

Prayer – part 2

The model prayer; The “Lord’s prayer” – **Matthew 6:1-15**

- There are different types of prayer:

1 Timothy 2:1 “I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men;”

1. Supplication: petition, or request – when we ask God to supply our needs.
2. Intercession: when we pray for others, such as for healing or salvation.
3. Thanksgiving and praise: Giving God the glory He so richly deserves for what He has done and for who He is. This is part of worship.
4. Prayer is talking with God not just to Him. It is time spent in His presence.

1. How to be sure that your prayers are answered.
2. Reasons why your prayers are not answered.

- In the life of a Christian prayer is not just one of the many privileges, it is an absolute necessity.
- Without our proper exercise of prayer we cut ourselves off from God who is the source of life, it’s like holding our breath until we pass out – prayer is life and breath to us.
- Reading through the Gospels we see that Jesus constantly urged His disciples to pray.
- From His own example we learn the necessity to pray.

John 1:14 “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”

- When Jesus became a man, when he left the glory above to put on humanity, He died to self-sufficiency in that He became a God dependant Man.
- His life and ministry demonstrate a complete absence of self-dependance.

John 5:19 “Then answered Jesus and said unto them, verily, verily, I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.”

John 5:30 “I can of mine own self do nothing:...”

- The Bible is the believer's guide to prayer, it contains all we need to know on the subject.
- The subject of prayer is expansive and would take a great deal longer to study fully. One approach would be to examine all the prayers in the Bible and see how believers have prayed through the centuries.
- We don't have time for all of that tonight, I'm just trying to point you in the right direction for further study on the subject.

There are 4 basic truths to keep in mind as we approach His throne in prayer:

1. **We can only approach the throne of God in prayer because of or through the shed blood of Jesus who died for our sins.**

Romans 5:1-2 “¹Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: ²By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.”

- By virtue of His finished work on the cross, and not because of anything we have done, knowing that we are bought with a price; it is this understanding that allows us to approach a Holy and Righteous God – otherwise we don't dare!
2. **God in His mercy has given us the name that is above every name to present as we enter into His presence:**
- God delights to honor the name of Jesus.

John 14:13-14 “¹³And whatsoever ye shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴If ye shall ask anything in My name, I will do it.”

3. Even though we are the Temple of the Holy Spirit, we are still subject to the frailties of the flesh. Because of this we don't always know how to pray as we should. **The Holy Spirit however will help us when we need it to pray as we should.**

Romans 8:26-27 “²⁶Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. ²⁷And He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.”

4. **Christ who set the example on earth in prayer continues to pray for us in heaven, making intercession on our behalf:**

Hebrews 7:25 “Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them.”

- It is never a vain or foolish thing to wait upon the Lord:

Isaiah 40:31 “But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.”

James 5:16 “Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”

- Elijah prayed for Specific things, we should be specific as well – not overly generalized.

Luke 11:9-12 ⁹“And I say unto you, ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. ¹⁰For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. ¹¹If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone. Or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? ¹²Of if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?”

- Aimless, non specific prayers never reach their goal. We need to be careful not to ask amiss.
- Bible saints approached God about practical things, temporal things, about spiritual things, and about national matters. Some of Elijah’s prayers related to sunshine and rain.

James 5:17-18 ¹⁷“Elijah was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. ¹⁸And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.”

- Many of the Bible prayers teach us to pray for others rather than for ourselves, we shouldn’t confine our prayers simply to our needs, but to consider the needs of others.
- When we pray for others we should maintain somewhat of a balance. Our prayers can at times be biased in a way that reflects poorly upon others.
- It might be better to pray at times that we have a right attitude toward them and be a blessing to them.

Colossians 4:12 “Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.”

1 Thessalonians 5:23 “And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

- Jesus gave us some general rules for prayer – some “do’s” that will make our prayer life more effective:

1. **Jesus taught that our prayer must be accompanied with faith.**

Matthew 21:21-22 “²¹Jesus answered and said unto them, verily I say unto you, if ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done. ²²And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.”

- How can prayer be effective if it is not founded upon faith in God’s power and willingness to answer?

2. **Jesus taught us that our prayer must be offered in His name:**

John 16:23 “... Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it you.”

- The name of a person represents his character and merit.
- The value of a check lies in the signature, not in the dollar amount – the amount specified would mean nothing with out the signature.
- When we pray in the name that is above every name, we are assured of an answer, seeing that we plead the righteousness of Christ to the Father.

3. **Jesus taught us to pray simply:**

Matthew 6:6 “But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.”

- God does not answer prayer according to our intelligence, but according to His.
- The simpler we are in prayer the more blessed the exercise become, and the more effective.

Ecclesiastes 5:2 “Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few.”

- We are not heard because of our expansive vocabulary or because of the number of our words.

4. Jesus taught us to pray in secret, privately.

Matthew 6:6 “But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret;...”

- This isn't about ritual, it's about intimacy and the removal of distractions.

5. Jesus taught us to pray persistently:

Luke 11:9 “And I say unto you, ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.”

- So often God is more willing to give than we are to receive – we need to be persistent.

6. Jesus taught us to pray in all humility:

Luke 18:9-14 Turn to / read

- The prayer of the Pharisee never rose above the ceiling of the Temple, because he prayed with himself. His prayer was an expression of his pride both of heart and religion.
- But the prayer of the publican in contrast was short and was accompanied by humility and penitence, asking for forgiveness – that prayer was graciously answered by the Lord who blessed him with justification.

7. Jesus taught us to pray, conscious that we need to be right with others.

Matthew 6:14-15 “¹⁴For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: ¹⁵But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”

- A wrong relationship with a fellow believer will hinder the effectiveness of our prayers.

1 Peter 3:7 “Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.”

- For God to answer our prayers, there must be a steady attitude of forgiveness on our part.

8. One of the most effective ways to pray is to harness our prayers to the promises of God.

- The mightiest prayers are those that come from a hearts that is saturated in the Word of God.

- As we pray God will quicken us according to His word:

Psalm 119:25 “My soul cleaveth unto the dust: quicken thou me according to thy word.”

Psalm 119:11 “Thy Word have I hidden in my heart that I might not sin against thee.”

- Learning to take God’s promises and instruction and turn them into petitions and intercessions.
 - Learning to pray God’s word.
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- In a similar manner the Bible teaches us a few things that will hinder our prayers, or cause them not to be answered:
- The Bible teaches us that the answers to some prayers are delayed; sometimes the answer is wait as opposed to “no”.

1 Peter 1:7 “That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.”

- Prayers that are in accordance to His will and for His glory are always answered.
- Prayers that are contrary to His will and purposes are not.

Prayer goes unanswered when:

1. When we’re praying instead of taking obedient action.

Exodus 14:15 “And the Lord said unto Moses, wherefore criest thou unto Me? Wherefore criest thou unto Me? Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward.”

Joshua 7:7-15

2. When it contradicts His word or his known and revealed will; God will not act contrary to His word.

Deuteronomy 3:26 “But the Lord was wroth with me for your sakes, and would not hear me: and the Lord said unto me, let it suffice thee; speak no more unto Me of this matter.”

Jeremiah 7:16 “Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither make intercession to Me: for I will not hear thee.”

3. When it comes from an unclean heart, when it is accompanied by unconfessed, conscious sin.

Psalm 66:18 “If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.”

Isaiah 59:1-2 “¹Behold, the Lord’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither His ear heavy, that it cannot hear: ²But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you, that He will not hear.”

1 John 1:8-10 “⁸If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.”

4. When it seeks to avert deserved and necessary chastisement.

2 Samuel 12:16-18 “¹⁶David therefore besought God for the child; and David fasted, and went in, and lay all night upon the earth. ¹⁷And the elders of his house arose, and went to him, to raise him up from the earth: but he would not, neither did he eat bread with them. ¹⁸And it came to pass on the seventh day, that the child died. And the servants of David feared to tell him that the child was dead: for they said, behold, while the child was yet alive, we spake unto him, and he would not hearken unto our voice: how will he then vex himself, if we tell him that the child is dead?”

2 Corinthians 12:7-9 “⁷And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. ⁸For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. ⁹And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness....”

5. When it is offered in arrogance and foolish pride; Pharisaism in prayer is an abomination to God.

Proverbs 8:13 “The fear of the Lord is to hate evil. Pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate.”

6. When it is prompted by selfish or ulterior motives.

Matthew 6:5 “And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward.”

James 4:2-3 “²Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. ³Ye ask,

and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.”

7. When it simply expresses meaningless or repetitious phrases.

Matthew 6:7 “But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.”

8. When it lacks sincerity of faith:

Matthew 6:5-7 “And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward.”

Hebrews 11:6 “For without faith it is impossible to please God.”

James 1:6-7 “⁶But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. ⁷For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.”

- The essence of true, effective prayer is found is simply a right relationship with God.

Philippians 4:6-7 “⁶Be careful / be anxious for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. ⁷And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”