

"I did not come with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring to you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified" (1 Corinthians 2:1-2).

Prayer

The foundation of prayer is our walk with God. In fact, walking with God *is* prayer. When I walk with God, I am not simply using my spiritual legs; I am communing with God through mouth, mind, heart, soul, and spirit, by believing and obeying Him.

If we believe and obey, we walk in the light and we have fellowship with Him, because He *is* the Light. To pray is to have fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ. I can only walk with Him if I am in agreement with Him. If I disagree with God on any matter, it is I who needs correction, because there is no darkness with Him, no lack of knowledge or wisdom. As I walk with Him, He teaches, disciplines, and chastens me, and the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses me from all unrighteousness.

Prayer is not only asking God for things; it is much more. It is the action or process of communing with God, talking to Him, acknowledging His presence, and getting acquainted with Him and His Kingdom, the Kingdom of Heaven. It is much like getting seriously acquainted with others, except with a reverence or fear one does not have with others. God is not to be taken lightly.

The First Commandment is, "You shall Love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul and mind and strength."

Jesus said, "He that has My Commandments and keeps Them is the one who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him" (John 14:21).

God only hears those who are true worshippers of Him.

If I love God, I will do as He says. If I do as He says, He will manifest Himself to me. As I do what He says, I walk with Him, and He manifests Himself to me. Otherwise, how can I walk with Him? What does it mean that He manifests Himself to me if not that He hears and answers? And if He manifests Himself because I love Him and keep His commandments, will He not also respond to me and grant me the petitions that I make of Him? If I err in my petitions, will He not correct and spare me? Would He give His infant child a pair of scissors if the child asked for them (Luke 11:9-13)? But He is faithful and His promises are sure, and He will always grant me that which I ask or need according to His love toward me.

God does not hear sinners. He only hears those who are true worshippers of Him, those who [worship Him](#) in spirit and in truth, not in works or religiosity or in their own righteousness (Luke 18:10-14). If I come to God, I must know that I am unworthy, and that I can receive nothing of Him except by His mercy and because it is His will to give it to me.

We can never do anything for God apart from Him. Jesus, the Son of God Himself said, “Without the Father, the Son can do nothing” (John 5:19), contrary to many religious self-appointed helpers of God who say, “Without me, the Father can do nothing.” To believe and obey Him is to worship Him in spirit and truth, and He is the Author and Finisher of our faith.

If we believe and obey, our prayer life is taken care of.

Regarding making requests, here are some things to be pointed out (though if you believe and obey, all else is automatically taken care of):

God expects us to ask at times (Matthew 7:7; James 4:2). I say “at times” because He has granted me many a thing for which I have not asked.

We must ask believing we will receive. This is not a matter of will power or concentration so much as a spiritual witness within, an assurance and peace that what we ask for is His will and, therefore, as good as done (I John 5:14-15). This is faith. Read James 1:5-8.

There must be right motive in asking. If we ask something of God with selfish motive, we will receive nothing. Read James 4:1-4. Many requests may appear good on the surface, but God knows the heart. I may pray for the salvation of a loved one, not because I genuinely want to see that one saved, in Christ, but because I am not willing to forsake that one for Christ. This brings us back to our foundation of prayer, namely, our walk with God. Are we obeying Him? If we believe and obey, our prayer life is automatically taken care of.

We must be earnest. The prayers of tears and strong crying are the prayers He hears. Read James 5:16-18. I do not speak of the kind of strong crying and tears Pentecostals and others are reputed to produce. Those are the ways of Baal worshippers, who think they can drag God down out of Heaven by their hypocritical imitations of sincerity and earnestness. I speak of an inner brokenness that may not necessarily manifest itself in outward terms, and it be conjured up. God does not acknowledge half-heartedness.

God deals with the real issues. He does not acknowledge matters which are unimportant in His judgment though they may be important to the petitioner.

We need to learn to recognize answers when we get them. A prayer may have been answered, though appearing not to be.

We must be clear of sin in approaching God and expecting Him to grant His ear. We need to walk in His righteousness, not our own, obeying. God does not hear sinners (John 9:31). Jesus said, “He that sent Me is with Me: the Father has not left Me alone; for I do always those things that please Him” (John 8:29). The Lord advises us to be right with our brothers

and sisters in Christ, or anyone else for that matter, before we approach Him in worship or prayer (Matthew 5:23-24).

We must have the right (not in ourselves) to ask for what we ask. It may be God's will to heal me or to baptize me in His Spirit, but is it necessarily His will to answer me directly? Does not James say, "Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church and let them pray over him...." If someone has a gift of healing, it will be required of that one to minister the gift to others, and others should avail themselves of that person in the Lord.

If we pray as we ought, ask according to God's will, and believe that He has heard and will answer, then **we ought to thank Him for having heard and granted our requests** (Philippians 4:6). In many cases you will find yourself automatically rejoicing and thanking Him because of the assurance you have received. Nevertheless, in time of trial, you may have to make the effort.

There are times when you will not feel thankful, but give thanks all the same. Is that hypocritical? Not if you genuinely *want* to thank and be thankful, though you don't *feel* like it. We have learned that when we grit our teeth in difficult times and thank God ("In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" - I Thess. 5:18), though we are not thankful, we soon become thankful. We see the purpose for our sufferings in the fruits that result in our betterment. Thank God, and you'll see, in due time, the reason for the thanksgiving. In other words, you'll be thankful.

To know how to pray is to walk with God daily in all things.

Often, even before the prayer is answered, God gives us thankfulness when we thank Him. It is one of His many miracles. Many times we find strength to go on simply by thanking God for the circumstances we found so difficult and unpleasant. We discover that our greatest curses are our greatest blessings, if only we will submit to the will and sovereignty of God and trust Him.

When the disciples asked Jesus to teach them how to pray (Luke 11:1), He gave an example (not a canned prayer). He did not only give them "The Lord's Prayer," for this example is also found in the middle of a discourse in Matthew chapters 5, 6, and 7. This whole discourse well describes the walk with God. Again, to know how to pray is to walk with God daily in all things. These 3 chapters in Matthew are the answer of the Lord to the disciples who asked Him to teach them how to pray. Luke included only a portion of what Matthew recorded. These men recorded as was given them according to the leading of the Spirit of God. Each Gospel gives a portion, and the four Gospels together give the sum ordained of God for us. Read Matthew chapters 5, 6, and 7.

To whom do we pray? Such horrible confusion out there that I should have to answer such a question! Scrap the notion of a trinity. And for this statement the religious in certain quarters damn me as a heretic. I pray to the Lord. Who is the Lord? Jesus Christ. Isaiah says He is also our Father (Isaiah 9:6). There is only one Lord (Ephesians 4:5). Pray to Him as I do and as does Stephen (Acts 7:59-60). When I hear Him, I hear only One voice, not three, and it is *the Lord's!*

The rebellious heart seeks to avoid submission.

What of receiving the Spirit? Luke says that God will give the Holy Spirit to them who ask. But asking in itself, as we have already seen, is not always enough. Do you not think Philip would have gladly imparted the Spirit to the Samaritans if he could (Acts 8:5-17)? Why did the Samaritans not ask for themselves? Peter and John, having heard that the Samaritans had not received, came down and laid hands on them to receive the Spirit. God has His order of things.

The religious nominal Christians like to speak of the priesthood of the believer; they treasure their independence and claim that they can go to the Father directly, without the mediation of any other. This is an over-reaction to the tyranny of the Catholic Church, which abused and perverted principles of truth for their own ends. It is also the reaction of a rebellious heart that seeks to avoid submission and does not wish to acknowledge the need of another, especially, and in essence, ironically, God Himself.

And what of the laying on of hands in prayer? The elders prayed over the sick, Peter and John laid hands on the Samaritans, Paul laid hands on the Ephesians to receive the Spirit, Jairus asked Jesus to lay hands on his daughter, and Paul reminded Timothy of the gift imparted to him by the laying on of hands by the elders. Obviously God sanctioned such a practice, though it was not always required. Jesus did not lay hands on all He healed. Cornelius and the Gentiles received the Spirit without the laying on of hands, though Peter had to come and preach to them. But God leads His servants as He wills and they are found doing what is necessary.

We are admonished to be reverent and not careless in the presence of God.

Prayers (requests) are often, if not always, inspired by God. I ask because I am given to ask and, if given so, I will receive. The question is, "Is it *my* request or is God giving me to ask?" This we learn by the Spirit of God. If it is a request of the flesh (which is always contrary to God), it won't be answered, or if it is answered, we will be sorry, as when the

Israelites lusted for meat and God gave it to them, destroying them while it was yet in their mouths. Again, it comes back to our walk with God.

We are admonished by Solomon in Ecclesiastes to be sober, reverent, and not hasty or careless in the presence of God. Read Ecclesiastes 5:1-7.

Notice, though I have said we will not receive an answer from God unless our motives are right, yet I just gave an example of where the Israelites were given their request of God even though they asked out of lust. Many died when they were granted their request. Beware what you ask of God, especially if you are persistent. He may give it to you, and you may regret it.

God performs His will in spite of our selfish requests.

The Israelites asked for a king to rule over them, as other nations had, and received one from God. God and Samuel were grieved by their request, yet not only did God give them a king, but Jesus Christ became known as the son of one of those kings, David (Matthew 9:27; 12:23; 15:22; 20:30). So here is an example of where God reigns over all and performs His will in spite of ourselves and our selfish requests. Who can understand?

Paul says: “The Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Now He Who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to God’s will” (Romans 8:26-27).

Disproving the doctrine of three Gods or a trinity, one never finds in the Scriptures where it is said, “This is the Father speaking,” or, “This is the Spirit speaking,” but one will find the Lord Jesus identifying Himself as to Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9) and to John in Revelation (Revelation 1:8,11,18). Throughout the Old Testament, it is, “Thus says the Lord.” Paul says it was Christ in the Old Testament Who was the Rock and Who was tempted in the wilderness by the Israelites (1 Corinthians 10:4,9). It was God; it was the Lord; it was Jesus Whose Name is not only Wonderful, Counselor, Prince of Peace, but also Everlasting Father, the Alpha and Omega, the First and Last, the Beginning and End.

I used to have a prayer list I went through every day and week, over and over and over... until answered. Those prayers were not answered in many or most cases. I was a heathen praying repetitively. Are you doing the same? Don’t you think that God, Who made the ear to hear, is quite capable of hearing? But you repeat yourself over and over **for only one reason**: You don’t believe! You don’t believe He hears, and you don’t believe He will answer. Repetitious prayers are not prayers inspired of God, of course, because God is not so foolish as to repeat Himself over and over again as though He didn’t exist or was Someone stubborn and heedless.

God's ear is ever open to those who are His.

“But what about the importunate widow (Luke 18) and Daniel (Daniel 10) who persisted?” you may ask. The answer is that Jesus already made it quite clear that nobody will be heard for their much speaking. But these *were* heard, so it must be for a reason other than repetition. Jesus is not in error, and neither are the Scriptures.

Persistence and faith is the answer. The woman would not lose heart. She had faith. Daniel had faith. He didn't keep on asking. He was simply steadfast in his request. It is also recorded that the delayed answer was not because he had to keep asking, but because Gabriel was stalled by adversaries. Daniel's request was heard the first day he made it. Why? Because he was a man greatly beloved of God. He walked with God. He obeyed and believed. God's ear is ever open to those who are His. The widow trusted in justice. God is just; He will never deny anyone justice.

It is important to know that God loves us, and He is eager to grant us the desires of our hearts (Psalm 37:4). If you have children, do you not desire to give them good things (Luke 11:13)? If you don't have children, at least you have been a child. Have you not experienced your parents' desire to give you good things? If not, God desires to do so (Matthew 7:11; Luke 12:32; Romans 8:32). God is love. And we experience His love by walking with Him, which is prayer.

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