

Fundamentals of the Faith

Lesson #8 - Prayer and the Believer

Lesson Outline

I. Why Pray?

Question: If God is omniscient then why pray?

A. Introduction: Quotes on the purpose of prayer

1. Unknown

"Prayer is the expression of man's dependence upon God for all things. Prayer does not have the office of giving God information because God foreknows all things. Rather, prayer discloses our faith in the greatness of God and allows communion with God. Prayer brings us to our knees before God in a humble unworthy spirit, praising Him, worshiping Him and recognizing Him as the source of all things. - *Unknown*

- Prayer expresses our faith in God
- Prayer expresses our submission to God by recognizing Him as God!

2. John Stott

"The purpose of prayer is not to inform or persuade God, but to come before Him sincerely, purposely, consciously, and devotedly."

John Stott, *John MacArthur New Testament Commentary, Matthew 1-7, page 369.*

3. Martin Luther

"By our praying ... we are instructing ourselves more,
than we are him"

Martin Luther, *John MacArthur New Testament Commentary, Matthew 1-7, page 369.*

B. Main Purpose: Prayer brings _____ to God

1. Prayer and God's Name - John 14:13

*"And whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, **that the Father may be glorified in the Son.**"*

➤ John MacArthur on "*in God's name*"

"To ask or to do anything *in God's name* is not to utter His name but to ask and to work according to His divine will and character."

The MacArthur New Testament Commentary, Matthew 16-23, pg. 139.

2. Prayer and God's glory - quote: John MacArthur

"Although nothing benefits a believer more than prayer, the purpose in praying must first of all be for the sake of God, not self. Prayer is, above all, an opportunity for God to manifest His goodness and glory."

True prayer ... centers on God's glory, not on man's needs.

John MacArthur, John MacArthur New Testament Commentary, Matthew 1-7, page 372.

C. To align ourselves with God's _____ – Matthew 6:10

"Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, On earth as it is in heaven."

"When we pray '*Thy will be done*', we are praying first of all that God's will become our will. Second, we are praying that His will prevail all over the '*earth as it (does) in heaven*'"

John MacArthur, John MacArthur New Testament Commentary, Matthew 1-7, page 372.

Note: Prayer, in a mysterious way causes God's will to occur.

"In God's wise and gracious plan, prayer is essential to the proper working of His divine will on earth."

The MacArthur N.T. Commentary, Matthew 1-7, John MacArthur, Jr., pg.383

D. Prayer is _____ - God _____ prayer - James 5:16-18
(LESSON, box, pg. 54)

- 16 *Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. **The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.***
- 17 *Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain; and it did not rain on the earth for three years and six months.*
- 18 *And he prayed again, and the sky poured rain, and the earth produced its fruit.*

E. For "Peace" - that surpasses all _____ - Philippians 4:6-7

- 6 *"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything **by prayer and supplication** with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.*
- 7 *And **the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.**"*

F. Pray to _____ sin - 1 John 1:9

*"If we **confess our sins**, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."*

3 *"For I know my transgressions, And my sin is ever before me.*

4 ***Against Thee, Thee only, I have sinned**, And done what is evil in Thy sight, So that Thou art justified when Thou dost speak, And blameless when Thou dost judge."*

G. We are _____ to pray - 1 Thessalonians 5:17 (LESSON, pg. 55, II.A.2)

"pray without ceasing;"

H. Jesus prayed - our _____

1. Matthew 14:23

*"And after He had sent the multitudes away, He went up to the mountain **by Himself to pray**; and when it was evening, He was there alone."*

2. Mark 14:35

*"And He went a little beyond them, and **fell to the ground, and began to pray** that if it were possible, the hour might pass Him by."*

3. Luke 5:16

*"But He Himself would often slip away **to the wilderness and pray**."*

4. Luke 6:12

*"And it was at this time that He went off to the mountain to pray, and He spent **the whole night in prayer** to God."*

5. Luke 9:28

*"And some eight days after these sayings, it came about that He took along Peter and John and James, and went **up to the mountain to pray**."*

II. When should we pray?

A. At all times

Note: We already saw 1 Thessalonians 5:17 "**Pray without ceasing**" (above)
(Also LESSON, pg. 55, II.A.2)

1. Ephesians 6:18 (LESSON, pg. 55, II.A.3)

*"With all prayer and petition pray **at all times** in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints,"*

2. Luke 18:1 (LESSON, pg. 55, II.A.1)

*"Now He was telling them a parable to show that **at all times they ought to pray** and not to lose heart,"*

B. What does it mean to "**Pray at all times**"?

1. Be _____ of God

"To pray at all times is to live in continual God consciousness, where everything we see and experience becomes a kind of prayer, lived in deep awareness of and surrender to our heavenly Father."

John MacArthur, Jr., The MacArthur N.T. Commentary, Ephesians, pg. 380.

- When you are tempted - hold the temptation before God
- When you experience something good and beautiful - thank and praise

God.

2. Constantly setting our _____ on *things above* - Colossians 3:2

"Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth."

3. Deep _____ with God - 1 John 1:3

*"what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, that you also may have fellowship with us; and indeed **our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.**"*

4. To _____ God

"The purpose of our salvation is to glorify God and bring us into intimate, rich fellowship with Him; and to fail to come to God in prayer is to deny that purpose."

John MacArthur, Jr., The MacArthur N.T. Commentary, Ephesians, pg. 380.

III. Conditions for _____ Prayer

A. Pray in the Spirit - Ephesians 6:18

*"With all prayer and petition pray at all times **in the Spirit**, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints,"*

- Back to Ephesians 6:18 - Not only are we to pray all the time.

B. _____ in Christ - John 15:7 (LESSON, pg. 55, II.B.2)

"If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you."

C. Obedience - 1 John 3:22

*"and whatever we ask we receive from Him, **because we keep His commandments** and do the things that are pleasing in His sight."*

NOTE: Abiding <--> Salvation <--> Obedience

➤ 1 John 2:3

"And by this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments."

D. Ask according to _____ will - 1 John 5:14-15 (LESSON, pg. 55, II.B.3)

14 *"And this is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we **ask anything according to His will**, He hears us.*

15 *And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him."*

Note: What things are according to God's will?

1. **The Saints - which is the church of Christ** - Ephesians 6:18

*"With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and **petition for all the saints**,"*

2. **The Gospel** - Ephesians 6:19

*"and pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of **my mouth, to make known** with boldness the mystery of **the gospel**,"*

➤ Pray for what would be important to Jesus Christ.

3. **For ourselves**

a. **Prayer of Confession** - 1 John 1:9
(already saw above, in "Why pray", section)

*"If we **confess our sins**, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."*

b. Pray for wisdom - James 1:5

*"But if **any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God**, who gives to all men generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him."*

IV. _____ to answered prayer: (LESSON, pg. 56, II.C)

A. Sin - Psalm 66:18 (LESSON, pg. 56, II.C.1)

18 *"If I regard wickedness in my heart,
The Lord will not hear;*

B. Wrong _____ - James 4:3 (LESSON, pg. 56, II.C.2)

"You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures."

C. Lack of _____ - Doubting - James 1:5-8

5 *"But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all men generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.*

6 *But let him ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea driven and tossed by the wind.*

7 *For let not that man expect that he will receive anything from the Lord,*

8 *being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways."*

V. The _____ of Prayer (LESSON, pg. 56, III.A)

A. Prayer can be hard work

1. Jesus prayed all night - Luke 6:12 (LESSON, pg. 56, III.A.1)

*"And it was at this time that He went off to the mountain to pray, and **He spent the whole night in prayer** to God."*

2. The intensity in the Garden - Luke 22:44 (LESSON, pg. 56, III.A.2)

*"And being in agony **He was praying very fervently**; and His sweat became like drops of blood, falling down upon the ground."*

3. Practical exhortation to: Keep Alert in prayer
Colossians 4:2 (LESSON, pg. 56, III.A.3)

*"Devote yourselves to prayer, **keeping alert in it** with an attitude of thanksgiving;"*

B. David was _____ - Psalm 22:1-2 (Read, class as a whole)

- 1 *"My God, my **God, why hast Thou forsaken me?** Far from my deliverance are the words of my groaning.* ➤ David is discouraged
➤ wonders why God does not answer
- 2 *O my God, I cry by day, but Thou doest not answer **and by night, but I have no rest.**"*

And yet as the Psalm continues David, as he reflects upon God, has his outlook changed to one of confidence and praise:

- 3 ***Yet Thou art holy,** O Thou who art enthroned upon the praises of Israel.* ➤ Recognizes God
- 4 ***In Thee our fathers trusted;** They trusted, and Thou didst deliver them.* ➤ remembers God's past faithfulness
- 5 ***To Thee they cried out, and were delivered; In Thee they trusted, and were not disappointed.***
- 6 ***But I am a worm, and not a man,** A reproach of men, and despised by the people.* ➤ As David considers God his humbled
- .
.
- 19 ***But Thou, O Lord, be not far off; O Thou my help,** hasten to my assistance.*
- .
.
- 23 *You who fear the Lord, **praise Him;*** ➤ This moves him

All you descendants of Jacob, **glorify Him**, to praise
And **stand in awe of Him**, all you descendants of Israel.

24 **For He has not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted;**
Neither has He hidden His face from him;
But when he cried to Him for help, He heard. ➤ He knows God cares

25 *From Thee comes my praise in the great assembly;*
I shall pay my vows before those who fear Him.

26 *The afflicted shall eat and be satisfied;*
Those who seek Him will praise the Lord. ➤ David is lifted up
Let your heart live forever!

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28 *For the kingdom is the Lord's,*
And He rules over the nations.

VI. How is prayer answered?

A. **Sometimes _____** - Isaiah 65:24

*"It will also come to pass that **before they call, I will answer**; and while they are still speaking, I will hear."*

B. **Sometimes it is _____** - Luke 18:7

*"now shall not God bring about justice for His elect, **who cry to Him day and night, and will He delay long over them?**"*

➤ But: be persistent - Luke 18:1 (above & LESSON, pg. 55, II.A.1)

*"Now He was telling them a parable to show that at all times they ought to **pray and not to lose heart,**"*

C. **Sometimes it is _____ than what we ask for** - 2 Corinthians 12:7-9

*"And because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, **there was given me a thorn in the flesh**, a messenger of Satan to buffet me-- **to keep me from exalting myself!**"*

8 *Concerning this **I entreated the Lord three times that it might depart from***

me.

- 9 *And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may dwell in me."*

VII. How to Pray

A. To whom do we pray?

1. To God, through Christ - Romans 1:8

"First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, because your faith is being proclaimed throughout the whole world."

2. To the Father; through Christ; in the Power of the Spirit - Ephesians 2:17-18

17 *"And He came and preached peace to you who were far away, and peace to those who were near;*

18 *for **through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father.**"*

➤ Hebrews 10:19

*"Since therefore, brethren, we have confidence **to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus,**"*

3. The Spirit intercedes for us - Romans 8:26 (LESSON, pg. 53, I.A.2)

*"And in the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for **we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words;**"*

You may pray to the Father, Christ or the Holy Spirit; they are all God.

However, Scripture emphasizes praying to the Father.

Example: The Disciple's prayer ... Matthew 6:9-13 (below)

B. Christ's _____ on How to Pray: Prelude to *The Disciple's prayer*

1. Matthew 6:5-6

5 *"And **when you pray**, you are not to be as the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners, in order to be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.*

6 *But you, when you pray, **go into your inner room**, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is **in secret**, and your Father who sees in secret will repay you.*

Note the contrasts between verse 5 and 6:

- Praying in secret - rather than - Praying in the open
- God repays in secret - They have their reward already

a. Have you ever been in a Bible study and they have group prayer?
You know that your turn to pray will be coming up?
Did you have thoughts like:

- Will my prayer be religious enough?
- What will I pray for?

Note: Don't pray if it is not from your heart.
Our prayers are to be heard by God and not other people.

b. From verse 6, where should we go to pray?

- Inner room
 - Small room, even a storage closet
 - Prayer is communion with God
 - Just you and God

➤ Jesus regularly went away to pray on His own - Matthew 14:23

*"And after He had sent the multitudes away, **He went up to the mountain by Himself to pray**; and when it was evening, He was there alone."*

2. Matthew 6:7-8

7 *And when you are praying, **do not use meaningless repetition**, as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words.*

8 *Therefore do not be like them; **for your Father knows what you need, before you ask Him.***

- Not Persistence in prayer
The elect crying out the same thing - day and night - Luke 18:7

*"Now shall not God bring about justice for His elect, **who cry to Him day and night**, and will He delay long over them?"*

- How about repeating the same prayers before a meal?

Prayer that is thoughtless and indifferent is offensive to God,
and should also be offensive to us.

John MacArthur, *John MacArthur New Testament Commentary, Matthew 1-7*, page 369.

+ Note the omniscience of God in verse 8 - but we are still to pray!

- prayer.
- We show our dependence upon God & agreement with God in
 - Somehow the Father power is released through our prayers.

C. Christ's Teaching on How to Pray:

The Disciple's prayer is a model - Matthew 6:9-13

9 *Pray, then, in this way: 'Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name.*

10 *Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, On earth as it is in heaven.*

11 *Give us this day our daily bread.*

12 *And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.*

13 *And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen."*

C. The Disciples prayer is a model (continued)

1. The prayer in "**this way**" - verse 9a

a. "pray, then in this way:"

b. The disciples asked Jesus how to pray - Luke 11:1

"And it came about that while He was praying in a certain place, after He had finished, one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray just as John also taught his disciples."

2. "**Our Father**" (verse 9)

a. Why *Our*?

b. Father

3. **Hallowed be Thy name** (verse 9b)

"How clearly then is the fundamental duty in prayer set forth, self and all its needs must be given a secondary place and the Lord freely accorded the pre-eminence in our thoughts, desires & supplications. This petition must take the precedence for the glory of God's great name is the ultimate end of all things. Every other request must not only be subordinated to this one but be in harmony with and in pursuance of it. We cannot pray aright, unless the honor of God be dominant in our hearts."

Arthur Pink

4. "**Thy Kingdom come**" (verse 10a)

4. "**Thy will be done**" (verse 10b)

Note: Again what would be important to Christ?

- Pray for God's will to be done - agreement with God
- Pray that God's will, will become your will.

Note: "In God's wise and gracious plan, prayer is essential to the proper working of His divine will on earth."

The MacArthur N.T. Commentary, Matthew 1-7, John MacArthur, Jr., pg.383

5. "Give us this day our daily bread" (verse 11)

Note: God wants us to ask him for our needs.
He wants to supply our needs.

6. "Forgive us our debts" (verse 12)

➤ Confession - I John 1:9

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

➤ Remember: Proverbs 28:13

"He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, But he who confesses and forsakes them will find compassion."

7. "Do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil" (verse 13)

Note: Our desire is rather to submit to God - James 4:7

"Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you."

8. "For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever" (verse 13b)

Note: Not found in the most reliable manuscripts.
Sometimes in brackets or footnotes.

A doxology declaring the preeminence of God:

- Triumph, exultation - recognition of God's power
- Forever - hope

D. RECAP - ACTS: Four important areas of prayer - (LESSON, box, page 56)

1. Adoration praise, attributes
2. Confession confess sin
3. Thanksgiving grateful for His provision
4. Supplication specific requests - other, Christ's will