

## CHRISTIANS: HOW TO PRAY (PART 1)

### SCRIPTURE READING:

**“<sup>8</sup> For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ. <sup>9</sup> And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; <sup>10</sup> That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ. <sup>11</sup> Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God” (Philippians 1:8-11).**

### INTRODUCTION:

**A. Prayer is talking with God which also includes listening to God. Prayers to God can be in the form of words or thoughts.**

**B. Prayer is the first duty of the Church (1 Tim 2:1-8).**

**1. Pray “for all men” (v. 1)**

Every person is in need of prayer as everybody is in need of God – His Salvation, Care and Direction.

**2. The four types of prayer (v. 1)**

**a. “Supplication”** – these prayers are for special needs. We are to carry the special needs of others before God.

**b. “Prayers”** – this is the special times of prayer that we set aside for devotion, worship and Bible reading.

**c. “Intercessions”** – this is praying to God on behalf of others – standing in the gap between God and others.

**d. “Thanksgiving”** – this means thanking God for hearing and answering our prayers – thanking Him for what He has done and what He is going to do for us and others.

**3. Pray for those “in authority” so that we can live “a quiet and peaceable life” – Godly and sincere lives (v. 2).**

**4. Pray for “all men to be saved, and come unto the knowledge of the truth” – there is only “one God and one mediator between God and man, Christ Jesus who gave Himself a ransom for all” (vv. 4-6).**

○ “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6).

○ “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Pet 3:9).

○ “As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one” (1 Cor 8:4).

**In Part 1 of this lesson, we will study three ways in which Christians are to pray to God:**

**I. Christians are to Pray Secretly (Matt 6:5-6)**

“<sup>5</sup> And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. <sup>6</sup> But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly” (Matt 6:5-6).

**A. Christians are to pray with right motives.**

It is possible to pray with the wrong motive and in the wrong way.

1. **The Wrong Motive** – praying to be seen or praised by men (v. 5), self-glorifying (v. 8).
2. **The Right Motive** – praying to be heard by God (v. 6)

**B. Praying in secret does not preclude (prohibit) public prayers.**

1. Pray in public with the right motive – having reverence for God. It demonstrates a close walk with God.
2. The person who prays in public to be seen and praised by man has already received his reward – Public Recognition.

**C. God wants us to pray secretly and in public with the right motive.**

**D. It is possible to pray and not be heard by God.**

The Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector (Luke 18:9-14)

1. The Pharisee prayed with the **wrong motive** – “Prayed with himself” – God did not hear his prayer. The Pharisee boasted of his own moral and religious attainments. He compared himself to others instead of God’s perfect standard. God’s perfect standard would have shown him how sinful he really was. He did not think of himself as a sinner (vv. 11-12).
2. The Tax Collector prayed with the **right motive** – He sensed his own unworthiness and cried out “God be merciful to me a sinner” (v. 13).

**E.** Jesus said, “I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted” (v. 14).

**II. Christians are to Pray Watchfully (Matt 26:40-41)**

“<sup>40</sup> And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour? <sup>41</sup> Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak (Matt 26:40-41).

**A. On three occasions, Jesus found His Disciples asleep** (Matt 26:40, 42, 44), in the Garden of Gethsemane, while He was confronting death. They were supposed to praying with Jesus.

- Do not condemn the Disciples for falling asleep during prayer meeting. How many times have we fallen asleep while praying to God?

**B. As Believers, we are to “watch” – stay awake, be alert – and “pray, that ye enter not into temptation.”**

1. In the Lord’s Prayer, Jesus taught His Disciples “... lead us not into temptation ...” (Matt 6:13). Jesus is not implying that God leads Believers into temptation. He is simply asking for deliverance from Satan and his deceit.

2. As Believers, we must stay on constant alert – Satan is our adversary – as a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

- “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Pet 5:8).

3. “**Watch and Pray**” – **Watch** in order to see Satan and temptation coming your way and **Pray** in order to be prepared when temptation comes.

4. **Yield Not To Temptation**

Yield not to temptation, For yielding is sin;

Each vict’ry will help you, Some other to win;

Fight valiantly onward, Evil passions subdue;

Look ever to Jesus, He will carry you through.

Ask the Savior to help you, Comfort, strengthen and keep you;

He is willing to aid you, He will carry you through.

**III. Christians are to Pray Believing (Mark 9:14-29)**

“<sup>23</sup> Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.

<sup>24</sup> And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief” (Mark 9:23-24).

**A. In Mark 9:14-29, we noticed the unbelief on the part of the Disciples and a boy’s father to heal his demon possessed son.**

1. The father described his son’s condition and asked Jesus, “If thou canst do anything, have compassion on us and help us” (v. 22).

2. Jesus informed the father that it was not a question of His ability to heal, but of the father’s ability to believe. Faith in God is always rewarding. The father replied, “Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief” (v. 24).

3. Jesus healed the demon-possessed boy – He ordered the “Foul Spirit” to leave the boy, who has a terrible spasm, then his body relaxed as if he was dead. Jesus raised him up and restored him to his father (vv. 25-27).

4. Later, when Jesus was alone with His Disciples, they asked Him privately why they could not cast the “foul spirit” out of the boy. Jesus replied, that certain miracles require prayer and fasting (vv. 28-29).

**B. Believers are to pray and believe that God will answer our prayers (according to His will).**

- “Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them” (Mark 11:24).
- “Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts” (James 4:3).
- “<sup>14</sup> And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: <sup>15</sup> And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him” (1 John 5:14-15).
- “Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved” (Psalm 55:22).

**MEMORY VERSE:**

“Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever” (Heb 13:8).

**CONCLUSION:**

**A. How Christians should pray: Pray Secretly, Pray Watchfully, and Pray Believing.**

**B. “In our prayers, we talk to God, in our Bible Study, God talks to us, and we had better let God do most of the talking” – D. L. Moody**

**C. Dallas Theological Seminary**

Shortly after Dallas Theological Seminary was founded in 1924, it almost came to the point of bankruptcy. All the creditors were going to foreclose at noon on a particular day. That morning they met in the president’s office with Dr. Chafer for prayer that God would provide. In that prayer meeting was a man by the name of Harry Ironside. When it was his turn to pray, he prayed in his characteristic manner: "Lord, we know that the cattle on a thousand hills are Thine. Please sell some of them and send us the money."

While they were praying, a tall Texan with boots on and an open collar stepped up to the business office and said, "I just sold two carloads of cattle in Ft. Worth. I’ve been trying to make a business deal but it fell through, and I feel compelled to give the money to the seminary. I don’t know if you need it or not, but here’s the check". A secretary took the check and, knowing how critical things were financially, went to the door of the prayer meeting and timidly tapped. When she finally got a response, Dr. Chafer took the check out of her hand. It was exactly the amount of the debt. When he looked at the name, he recognized the cattleman in Ft. Worth, and turning to Dr. Ironside said, "Harry, God sold the cattle" (Sermon Central).

**D. Romans Road (Rom 3:10, 23, 5:8, 10:9, 13)**

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Corinth Christian Fellowship  
March 29, 2023

“... the word of our God shall stand for ever” (Isa 40:8).