door; you are not a homeless beggar, standing on the corner hoping God will pass by and hand you a couple of bucks; you are not a refugee, standing in line at the embassy, hoping the Ambassador will hear your request. Not even a faithful servant, humbly trying to do your best. You are a son or daughter of the living God, a friend and ally, wielding his authority to get things done. And by the way—your eternal destiny is to reign. LOCATION: 1028

We really thought this life was simply about getting a nice little situation going for ourselves and living out the length of our days in happiness. I'm sorry to take that from you, but you and I shall soon be inheriting kingdoms, and we are almost illiterate when it comes to ruling. So God must prepare us to reign. How does he do this? In exactly the same way he grows us up—he puts us in situations that require us to pray and to learn how to use the authority that has been given to us. How else could it possibly happen? LOCATION: 1050

Intervening prayer often takes time. And it takes repetition, repeatedly intervening and invoking (eight rounds for Elijah). LOCATION: 1137

We know that Jesus did not mean to teach us to shun repetition in prayer because he used it himself in Gethsemane, praying over and over and over again the same thing: Take this cup from me. LOCATION: 1172

Prayer is more effective when we can get several people agreeing with us. That's just how it works. This is not to say our personal prayers do not have great power and effect; they do! Elijah was alone on the mountain. Daniel appears to have been alone in his fast. Ananias went alone to heal Saul. But let us also accept the truth that the power of agreement in prayer is not to be overlooked. LOCATION: 1194

We do not have to be passive victims of life, waiting until a distant God chooses to do something. We are friends and allies of our intimate God; he has given us power and authority to change the course of events ourselves. Human beings are meant to intervene, to engage, to make a difference. We can move mountains. It's in our DNA. LOCATION: 1279

God is not a reluctant participant in your life, bothered by your requests, unwilling to act until he gets tired of hearing the sound of your voice. LOCATION: 1349

When I come into my office to work on this book, I don't start banging away on my keyboard; that would be utterly foolish and, frankly, a bit arrogant. This book is far too important; I want it fully under the inspiration and guidance of the Holy Spirit. Plus, the enemy jams the process any way he can. So first—after my daily prayers—I turn on some worship music, get down on my knees, and worship God in my office; I worship Jesus "over" my office and the book I am writing. Then I pray something like this: I consecrate my life again today to the Holy Spirit—I consecrate my gifting and my writing; I consecrate this book—every word, every paragraph, every page, all of the structure, the flow, the stories, the very spirit of it. I consecrate this office and my computer. I bring this all under the rule of Jesus and under the filling of the Holy Spirit. And I call forth the creative life rule of Jesus Christ throughout my office today, throughout my gifting and all of my writing, in Jesus' name. LOCATION: 1385

Before the healing power of God can flow into a body, you have to re-present that body to God; you have to bring it under the loving rule of Jesus once again. LOCATION: 1423

I present my body to Jesus Christ as a living sacrifice; I present the members of my body to Jesus Christ as instruments of righteousness. My body has been bought with the blood of Jesus Christ and it belongs to him. My body is a temple of the Holy Spirit. I renounce every way I have misused and abused my body; I bring all those acts under the atoning blood of Jesus Christ. I rededicate my body and all its parts to the loving rule of Jesus Christ; I dedicate and consecrate my body to him in every way. I ask for the blood of Christ to cleanse my body and make it holy once more. Holy Spirit, come and fill your temple now; restore my body under the complete dominion of Jesus Christ. LOCATION: 1428

A word on this—the armor of God is not a metaphor. I think most people have a vague notion about it, not realizing that the armor is a real thing. You are actually putting on real combat gear in the spirit realm; it is just as real as God, whom you cannot see. Take it seriously; this is not symbolic, but actual equipment provided for your safety: Heavenly Father, thank you for granting to me every spiritual blessing in Christ Jesus. I claim the riches in Christ Jesus over my life today. I bring the blood of Christ once more over my spirit, soul, and body, over my heart, mind, and will. I put on the full armor of God: the belt of truth, breastplate of righteousness, shoes of the gospel, helmet of salvation; I take up the shield of faith and sword of the Spirit, and I choose to be strong in the Lord and in the strength of your might, to pray at all times in the Spirit. LOCATION: 1665

And can I add how fruitless it is to seek God's counsel while you are privately committed to one course of action over all others? We must surrender our agendas. We must surrender our "best thoughts" on the matter. We must surrender our secret desires. When we do this, we are in a much better place to receive God's thoughts on the situation. LOCATION: 1799

First off, do whatever you can to reduce the pressure. Pressure is a killer; it nearly always gets in the way of hearing from God. As best you can, lay down the pressure as you seek guidance. Drama never helps; stress

never helps. Give the search some breathing room. Take a deep breath yourself. LOCATION: 1825

Second, be open to whatever it may be that God has to say to you. If you are, in truth, only open to hearing one answer from God—yes, you should buy that house—then it's not likely you will hear anything at all. More sadly, if you do hear a yes, you won't be able to trust it. Surrender is the key. Yield your desires and plans and hunches to the living God so that you might receive from him something far better: his counsel. Consecrate the matter; consecrate the process of decision making too! LOCATION: 1828

The single most significant decision that has changed my prayer life more than any other, the one step that has brought about greater results than all others combined is this (drum roll, please) . . . Asking Jesus what I should pray. LOCATION: 1901

If we pray in line with God's will, we can stand firmly on the promise it will be done. Amen will finally become AMEN! LOCATION: 1910

I want to live and pray like God's intimate ally, so I turn my gaze toward God and ask, What do you want me to pray for her mother and father? Show me what to pray. Those prayers are far more effective because they are aligned with his will. They are aligned with what he is doing in the situation at this particular moment. LOCATION: 1923

Prayer is not making speeches to God; it is entering into conversational intimacy with him. Father to son or daughter, friend to friend, partner to partner, essential prayer is conversational. It involves a give-and-take. Remember the playful exchange between Ananias and Jesus? "You want me to do what?" "Go to this specific house. Place your hands on him." "Wait a second—really?" I understand that prayer speeches are what most of us have seen modeled, but there is a fabulous intimacy and effectiveness available to us as we pause and let God say something in return. LOCATION: 1945

Four times in this passage alone Jesus repeats himself, to make it perfectly clear: his sheep hear his voice. We are meant to hear the voice of God. This is one of the lost treasures of Christianity—an intimate, conversational relationship with God is available, and is meant to be normal. LOCATION: 1958

To be clear, I am not listening for an audible voice, as I would if you and I were talking. I am listening for his gentle voice within, for that is where Jesus dwells—within our very hearts (Eph. 3:17). LOCATION: 2011

Surrender, true open-handedness, on the question before me is crucial to hearing from God. LOCATION: 2015

The Holy Spirit is always praying the will of God, so we want to be as tuned in to the Spirit as we can be. LOCATION: 2045

First, I consecrate and ask the Holy Spirit to fill me. But I don't even start praying after that; second, I ask the Spirit what to pray. How he reveals this is as diverse and creative as the God who made the world around us. Sometimes I will simply hear a word, like, Comfort. So I will begin to pray for comfort. Sometimes he will bring a scripture to mind, and I will let that be the focus of my prayers. Other times he will reveal something key by a "feeling" or a sensation—I will suddenly feel overwhelmed, or discouraged, or fearful when I wasn't moments before—and in that manner he reveals to me what the person I am praying for is under. LOCATION: 2053

So yes, by all means, when I am facing an obstacle I will pray, Jesus, go before me and level mountains; break through gates of bronze and cut through bars of iron here. Give to me the treasures hidden in secret places. Go before me and break through every barrier, Lord! My attitude is, "This is my God; this is how he acts; you can do this, Jesus! I'm praying you would do it for me!" The Scriptures are mighty and Spirit-breathed, and they will lend both precision and power to your prayer life. As you read the Bible, by all means take it in and let

it minister to your soul. But also pray it! This is how we get active and begin to wield "the sword of the Spirit," which has devastating consequences against our enemy. LOCATION: 2229

Now we turn to the form of prayer that often brings the most dramatic and immediate results—prayer that banishes the enemy. It is actually a simple form of prayer, and very effective. The reason more people don't enjoy its wonderful fruits is either because they don't believe we are at war (a worldview that takes massive amounts of denial to sustain) or because they feel intimidated by the subject. So let me make this clear—the enemy always tries to keep you from praying against him, as Jesus taught us to pray, because he knows once you learn how to do this, his gig is up. LOCATION: 2267

We are at war, whether you choose to believe it or not. I said I believe that part of the reason God has left it to be done this way is because he is growing us up; we too must learn to rule and reign. LOCATION: 2284

Notice he doesn't take away the attack; rather, he gives us the authority we need to overcome it. Far better to learn how to shut it down than let it wreak havoc in your kingdom unchecked and unchallenged. You have everything you need to live a life free from Satan's assaults. The demons know your authority in Jesus; they know that if you banish them, they have to obey. Every time they are commanded to in Scripture, they obey. LOCATION: 2290

Resist. Fight back. Take your stand. Scripture is very clear on this point. First, Jesus models it; then the disciples do it, and then Paul and the early church. LOCATION: 2299

We have absolutely nothing to fear. Jesus has secured our everlasting victory over the enemy, whatever his attack might be. We have everything we need. LOCATION: 2342

If you hold on to trauma, rage, or guilt for years, it is likely the enemy is going to use those unaddressed issues as an opportunity to oppress you. My story of fear when I was twelve, left unaddressed, gave the enemy an opportunity until I took that opportunity away through intentional prayer. LOCATION: 2395

Proclaiming, invoking, and enforcing prove most effective here. We proclaim the truth—that is the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God. We invoke the authority of Christ over the specific need—that is how we bring the rule of Jesus back over the place now being claimed by Satan. We enforce the work and authority of Christ directly and specifically against the oppressors—that is how we get the enemy to leave. Demons (often referred to as "foul spirits") are belligerent, deceitful, and rebellious. They need to be confronted with the triumph of Jesus Christ. LOCATION: 2406

Spiritual warfare often tries to work like a computer virus—it loves to transfer around to as many people as it can, infecting whole households or even churches. You can witness this with great clarity when you are standing outside of it. You will step into certain fellowships and immediately feel an arrogant attitude, or perhaps something that feels very "religious" and stifling; perhaps there is a sense of guilt overwhelming the group. You've seen the same thing in family systems—how a particular sin or brokenness will play out down through a family line, such as divorce, infidelity, pornography and sexual sin, alcoholism, violence, poverty, shame, fear. Somebody's sin opened the door, and because the spiritual realm works on authority, the enemy will seize the opportunity of the sin (often repeated and habitual sins) and will try to oppress all those within the "system." LOCATION: 2428

Now we have come in our prayer tutorial to what I believe is the most beautiful form of prayer—prayer for the healing of the heart and soul. At its very best, all prayer is deep communion, drawing us into intimacy and union with our God. When that intimacy and union reaches the damaged places within us, it is like the spring showers that come to Death Valley—wildflowers burst forth from barren ground, and the land looks like Eden again. LOCATION: 2541

Your soul is actually a region of vast mystery and beauty, filled with memories and capacities far beyond the reckoning of the average person educated in the scientific era. Both the Old and New Testaments address the heart and soul as distinct entities (I believe the heart is the seat of your soul, or the center of your soul). They are very real "things" and can be wounded deeply, as anyone who has been heartbroken can tell you. As your own soul will tell you, if you will but listen. LOCATION: 2572

The destiny of the human soul is union with God. The same oneness that Jesus talked about with his Father is our destiny as well. That's what we were made for. Prayer is one of his primary means of doing it, drawing us to himself, getting us to pour out our hearts before him so that we can receive his heart toward us. "Communion with God is the one need of the soul beyond all other need," wrote George MacDonald. "Prayer is the beginning of that communion and some need is the motive of that prayer." LOCATION: 2627

Think of wounding as taking an arrow to the heart and soul. It can come in so many ways: shame, guilt, betrayal, violation, neglect. The list is nearly endless, and growing more and more extreme as the world spirals deeper into darkness. Do not diminish the wounds you have received because you have heard far "worse" stories than yours; minimizing the impact of a wound never heals it. Jesus cares about it all. LOCATION: 2660

Psychologists will sometimes refer to this as "arrested development," when part of our inner being becomes "stuck" at a certain age. It is also called fragmentation, or DID—Dissociative Identity Disorder—an attempt to describe the inner being in need of reintegration. However you choose to describe it, the reality we have seen perhaps a thousand times now in our ministry is that most of us have younger places within us that need the healing ministry of Jesus. A wound does not necessarily result in this brokenness, this fragmentation; wounds do pierce us, painfully, but some events actually shatter part of our inner beings and that broken part remains at the age when the event took place. This is usually true in cases of sexual abuse, but it extends far beyond abuse. LOCATION: 2724

The "undivided heart" is what we are after. As with healing prayer for woundedness, we begin by inviting Jesus in. We ask him to shine his light into the broken places he is trying to reach. Sometimes he will take us back to a memory, a time and place when a shattering blow was given. Sometimes he will simply make us aware of a "young" place in our hearts, a younger "us" that needs his love and comfort. Pay attention. Keep inviting Christ in. LOCATION: 2736

"Healing prayer," said Leanne Payne, "is not the 'instant fix,' nor the bypassing of slow and steady growth. It is that which clears the path and makes such progress possible." This type of prayer is beautiful and indispensable in our journey toward maturity, toward holiness, toward wholeness. But the journey requires other things as well—often counseling, certainly discipleship, and, to borrow Eugene Peterson's phrase, "a long obedience in the same direction." There is no zap that suddenly makes a person as whole and beautiful as Jesus Christ. Wholeness is something we grow into as we walk with Jesus through the years of our lives. Knowing this actually takes a great deal of pressure off—that pressure to find the instant fix or have the One Defining Moment. It releases us to walk with God and allow him to personalize our healing journey. LOCATION: 2763

Consecration, as we have seen, brings the consecrated object back under the rule of Jesus, into his kingdom, and therefore available to his blessing. But before you have the person you are praying for consecrate his body to Jesus, you will benefit from first consecrating yourself! LOCATION: 2795

The mechanics of healing prayer are quite simple: we are invoking the life force of God into the afflicted body to restore it. LOCATION: 2821

First—be very careful how you interpret "unanswered prayer." Our hearts are so vulnerable in these moments. It's just too easy to lose heart. The conclusions come rushing in—God isn't listening; he doesn't care; I'm not

faithful enough; prayer doesn't really work. Catch yourself! Don't let your heart go there! Ask Jesus to help you interpret what is going on. Jesus—catch my heart, is the first thing I always pray. Catch my heart, Lord. Help me interpret what is going on here. Beware those nasty, soul-killing agreements. LOCATION: 2958

"A sower went out to sow some seed . . ." So begins one of the most famous of the story-lessons Jesus left recorded for us. You recall how it goes: Some of that precious seed gets eaten by birds, some sprouts but withers quickly, and some is strangled by those infamous weeds. Only one in four makes it to good soil. A famous metaphor, but I think we've missed one of the staggering implications. Less than half the seeds that Jesus plants ever bear the fruit he longs for. The Son of God is the sower; he says so himself. He then honestly admits that even his efforts prevail only some of the time. Not all of the time—some of the time. One in four. Jesus implies that his batting average is about .250. And this is Jesus we are talking about—the man who walked on water, calmed the storm, fed five thousand, raised Lazarus and a few other people from the dead. What do you make of that? LOCATION: 2988

Have you reconciled yourself to the partial? Are you able to hold on to your faith when only some prayers are answered? It takes genuine maturity. LOCATION: 3010

Dear ones, our real class work has just begun. God is growing us all up. The goal of that maturity—much to our surprise—is not a life free from affliction. Not yet. There is something even greater than happiness, something far higher he has for us. LOCATION: 3022

Our longing for life keeps confusing us about the purpose of life. LOCATION: 3073

The mighty victory is staying true to God. It is maintaining a mature perspective—where God means everything to you—through glorious breakthrough and in the midst of terrible affliction. If you do not hold fast to this, you will be shaken when your prayers do not seem to prevail; you will fall prey to feelings of failure or despair. Or, you will be grasping at promises of unending victory, looking down on those who do not see things as you do. You will be forced to ignore the sufferings of Christ, and our honor in sharing in them. LOCATION: 3102