



## The Doctrine of Prayer

### *Why Should We Pray?*

#### I. TO HAVE A RELATIONSHIP WITH OUR FATHER

##### A. Introduction

1. Revelation 4:11 tells us “Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, **and for thy pleasure they are and were created.**”
2. This means that God created man to bring him pleasure and he gave us a free will so that we would choose to love God rather than be forced to love him.
3. From the beginning God enjoyed communing with his creation. According to the account in Genesis 3:8-10, God would visit with Adam and Eve and spend time walking and talking with them.
4. This precedent is set forth at the onset of mankind and reveals to us God’s desire. He wants us to have fellowship with him for this brings him pleasure.

##### B. Understand the relationship that God has brought us into as Christians.

1. Galatians 4:5 says, “To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.”
  - a. As Christians, God has adopted us as his very own children.
  - b. In fact, Galatians 3:26 says, “For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.”
2. Galatians 4:6 continues saying, “And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.”
  - a. Three times is Abba, Father used in the scriptures (Mark 14:36, Romans 8:15, and Galatians 4:6).
    - (1) Mark 14:36 “And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt.”
    - (2) Romans 8:15 “For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.”
  - b. In the Mark 14:36 case it is Jesus crying out to the Father in the garden when his soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death (Mark 14:34). The Son



used the word Abba to express a great closeness and intimacy with the Father.

- c. In the Romans 8:15 case it is us as Christians that are crying Abba, Father through the Spirit of adoption.
  - d. Finally, Galatians 4:6 tells us that God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father.
  - e. The point being made here is that the usage of the word Abba indicates a very close and personal relationship with the Father.
  - f. Incredibly, the Father put the Spirit of his Son into us and through the Spirit we cry unto his as Abba, Father!
  - g. This means that God wanted us to have a very close, personal, and intimate relationship with him for he put his Spirit in us so that we could call him Abba, Father.
- C. We cannot have a great relationship with the Father if we do not spend time speaking to him.
1. In any healthy relationship between two parties, both parties must communicate with the other. How good can a relationship be where only one individual ever speaks?
  2. So too, is the case with us and our heavenly Father. He has brought us into a personal relationship with him through his Son.
  3. The Father speaks to us through his Bible, expressing his love, thoughts, and desires to us. And we express our love, thoughts, and desires to him in prayer.
  4. If we do not speak to him then we are not pleasing him as we should and we are hurting our relationship. Mainly, we will not be as close to God as we otherwise would and should be.
- D. The scriptures make it known that God wants us to meet with him and speak to him.
1. One such example is found in Exodus 25:22, “And there will I meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel.”
    - a. This was spoken to the children of Israel because God wanted them to have access to be able to speak to him when they needed.
    - b. But as Christians today, we do not need to meet God in a specific place or in the temple. In fact, the Bible tells us that we (Christians) are the temple of God (1 Corinthians 3:16).



2. Moses had a wonderful relationship with God where both would speak to each other.
  - a. Numbers 7:89 says, “And when Moses was gone into the tabernacle of the congregation to speak with him, then he heard the voice of one speaking unto him from off the mercy seat that was upon the ark of testimony, from between the two cherubims: and he spake unto him.”
  - b. The “him” that Moses went into the tabernacle to speak to was God according to the context (Numbers 7:11). There God and Moses spoke to one another.
3. We have been given an incredible gift and privilege in that we can commune with God anytime and anywhere.
4. Our relationship with God is of far more importance than our relationship with our spouse, parents, children, friends, etc., and we make time to nurture those relationships through our communication.
5. How much more important is our relationship with God! How much more should we spend time in communion with our heavenly Father?

## II. TO RECEIVE HELP FROM GOD

### A. Introduction

1. None of us are perfect Christians, spouses, parents, children, employees, friends, etc. and we need help to improve and be godlier in all these areas.
2. The greatest source of help is from God himself and he is ready to help us.
3. However, here is an incomplete list of Bible verses clearly showing that God only helped after man spoke or cried out to him for help.
 

a. Genesis 21:17	i. 2 Chronicles 5:13-14
b. Genesis 30:6	j. 2 Chronicles 30:27
c. Numbers 20:16	k. Job 9:16
d. Numbers 21:3	l. Psalm 3:4
e. Deuteronomy 26:7	m. Psalm 5:2-3
f. Joshua 10:12-14	n. Psalm 6:8
g. 2 Samuel 22:7	o. Psalm 28:6
h. 1 Kings 17:22	p. Psalm 31:22



- q. Psalm 55:17
- r. Psalm 66:19
- s. Psalm 116:1
- t. Isaiah 30:19
- u. Jeremiah 4:31
- v. Jeremiah 9:19
- w. Lamentations 3:55-57
- x. Jonah 2:2

4. God does work in our lives to help us even when we do not pray unto him yet this is an incredible truth found in the verses above that God intervened after his people cried out to him.
5. As stated above, we all stand in great need of help and according the example of the scriptures we need to be seeking God for his help.

B. The Lord responds to our requests for help.

1. David was going through troubling times, so much so that he said, “The sorrows of hell compassed me about: the snares of death prevented me.” (Psalm 18:5).
  - a. It was at this point of great need of God’s help that the Psalm 18:6 says, “In my distress I called upon the LORD, and cried unto my God: he heard my voice out of his temple, and my cry came before him, even into his ears.”
  - b. So, David did the best thing he could have to find help for his need. He made his need of help known to God.
  - c. Once David requested God’s help, then God responded being moved to action to help. Reading the succeeding verses in Psalm 18 will show God’s wondrous help to David.
  - d. But it was not till David cried out to God that God actually intervened in the situation. Verse 6 is where we read of David calling upon God and verse 7 begins with “Then”. Then God helped.
2. Often the greatest help we can receive of the Lord is his mercy and grace but we must seek him for it.
  - a. Hebrews 4:16 says, “Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”
  - b. The scripture assures us that we may obtain mercy and that we will find grace to help but the Lord allows this to us after we have come unto him in prayer.
  - c. There is no doubt that God is willing and able to help us. He is ready to help us but what is intriguing is how many examples there are that indicate he wants us to speak to him about our need first.
3. The encouraging truth is that God will respond to our requests for his help.



- C. Is it possible that we limit God's help in our lives due to our lack of praying to him?
1. Psalm 145:18-19 says, "The LORD is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth. He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him: he also will hear their cry, and will save them."
  2. The passage sets forth a pattern: Man calls upon God and then God is nigh unto them; Man cries unto God and then God will save them. What if man does not call upon or cry unto God?
  3. Maybe, the Lord is ready to give us more help in all areas of our life but because we do not pray like we should that we restrict the help he does give.

### III. TO KEEP OUR FOCUS ON GOD

#### A. Introduction

1. Our lives are filled with work, activities, responsibilities, entertainment, and interactions and while these things may be acceptable and necessary, they do serve as a distraction.
2. How many times have you come to the close of another day only to realize that you did not think about God at all that day, let alone talk to him or read his word.
3. The cares of life can prevent our hearts and minds being stayed upon God so, we need to pray so that we keep our focus on God and receive the blessings that come with that (Isaiah 26:3).

#### B. Praying helps us to remain spiritually minded and not carnally minded.

1. When Jesus was with his disciples in the garden, he told them to "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." (Matthew 26:41)
  - a. Jesus wanted the disciples to be vigilant and in constant communication with God so that they would remain spiritually minded and not succumb to the flesh.
  - b. By speaking to God, they focused their hearts and minds on him and could have victory over the flesh.
  - c. Praying is a spiritual act (or it should be) and when we talk to God, we are adjusting our minds to the spiritual and away from the fleshly.
  - d. The more we can get into the habit of speaking to the Lord throughout our day then the closer we will be to him and more spiritually minded we will be.



2. We are much more likely to live a holy life when we seek the Lord with our whole heart.
  - a. Psalm 119:10 says, “With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments.”
  - b. Our tendency is to wander from the Lord as the hymn writer, Robert Robinson said, “Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it, prone to leave that God I love”.
  - c. The psalmist was guarding himself from wandering from the Lord by seeking him with his whole heart.
  - d. At times in scripture, seeking the Lord is communicating unto him and seeking his counsel.
  - e. When we have honest communication with someone, our full attention is given unto that individual. When we pray without ceasing, our full attention is on the Lord as we go about our day.
- C. We become more like those we give our attention unto.
  1. Consider the principle given in Proverbs 13:20, “He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed.”
  2. The thought is that we become like those we surround ourselves with. If we surround ourselves with the wise then we will grow wise but if we surround ourselves with fools then we shall share in the fool’s destruction.
  3. This verse is not referring to our relationship with the Lord or having our focus on him but there is a parallel truth that we can connect to our relationship with the Lord.
  4. If we surround ourselves with the Lord, through continual scriptural prayer and studying his word, then will we assimilate to his mind and thoughts.
  5. This proverb is teaching that who we give our attention unto and surround ourselves with will influence our hearts and minds.
  6. In scriptural prayer we are thoughtfully communicating with God throughout our day. This means that we are thinking about who God is and what his word tells us as we speak unto him.
  7. Because of this our focus is more on the Lord and we are far more likely to live a holy life that day.
  8. We have had days that were rushed and we did not make time to read the Bible and pray and we went the whole day barely thinking of the Lord, whereas, when we make time for Bible reading and prayer our focus is more on the Lord.



#### IV. TO BE OBEDIENT

##### A. Introduction

1. A parent desires their children to be obedient. When they are small children, the parent expects the child to be obedient simply because they were told to do something. When a child matures, the parent hopes that they will be obedient out of a love for the parent and desire to please their parent.
2. The Lord desires obedience to his word. Even more still, the Lord desires obedience to his word out of heart that loves him and therefore wants to be obedient so as to please him.
3. If you have read through this lesson and thus far are unmotivated to improve your communication with the Lord then you should simply for the sake of being obedient.
4. God instructs us to pray and we are expected to be obedient. Hopefully, you will mature or have matured, and your only reason for praying will not simply be obedience but this is a starting place.

##### B. The scripture gives us an exhortation to pray.

1. 1 Timothy 2:1 outlines the exhortation to pray. It says, “**I exhort therefore**, that, first of all supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men;”.
2. By studying the word exhort, and its various forms, in the scripture; we come to the understanding that it means to strongly encourage, urge, or plead to adhere to certain teaching or instruction (Titus 2:12-15, Hebrews 13:22, 1 Peter 5:12, Jude 3).
3. An exhortation is not always necessarily a command although exhortation does at times contain specific commandments.
4. In 1 Timothy 2:1, Paul was strongly urging and possibly even giving a command.
5. As already stated, an exhortation is to urge to follow a teaching or instruction and in this case the instruction was to pray.
6. We are held accountable to the knowledge that we have received and we know that God is exhorting us to pray to him.
7. It is our responsibility to heed the word of God and pray.

##### C. The scripture gives us an acknowledgement of God’s will for people to pray.

1. Secondly, we see that we are not just exhorted to pray but it is the Lord’s will for his people to pray and have that personal relationship with him.



2. 1 Timothy 2:8 says, “**I will therefore** that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.”
  3. This was written by Paul but these words came from the inspiration of the Holy Ghost and are ultimately God’s words.
  4. Therefore, it is God’s will that we pray.
  5. We know that it is God’s will for “all men to be saved” (1 Timothy 2:4) because of his great love for man (John 3:16).
  6. How amazing of a thought is it that God desires us to commune with him because he loves us so much!
  7. This means that being a Christian is about having a close relationship with God, one where there is constant and continual communication back and forth and with joy.
  8. If you are saved and not praying daily and throughout your day, then you are disobeying God and have a very shallow Christianity. Prayer is essential.
- D. The scripture gives us a command to pray.
1. Lastly, the scripture gives as clear and direct a commandment to pray as it possibly could.
  2. 1 Thessalonians 5:17 says, “Pray without ceasing.”
  3. It does not say “If you pray, pray without ceasing”. It is a clear command to pray and to do so without ceasing.
  4. It is a great thing to have a specific uninterrupted time for prayer everyday but our communication to God should not be restricted to this time only.
  5. God commands us that we are to be in communication with him all throughout our day.