

Prayer
Lesson 38

1. Prayer is one of the highest FUNCTIONS and most important PRIVILEGES of the Christian life.
2. Prayer is dependence upon GOD, not SELF.
3. WORDS are not the important part of prayer. The SPIRIT of prayer is what God sees and understands.
4. Prayer accomplishes far more than all the RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES in the world.
5. SAYING PRAYERS and PRAYING are two different things. Acts 9:11
 - a. PAUL prayed many prayers as a PHARISEE.
 - b. His first REAL PRAYING began after his CONVERSION.
6. The disciples asked Christ to TEACH THEM to pray. Luke 11:1
7. Prayer is a GIFT FROM GOD meant for all who love the Lord and we should MAKE THE MOST of this privilege. Luke 18:1
8. The following are some GENERAL RULES Christ gave with regard to praying. Matthew 6:5-8
 - a. Don't pray to DRAW ATTENTION to your religiosity because that will have its own reward. Matthew 6:5 (What is it?)
 - b. Pray PRIVATELY as opposed to hypocritically. (vs. 6)
 - c. Do not pray PUBLIC, LONG, REDUNDANT prayers. (vs. 7) (vain repetition)
9. The Lord's Prayer is a MODEL prayer, it was not designed to be repeated corporately as a part of a LITURGY. Matthew 5:9
10. It is not wrong to repeat it as such ON OCCASION, but note that Christ said, "This is HOW you should pray, not WHAT you should pray."
11. If the "Lord's Prayer," better called the DISCIPLES prayer, is the MODEL, what format should our prayers follow? Matthew 6:9-13
 - a. WORSHIP and recognition of who He is. (vs. 9)
 - b. Prayer for HIS WILL to be done in ANY AND ALL situations. (vs. 10)
 - c. Request for PERSONAL NEEDS to be met. (vs. 11)

- d. FORGIVENESS for sins committed; with the prerequisite that WE FORGIVE others. (vs. 12)
 - e. Protection from the EVIL ONE. (vs. 13)
 - f. A restatement of HIS AUTHORITY. (vs. 13b)
12. FAITH is essential to THE POWER of prayer. James 1:6
 13. Faith must rest in FACTS. God CAN AND DOES answer prayer. Matthew 7:7
 14. We must pray ACCORDING TO His will. 1 John 5:14
 - * If, when you pray, you are walking in fellowship with God and you are harboring no known sin; if you are living a life of obedience to God's Word and are seeking to do all that you know He wants you to seek and do; You can be confident that what you pray WILL BE according to His will and you can expect Him to answer.
 15. When you pray in the WILL OF GOD you will not "ask amiss" (ask with the wrong motive). James 4:3
 16. God's desire for us is to be PERSISTENT in our prayers. Colossians 4:2; 1 Thess. 5:17
 17. God cannot hear your prayer when there is SIN IN YOUR LIFE. Ps. 66:18
 18. When we pray we pray in the NAME OF Jesus. John 16:23 & 24
 - * What does it mean to pray in the name of Jesus? Does it simply mean to use His name as a "rote" conclusion to every prayer? No, the concept is far more inclusive than that. The understanding of "in Jesus' name" is at least twofold:
 1. Praying in the authority Christ gives.
 2. Praying in union with Him.

To put it yet another way, to pray "in Jesus' name" means I pray this because I believe Jesus would pray this way if He were making the request.

Conclusion

Prayer is discovering God's will -- not trying to change His mind. Prayer is coming to God in absolute faith that what we need will be given to us in answer to our prayers. The Bible definitely teaches that our prayers should be according to His will (1 John 5:14-15).

God always answers prayer. The prayers of faith, the believing prayer for the glory of God, is always answered. The prayer for something that is not good for us is answered with a "no." The

prayer for something or someone is often delayed until God knows that by answering the prayer it will work for good.

So, the three answers to prayer are:

- *Yes*, your prayer is in the will of God.
- *No*, to answer your prayer would do you no good.
- *Wait*, God knows what is best and at what point we can accept His positive answer.

Some find a conflict with Matthew 6:8. If the Father knows what we have need of, why should we pray and ask God? Because God is God, He knows all things before we even think of them. He is still our Father and He wants us to ask Him, pray to Him. Read Matthew 7:7-8 again. *Communion* with God opens the way for *Petition*, which opens our concern for others, which is *Intercession*.

Prayer should be as much an attitude as an outward act. The person who communes with God in silence almost constantly is the one who has discovered the secret of prayer.