



Truth For These Times



29. HOW TO PRAY

Prayer is the breath of the soul. It is vital for the strength needed to live a victorious Christian life. When we pray, we are not approaching a “distant” God who is disinterested in our personal lives, but rather, we are speaking to One who is ever ready to help us and answer our prayers. Prayer is the opening of the heart to God as to a friend. This is the method of communication God has chosen in order that we may come to Him to present our petitions, and find spiritual power to live for Christ.

Matthew 6:7,8 **And when you pray, DO NOT USE VAIN REPETITIONS as the heathen *do*. For they think that they will be heard for their many words. Therefore do not be like them. For YOUR FATHER KNOWS THE THINGS YOU HAVE NEED OF BEFORE YOU ASK HIM.**

It is not necessary to ask God over and over for the same thing, as was the heathen practice. God knows what we need, but He nevertheless wants us to commune with Him through prayer, and ask for those things that are essential, we may need to persevere in prayer, and plead with God, but to make repetitious statements like a parrot has no virtue.

Matthew 6:9-13 **In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as *it is* in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.**

This is the model prayer given by Jesus, usually referred to as “The Lord’s Prayer”. The disciples had asked Jesus to teach them to pray, and Jesus gave this prayer as a guide to the things we should pray for and about. We can, however, pray about all things. This prayer is a broad outline and can be repeated word for word, but its purpose goes far beyond this.

John 14:13 **And **WHATEVER YOU ASK IN MY NAME, THAT I WILL DO**, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.**

When we pray to Our Father in heaven, we make our petitions through the name of Jesus. The promise is given that our prayers will be answered.



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Mark 11:24 **Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, **BELIEVE THAT YOU RECEIVE THEM, AND YOU WILL HAVE THEM.****

Answered prayer becomes a reality when we believe.

1 Thessalonians 5:17 **PRAY WITHOUT CEASING.**

Obviously this does not mean we will be upon our knees in prayer all the time, but it does mean we can always be within speaking distance of God. The atmosphere of heaven can be with us no matter where we are, or what we are doing.

“There is no time or place in which it is inappropriate to offer up a petition to God. There is nothing that can prevent us from lifting up our hearts in the spirit of earnest prayer. In the crowds in the street in the midst of a business engagement, we may send up a petition to God and plead for divine guidance. We should have the door of the heart open continually and our invitation going up that Jesus may come and abide as a heavenly guest in the soul”. *Steps to Christ*, page 99.



Matthew 6:6 **But you, WHEN YOU PRAY, GO INTO YOUR ROOM, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who *is* in the secret *place*; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.**

Prayer is not for proud display. Private prayer is between God and the individual. Christ admonished His followers to enter into a private room, shut the door, and pray in secret. This will crowd out influences that will distract from seeking God, and thus allow concentration. Public prayer does have its place, and when used, these prayers should be short. Private praying has no time limit, but public prayers are different. The one chosen to pray is not trying to impress others; he is instead, the spokesman, speaking on behalf of those who have gathered together.



Our prayers are heard because Jesus intercedes for us.

Romans 8:26 Likewise 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.

How reassuring to know that the Holy Spirit brings our prayers before God in the best possible way.

CONDITIONS FOR ANSWERED PRAYER

1. *Dependence upon God.*

1 Peter 5:7 **CASTING ALL YOUR CARE UPON HIM, FOR HE CARES FOR YOU.**

When we trust in ourselves we are sure to fail, but when we place our dependence upon Him we must succeed.

2. *Pray According to His Will*

1 John 5:14 **Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that IF WE ASK ANYTHING ACCORDING TO HIS WILL, HE HEARS US.**

It takes spiritual maturity to understand when God says NO to our requests. God knows what is best for us, but we do not. God always answers prayer. Sometimes He says YES, sometimes NO, and other times, WAIT. We can be assured that His answer is the best at all times. Sometimes we must follow the example of Jesus, and by faith say, “Thy will be done” If we could see as God sees, we would never doubt His leading.

James 4:3 YOU ASK AND DO NOT RECEIVE, BECAUSE YOU ASK AMISS, that you may spend *it* on your pleasures.

We are prone to error, and sometimes ask for the wrong things. God will not give us anything that will harm us.

3. Have Faith

Hebrews 11:6 BUT WITHOUT FAITH *IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO PLEASE HIM*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and *that* He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.



Noah demonstrated faith in God by obeying God's word. We also need faith.

We must believe God and trust Him in order to please Him.

James 1:6 BUT LET HIM ASK IN FAITH, WITH NO DOUBTING, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind.

This is the secret of answered prayer – faith: believing God without doubting, complete trust in Him.

4. Turn from Sin

Psalms 66:18 IF I REGARD INIQUITY IN MY HEART, THE LORD WILL NOT HEAR.

If we have premeditated thoughts of sin or a rebellious spirit, the communication link of prayer will be cut off.

Proverbs 28:9,13 ONE WHO TURNS AWAY HIS EAR FROM HEARING THE LAW, EVEN HIS PRAYER *IS AN ABOMINATION*. HE WHO COVERS HIS SINS WILL NOT PROSPER, but whoever confesses and forsakes *them* will have mercy.

If a person has been convicted to keep God's commandments, and refuses to listen, be it a great matter or small, God regards his prayer as an abomination. It is a mistake to think God will accept the prayers of a professed Christian, while willingly he disobeys God's commandments.



Obedience is essential for answered prayer.

Hebrews 4:16 LET US THEREFORE COME BOLDLY TO THE THRONE OF GRACE, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

When we have fulfilled the conditions of answered prayer, we can approach God with confidence, knowing He is delighted to accept us.

WHAT SHOULD WE PRAY FOR?

1 John 1:9 IF WE CONFESS OUR SINS, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

In the Lord's Prayer, Jesus told us what to pray for. Here again we are admonished to confess our sins. We do this as we pray to God.

James 1:5 IF ANY OF YOU LACKS WISDOM, LET HIM ASK OF GOD, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.



We can pray for understanding, particularly on spiritual things.

Matthew 7:7 ASK, AND IT WILL BE GIVEN TO YOU; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.

Psalm 84:11 For the LORD God is a sun and shield; The LORD will give grace and glory; NO GOOD THING WILL HE WITHHOLD FROM THOSE WHO WALK UPRIGHTLY.

To receive, all we have to do is ask; and, provided it is according to God's will, it will not be withheld from the genuine Christian.

James 5:15 AND THE PRAYER OF FAITH WILL SAVE THE SICK, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.



If we have faith that God will heal, God will raise the sick to health in response to the earnest prayer of the believer. In fact, a devoted prayer life will encourage us to bring all things to our heavenly Father. He will be to us a constant Companion, leading us day by day in the paths of righteousness.

“If we keep the Lord ever before us, allowing our hearts to go out in thanksgiving and praise to Him, we shall have a continual freshness in our religious life. Our prayers will take the form of a conversation with God as we would talk with a friend. He will speak His mysteries to us personally. Often there will come to us a sweet, joyful sense of the presence of Jesus. Often our hearts will burn within us as He draws nigh to commune with us as He did with Enoch. When this is in truth the experience of the Christian, there is seen in his life a simplicity, a humility, a meekness, and lowliness of heart, that show to all with whom he associates, that he has been with Jesus and learned of Him”. *Christ's Object Lessons*, pages 129,130.

Philippians 4:6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything BY PRAYER AND SUPPLICATION, WITH THANKSGIVING, LET YOUR REQUESTS BE MADE KNOWN TO GOD.

To make prayer more meaningful, it is necessary to create a suitable atmosphere. This can be done by being alone. First of all say a short prayer, then read a portion of the Bible and mediate on what you have read. Apply its meaning to you personally wherever possible. Now you have blocked out of your mind the everyday things of life, and you are ready to address God in prayer. Never rush prayer. Give it top priority. It is good to pray for specific people or particular needs. Avoid generalising in prayer, or it will become vague. When you are praying, you are talking to God as a Friend. Dear Friend, are you really communicating with God through prayer? Communication is not dependent on your feelings or emotion, it is based on fact. There is victory for you, there is deliverance, and there is rejoicing in the Lord. Won't you decide now to use the communication system God has provided? – PRAYER.

Review Sheet – How to Pray

Assignment: Read the Bible study carefully before answering the following questions.

1. What admonition did Jesus give when explaining how to pray in Matthew 6:7,8?
“And when you pray, _____.
 2. What is the model prayer given by Jesus in Matthew 6:9-13 usually referred to as?
The _____.
 3. When we pray, what should be our attitude towards our requests? Mark 11:24
when you pray, _____.
 4. How did Jesus explain the method of private prayer? Matthew 6:6
When you pray, _____,
_____;
 5. Who makes our prayers acceptable to God? Romans 8:26?
But the _____.
 6. What condition should we always remember when making requests in prayer? 1 John 5:14,15
If we ask anything _____,
 7. How important is faith in prayer? James 1:6
Let him ask in _____,
 8. When does God not hear a prayer? Psalm 66:18
If I _____,
 9. Does God hear the prayer of one who will not obey His law? Proverbs 28:9,13
One who turns away his ear _____.
 10. What is vital to remember in prayer at all times? 1 John 1:9
If we _____.
 11. How willing is God to grant our petitions in prayer? Psalm 84:11
No _____.
 12. How does Philippians 4:6 show how we can bring everything to God in prayer?
But in everything _____,
_____;
- Is it your plan to use God’s communication system of prayer every day? _____.