



The Doctrine of Prayer

What Are the Components of Scriptural Prayer?

I. REGARDING OUR HEARTS

- A. The Christian life is a life of action and service to the Lord which can be performed independent of a tender heart. The end result of this is wood, hay, and stubble which will burn up when tried by the Lord's fire (1 Corinthians 3:12-15). The right actions without a tender and right heart are not as pleasing to the Lord.
- B. So too, does the Lord desire us to approach him with our whole heart and from the depths of our heart. When the Lord spoke to the Jews through the prophet Jeremiah he said, "Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek me, and find me, **when ye shall search for me with all your heart.**" (Jeremiah 29:12-13).
- C. The Lord promised to be found of the people when they sought after him with their whole heart. It does us no avail to pray empty, heartless prayers to the Lord. It would be better to say few words to the Lord from the heart rather than many great swelling words void of heartfelt sincerity.
- D. The following are required components of scriptural prayer regarding our hearts.
 - 1. Humility
 - a. 2 Chronicles 7:14
 - (1) Upon the completion of the temple, Solomon prayed unto the Lord (2 Chronicles 6:14-42).
 - (2) Solomon requested that the Lord would "hear thou from the heavens" whenever the people would pray unto him (2 Chronicles 6:23, 25, 27, 29, 30, 33, 35, 39, 40).
 - (3) The Lord then responded to Solomon after this prayer and affirmed that he would hear the peoples' prayers IF they humble themselves first (2 Chronicles 7:14).
 - b. Nehemiah 1:10-11
 - (1) Nehemiah gives forth the example of a humble heart in his prayer recorded in the first chapter of Nehemiah.
 - (2) The statements Nehemiah makes regarding him and the people stand in stark contrasts to the statements that he makes about God.



- (3) Referring to himself and the people he states “We have dealt very corruptly against thee” (Nehemiah 1:7).
- (4) He also acknowledges their lowly position before God, “Now these are thy servants and thy people” (Nehemiah 1:10). This attitude reflects his understanding of God’s ownership and authority over them.
- (5) But when Nehemiah addresses God, he calls him “O LORD God of heaven, the great and terrible God” (Nehemiah 1:5).
- (6) This is a great example of approaching God in prayer with a humble heart.
- (7) The focus is on the attitude of the heart and not the words.

c. Isaiah 64:9

- (1) Isaiah prayed unto the Lord in the anguish of his heart for his people.
- (2) Several times in this prayer Isaiah showed forth his humble heart to the Lord.
 - a) In verse 6 he states “But we are all as an unclean thing” and “all our righteousness are as filthy rags”.
 - b) In verse 8 he says “we are the clay, and thou art the potter” and “we all are the work of thy hand”.
 - c) In verse 9 he says “we are thy people”.
- (3) All of these statements indicate his low opinion of himself and the people but his high opinion of God.
- (4) Isaiah did not approach God in the pride of his heart but with humility.

d. The Bible clearly warns us that “God resisteth the proud” (James 4:6 and 1 Peter 5:5). If we come before God in pride be sure that the Bible is true and that you will be resisted rather than heard and accepted. We must approach God with humble hearts.

2. Faith

a. Matthew 21:22

- (1) Jesus taught his disciples that they could receive whatever they asked of God in prayer.
- (2) The direction was simple enough but there was one requirement that the Lord gave them if they were to receive what they requested.



- (3) This requirement was simply interjected as “believing”. He said “whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive” (Matthew 21:22).
- (4) Jesus told his disciples that faith was necessary for answered prayer.
- (5) They could make requests unto God all they wanted and unless they did it in faith fully believing they would receive nothing.
- (6) One simple word “believing” is a key to prayer. Faith is required.

b. Philemon 22

- (1) The apostle Paul exemplified this attitude of faith so well when he sent a letter to Philemon.
- (2) In verse 22 he tells Philemon “But withal prepare me also a lodging: for I trust that through your prayers I shall be given unto you.”
- (3) Paul had faith that he would come to Philemon because Philemon would be praying for him.
- (4) He was so confident that the Lord would answer Philemon’s prayer that he could “trust” that he would be given unto Philemon.
- (5) To trust shows confidence and faith.

c. Hebrews 11:6

- (1) Faith is such a requirement in prayer that the Bible says that we “must” have faith when we come to God.
- (2) “Must” is not optional, is not conditional, is not wavering but is a hard and fast rule to be adhered to.
- (3) The verse says “But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God **must** believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.” (Hebrews 11:6)
- (4) According to this verse we cannot even please God if we do not have faith. There is no way to come before God in prayer without faith and expect to have our needs met.
- (5) Faith is an absolute belief of the heart when we pray.

3. Sincerity

a. Psalm 17:1

- (1) Many of the Psalms are prayers that were written down.
- (2) Psalm 17 is one such prayer by David.



- (3) This prayer begins with David asking God to “Hear the right, O LORD, attend unto my cry, give ear unto my prayer, that goeth not out of feigned lips.” (Psalm 17:1)
 - (4) He asks God to “hear” and “give ear” and he qualifies these requests to be heard by clarifying that his prayer “goeth not out of feigned lips”.
 - (5) David was telling God that his prayer was not feigned or faked. It was not insincere.
 - (6) He was crying out to God with a sincere heart and what he was speaking to God came forth out of the depths of his heart.
 - (7) It could be reasoned that David had an understanding that the Lord would not “hear” and “give ear” to prayer that went forth out of feigned lips.
- b. Matthew 6:7
- (1) The Lord had to teach his disciples to pray and, in this instruction, he told them “use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.” (Matthew 6:7)
 - (2) The heathens thought that if they used many words and eloquent words that their prayers would be heard.
 - (3) Unfortunately, their prayers exposed the insincerity of their hearts. They were simply speaking many words but to no avail.
 - (4) Of the heathen’s much speaking, Jesus said “they think that they shall be heard”. Jesus was saying that the heathen were in fact not being heard even though they thought they would be.
 - (5) The reason that they were not heard is because their prayer was not sincere.
- c. When we pray, we must pray out of the sincerity of our hearts. There is no Bible verse that tells us that God pays more attention to long prayers or eloquent speaking or prayers laced with deep doctrinal truths. In fact, Matthew 6:7 indicates that it is better to speak a few words in prayer and that it be from the heart.
- d. Simply, pour out your heart to God in prayer. Do not add fluff to your prayer. Hear how a child prays. A child has no thought of impressing God or man but simply speaks his or her heart unto the Lord. Pray with sincerity.
4. Godly Fear
- a. Micah 6:6



- (1) Micah expressed a healthy fear of God when he addressed the people of Judah after relaying to them what God had said.
- (2) God had just spoke by the mouth of Micah to the people and Micah then spoke to the people on his own behalf and said “Wherewith shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams...” (Micah 6:6-7a).
- (3) Micah’s questions indicated that he was afraid to come before God on the people’s behalf with burnt offerings because he knew that the Lord would not be pleased with that.
- (4) He did not want to approach God with something that would not be pleasing to God. He feared God and to come before him in the wrong manner.

b. Habakkuk 3:2

- (1) Chapter 3 of Habakkuk is specified as “A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet upon Shigionoth.”
- (2) Habakkuk begins his prayer by telling the Lord that he was afraid of God because of God’s words. “O LORD, I have heard thy speech, and was afraid:” (Habakkuk 3:2).
- (3) The man of God had an understanding of God’s might and power. This caused him to have a fear of God.
- (4) He understood that God was all powerful and that as a man he was not which is why he pleaded with God to “in wrath remember mercy”.
- (5) Habakkuk had special position as a prophet of the Lord and yet he feared God.
- (6) Understand that godly fear does not preclude us from being honest with the Lord but rather it affects our attitude in our approaching of the Lord.

c. The Bible says “Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God with reverence and godly fear:” (Hebrews 12:28).

d. We are to fear God. In fact, if we have a proper “reverence and godly fear” then we will be much more apt to come before God in humility, faith, and in the sincerity of our hearts.



II. REGARDING OUR CONTENT

- A. Prayer is most commonly viewed as telling God our wants and needs in life. It seems that prayer is narrowly viewed as our means of informing God of what we would like.
- B. Our prayers frequently say things like: “Please give me...”, “Will you do this for me...”, “Please bless my life”, “Help me to get a better...”, etc.
- C. We speak to the God of all creation as though he is there simply to serve us and give us everything we desire of him. It is a slap in the face of the Almighty. It is the pot turning to the potter and telling him all the ways to improve the pot.
- D. This is not well-rounded scriptural prayer. Making request is one aspect of prayer but prayer is much more than making request. We should not be guilty of simply going to God in prayer with a list of what we want from him.
- E. 1 Timothy 2:1 tells us that our communications unto God consist of several different components. This verse says. “I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men;”. All of these are communications unto God but they are different in their content and purpose. Scriptural prayer consists of several different components.
- F. Here we consider the scriptures to see what are the components of scriptural prayer as it pertains to the content of our prayers.

1. Praise

a. 2 Samuel 7:27

- (1) King David desired to build a house for the Lord and initially Nathan the prophet encouraged him in this but the Lord instructed that David was not to build him a house but his son (2 Samuel 7:1-13).
- (2) In response to hearing this, King David went “and sat before the LORD” (2 Samuel 7:18) and prayed unto God.
- (3) This prayer was David’s heartfelt expression of his own unworthiness but God’s great worth. Expressing God’s worth and value is praise.
- (4) David’s prayer had the praise of God throughout as in verse 22 when he said “Wherefore thou art great, O LORD God: for there is none like thee, neither is there any God beside thee,”.
- (5) He continues to show God’s praise by proclaiming his might in redeeming Israel from Egypt in verse 23, “whom God went to redeem for a people to himself, and to make him a name, and to do for you great things and terrible”.



- (6) David says in verse 26, “And let thy name be magnified for ever, saying, The LORD of hosts is the God over Israel:”.
- (7) At the end of his prayer, he offers more praise unto God saying, “And now, O LORD God, thou art that God, and thy words be true” (2 Samuel 7:28).
- (8) This prayer of David’s contained praise to God at the beginning, middle, and end.

b. 2 Kings 19:15

- (1) King Hezekiah was confronted with a threat by Sennacherib (2 Kings 18:19-35 and 2 Kings 19:10-13).
- (2) The words of Sennacherib through the words of Rabshakeh greatly troubled Hezekiah causing him to go in the temple and spread the letter before the Lord and prayed unto him (2 Kings 19:14).
- (3) King Hezekiah had great urgency and cause for fear since the kingdom and people were being threatened. He had an incredible need that only God could help him with.
- (4) Yet, the first thing he offers to God in prayer is not a plea for help but rather it is praise to God.
- (5) Hezekiah opens his communication unto God by praising God saying, “O LORD God of Israel, which dwellest between the cherubims, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; thou hast made heaven and earth.” (2 Kings 19:15).
- (6) Sennacherib had just challenged Hezekiah’s God saying that none of the other god’s of the nations before had been able to help and resist the Assyrians.
- (7) This act of praise was twofold: it exalted and gave God his due worship; it reminded Hezekiah who God was and encouraged him.

c. Jeremiah 32:16-19

- (1) At the command of the Lord, Jeremiah had purchased a field of Hanameel and delivered the evidence of the purchase unto Baruch (Jeremiah 32:6-15).
- (2) When this transaction was complete, Jeremiah prayed unto the Lord (Jeremiah 32:16).
- (3) This prayer also begins with and continues with the praise of God.



- (4) He praises God for his power and might: “thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee:” (Jeremiah 32:17).
- (5) He praises God for his lovingkindness: “Thou shewest lovingkindness unto thousands,” (Jeremiah 32:18).
- (6) He praises the name of God: “the Great, the Mighty God, the LORD of hosts, is his name,” (Jeremiah 32:18).
- (7) He praises God for his works: “Great in counsel, and mighty in work:” (Jeremiah 32:19).
- (8) Jeremiah spends the first portion of his communication unto God just praising God for his power, his name, and his great works. He brought an offering of praise to the Lord.

- d. These few examples are of men who were given great blessings of God and who had dire need of God’s help and they did not fail to praise God when they spoke to him.
- e. If our prayers fail to offer praise to God then we are robbing him of glory. Psalm 50:23a says “Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me:”. God is worthy of glory, no matter what, and our praise of him is an offering that we need to bring unto him.

2. Supplication

- a. Supplicating unto the Lord is another component that should be a part of our communication unto the Lord.
- b. Supplication is connected to crying out to the Lord and an earnest calling unto God.
- c. In 1 Kings 8:28 we see Solomon praying and supplicating unto the Lord. He says “Yet have thou respect unto the prayer of thy servant, and to his **supplication**, O LORD my God, to hearken unto the **cry** and to the prayer, which thy servant prayeth before thee to day:”.
- d. In this passage, the word “supplication” is very closely connected to the word “cry”. Often there is a dire circumstance or great emotional or spiritual need when we find supplication in the scriptures.
- e. Supplication could be called a heartfelt pleading unto the Lord. It is an earnestness for the Lord to hearken unto our voice and intervene in our lives.
- f. The following are but a few uses of supplication in scripture.



(1) Psalm 55:1

- a) First, let's look at the circumstances surrounding the Psalmist and why he is supplicating unto the Lord.
- b) Throughout this Psalm, we learn of the turmoil David is in. He says "I mourn" (verse 2), "my heart is sore pained within me" (verse 4), "Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me" and "horror hath overwhelmed me" (verse 5).
- c) This is the state of his heart "Because of the voice of the enemy, because of the oppression of the wicked: for they cast iniquity upon me, and in wrath they hate me." (verse 3)
- d) Because of the great pain and anguish of his heart and mind, he says to God, "Give ear to my prayer, O God; and hide not thyself from my supplication." (verse 1) So, David's communication unto God in this Psalm is identified as "prayer" and "supplication".
- e) David is calling upon God to rescue him from his enemy: "As for me, I will call upon God; and the LORD shall save me." (verse 16)
- f) This is not a lighthearted communication nor is a matter that one simple prayer is sufficient for but he says "Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice." (verse 17)
- g) As we can see in this Psalm, supplication is more than just a simple prayer to God. Supplication is something that takes place with fervency, crying, and intensity.
- h) Similar examples of supplication can be found in Psalm 142 and 143.

(2) Ephesians 6:18

- a) We saw, in the Psalms mentioned above, a man going through very difficult and trying times with a great need for God to intervene.
- b) The Psalmist was making supplication, a heartfelt pleading and crying out to God for help, for himself and the circumstances that he was going through.
- c) However, in the New Testament, we receive instruction to be "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;" (Ephesians 6:18).



- d) The scripture teaches us that the same earnestness and heartfelt pleading, that is supplication, is to be made for other saints.
- e) It is easy for us to be so greatly burdened and troubled due to our own painful and unpleasant situations and to seek the Lord in supplication but we are also commanded to seek the Lord in the same manner for others.
- f) This is a level of compassion that sadly most of us lack. We hear of anguish of heart and mind that our brothers and sisters in the Lord are dealing with and we may pray for them but we must learn to make supplication for them.
- g) We must learn to cry out and call unto God in supplication for others. This is true compassion and empathy.

(3) Philippians 4:6

- a) We are to make supplication unto the Lord when we are troubled with the cares of life according to Philippians 4:6 which says, “Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.”
 - b) Again, this passage shows a distinction between prayer and supplication.
 - c) Supplication, along with prayer and thanksgiving, is how we rid our hearts of the cares that trouble and in their place, receive the peace of God (Philippians 4:7).
- g. All of us are going to have very painful and trying things throughout our lives. Learning to make supplication unto God is the best thing we can do. Whether it be for ourselves or for others, both are commanded.

3. Thanksgiving

- a. Thanksgiving is another very important component of prayer.
- b. According to the scripture, thanksgiving is our offering to God.
 - (1) “Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the most High:” (Psalm 50:14)
 - (2) “I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the LORD.” (Psalm 116:17)
 - (3) “And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare his works with rejoicing.” (Psalm 107:22)



- (4) “By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.” (Hebrews 13:15)
- c. Thanksgiving is something that is to be freely offered to the Lord as a sacrifice and is he not most deserving of thanksgiving!
 - d. The Lord “daily loadeth us with benefits” (Psalm 68:19) and how often do we come to him only to ask more and fail to be thankful for all that he has already done for us.
 - e. We must consider the example of the one healed leper and learn to give God his due thanksgiving. How sad that we so often are the nine instead of the one. (See Luke 17:11-19)
 - f. In fact, the scriptures indicate that when we are making request of the Lord, that we also need to give him thanks. Philippians 4:6 says “Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication **with thanksgiving** let your requests be made known unto God.”
 - g. It is a selfish and ungrateful heart that only ever takes but never gives thanks.
 - (1) In fact, the scripture goes so far as to tell us “In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.” (1 Thessalonians 5:18)
 - (2) Regardless of your situation and whether good or evil, we are to offer God our thanksgiving.
 - h. Thanksgiving is a scripturally commanded component of prayer and something that we must make a regular part of our prayer.
4. Confessing Sin
- a. For the saved, the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all unrighteousness and sin, yet this in no way excuses us from confessing our sins to the Lord.
 - b. 1 John 1:9 tells us, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteous.”
 - c. There is not a Christian who has ceased from sin since salvation and thus there is still need to confess our sins to the Lord in prayer.
 - d. Although we can never lose our salvation and unconfessed sin will not bar our entrance into heaven, it can greatly hinder our walk with the Lord and harden our hearts.



- e. Harboring sin in our hearts can impede our communication unto the Lord per the scriptures. “If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me:” (Psalm 66:18).
 - f. Therefore, when we sin, we need to confess unto the Lord and like David ask him to “Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.” (Psalm 51:10)
 - g. Here are but a few scriptural instances of confessing sin to God:
 - (1) “And David’s heart smote him after that he had numbered the people. And David said unto the LORD, I have sinned greatly in that I have done: and now, I beseech thee, O LORD, take away the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly.” (2 Samuel 24:10)
 - (2) “I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah.” (Psalm 32:5)
 - (3) “And I prayed unto the LORD my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments; We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgements:” (Daniel 9:4-5).
 - h. Confessing sin, when there is sin to confess, must be a component of our prayers if we are to have effectual time talking to the Lord.
5. Intercessions
- a. Returning to 1 Timothy 2:1, we again read, “I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, **intercessions**, and giving of thanks, be made for all men;”.
 - b. As this verse clearly points out, intercession is a communication unto God for someone else.
 - c. George Whitefield made an incredible statement regarding intercession when he said, *“If we inquire, why there is so little love to be found amongst Christians, why the very characteristic, by which every one should know that we are disciples of the holy Jesus, is almost banished out of the Christian world, we shall find it, in a great measure, owing to a neglect or superficial performance of that excellent part of prayer, INTERCESSION, or imploring the divine grace and mercy in behalf of others.”*



- d. The word intercession is used ten times in scripture. In four of those instances, it is a member of the Godhead interceding for us to God the Father (Romans 8:26, Romans 8:27, Romans 8:34, and Hebrews 7:25).
 - e. To intercede on another's behalf is to be like God. This should be our aim in all that we do, to more and more be like God and thus we can be better ambassadors for Christ (2 Corinthians 5:20).
 - f. The Holy Ghost and the Lord Jesus have given us the example of interceding and the apostle Paul, through the Holy Ghost, has exhorted that intercessions be made for all men.
 - g. Let us follow the Lord and word of God and learn to include this very important component of prayer into our communication unto God.
6. Making Requests
- a. Requesting something of the Lord is the most common perception of what prayer is but as we have seen this is a very shallow understanding of prayer.
 - b. Making request of the Lord is not wicked nor is it indicative of immaturity. Making request is a valid and scriptural component of prayer and is therefore, something that should be part of our communication unto the Lord.
 - c. All throughout the scripture we see prayers of requests unto the Lord and by great men of God. You will find, though, that many times other of the components of prayer are included with these requests.
 - d. Philippians 4:6 gives the scriptural method of making request unto God. This verse tells us that we are to present our requests by prayer and supplication and with thanksgiving.
 - e. Our prayers are to be balanced. If we only praise then we neglect, thanksgiving, supplication, confession, interceding, and making request and vice versa.
 - f. The apostle Paul was no stranger in making request to the Lord.
 - (1) "For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers; Making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you." (Romans 1:9-10)
 - (2) "For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me." (2 Corinthians 12:8)



(3) “I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy,” (Philippians 1:3-4).

- g. There are several components to scriptural prayer, of which, making request is certainly one.
- h. The fact that we have needs and trust God to go to him and make request for these needs indicates maturity and understanding that we can do nothing apart from God and that he is our source.

III. REGARDING OUR METHOD

- A. Discipline is greatly missing in society and Christianity today. We live lives of ease and convenience. Labouring over a work is becoming less and less common. Instant gratification and pleasure have crumbled our resolve to do hard things.
- B. The mantras we are most familiar with cater to self and laziness. Hard work has been driven from the minds of younger generations and to our demise as a whole.
- C. Discipline may not at first seem necessary for prayer but it most certainly is. Hebrews 11:6 tells us “But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, **and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.**”
- D. To diligently seek requires effort and hard work on our parts. True scriptural prayer is not for the lazy and faint-hearted. Discipline is required for scriptural prayer. Fortunately, discipline can be learned and exercised so that even the most undisciplined individual can and should grow and increase his or her prayer life.
- E. Our time in prayer should not be approached with the same attitude as going through a fast-food drive thru which is quick, easy, and we get what we want now.
- F. The following is a list of components of scriptural prayer as it pertains to our method and they will require discipline.
 - 1. Continuing in Prayer
 - a. The scripture clearly indicates that there are times when we are to pray continually and frequently for whatever the matter is.
 - b. This is not because God did not hear us the first or second time that we prayed.
 - c. According to the scriptures we need to be disciplined to continue in prayer and not just say one quick prayer and be done.



- (1) “Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you: but I will teach you the good and the right way:” (1 Samuel 12:23)
- (2) “Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice.” (Psalm 55:17)
- (3) “Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer;” (Romans 12:12)
- (4) “Pray without ceasing.” (1 Thessalonians 5:17)
- (5) “But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them **that diligently seek him.**” (Hebrews 11:6)

2. Specificity

- a. When praying, it is important to be as specific as we can.
- b. We understand the importance of specificity in our communication with other people and so why do we think that when we talk to the Lord that we do not need to try and be specific with our communication?
- c. For example, there is something very important that you need to remember and you need to remember prior to a certain time. You may pray something vague like “Lord, help me to remember this.” But without specifying a timeframe then when we do remember it could be too late. It would be better to pray, “Lord, help me to remember this before while I still have time to act on it.”
- d. Being specific actually shows great faith in the Lord and trust that he will answer your specific prayer.
- e. Consider the example of Abraham’s servant in Genesis 24.
 - (1) Abraham sent him on a journey to find a wife from Abraham’s people for his son Isaac (Genesis 24:1-11)
 - (2) When the servant comes to Mesopotamia, where Abraham’s people were, he prayed for God’s help in finding the right woman.
 - (3) His request was this: “And let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: let the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that thou has shewed kindness unto my master.” (Genesis 24:14)



- (4) The servant was not worried that his prayer was too specific and requesting too much of God.
- (5) He had complete faith that the Lord can handle all the specifics of his prayer.
- (6) The very specific details were for the servant's benefit so that he would know precisely the correct woman for Isaac.
- (7) The Lord answered the specifics of this prayer according to the rest of the chapter.

3. Fasting

- a. Prayer and fasting almost always coincide in the scripture and yet fasting is not something that receives much attention today.
- b. Granted, fasting is not a highly stressed topic in the New Testament but it is there and should be a utilized component in our prayers.
- c. To fast is to put aside something that the flesh desires, typically food but not only, for the purpose of devoting that time and energy on prayer.
- d. The New Testament church has scripture to support Christians fasting today.
 - (1) The early church fasted. "And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed." (Acts 14:23)
 - (2) The apostle Paul supported fasting. "Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency." (1 Corinthians 7:5)
- e. To deny our flesh of what it wants and needs and instead devoting ourselves to prayer requires much discipline.

4. Lifting holy hands

- a. We most likely associate raised hands as a charismatic action. Of course, the charismatic movement takes things above and beyond scriptural practice but raising our hands while praying is very much scriptural.
- b. There are many instances of Old Testament saints lifting their hands toward God when they pray but there is also a New Testament admonition given for us to follow.
- c. 1 Timothy 2:8 says, "I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting."