

Prayer Lesson 1 January 8, 2012

The *Privilege* of Praying: Why Should We? What is it? Why Don't We?

Big Idea: God works through our prayers to accomplish His will.

Focal Scripture: 1 John 5:14-15 (NASB95) — 14 This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. 15 And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.

Class objective: To trust God by acknowledging and expressing our dependence upon God and to “pray without ceasing (1 Thess. 5:17).

Why Is Studying About Prayer Important?

1. God works through prayer to accomplish His will (Isa. 65:24)
2. God interacts with us through prayer (Gen. 18; Ex. 32; Josh. 10; 2 Kings 1)
3. God commands us to pray and has a reason for it, even if we do not understand it all (1 Thess. 5:17).

I. Why Should We Pray?

1. God strongly desires to have an intimate relationship with us (Prov. 3:32; Psa. 139:23; Prov. 3:32; Psa. 139:3; 63:1; Phil. 4:19; 1 Jn. 3:20; 2 Tim. 1:12; 1 Chron. 28:9; Matt. 23:37).
2. God wants to bless us (Lu. 11:5-13)
3. Prayer is powerful and does cause real, objective change (Num. 14:11-20; Jam. 5:17-18; Acts 12:1-17).
4. God commands us to pray (1 Thess. 5:17; Jam. 3:17; Psa. 145:9; 84:11; Josh. 1:8; Psa. 1:1-3)

II. What Exactly Is Prayer?

Prayer in the Bible refers to any and every audible or inaudible expression of our thoughts and feelings to God. A classic definition of Christian prayer is “an offering up of our desires unto God, for things agreeable to His will, in the name of Christ, with confession of our sins, and thankful acknowledgment His mercies”

The Bible tells us of 9 types of prayers:

Three Types of prayers that *ask* God something:

1. Prayers that *question* God (Josh. 7:7)
2. Prayers that ask God for *ourselves* (Lu. 11:1-13)
3. Prayers that ask God for *others* (intercessory prayer) (1 Tim. 2:1-2)

Six Types of prayers that *tell* God something:

4. Prayers that are merely *conversing* with God (Acts 9:13-14)
5. Prayers of *response* (Acts 9:10)
6. Prayers of *confession* (Exod. 32:32)
7. Prayers of *praise* (Psa. 146:1-2)
8. Prayers of *thanksgiving* (blessing) (1 Thess. 5:16)
9. Prayers of *complaint* (Exod. 5:22-23)

III. Why Don't We Pray (Theological Reasons)?

1. If God loves us so much, shouldn't He just give us things without us asking (Matt. 5:45; 1 Thess. 5:17; Prov. 16:25; 1 Jn. 3:20; Matt. 6:12; Isa. 44:12-13; Gen. 3)?
2. If God says He will not give us something unless we ask, isn't He holding out on us, and therefore doesn't really love us (Jam. 1:17; Lu. 11:9-10)?
3. If God knows all things, isn't it unnecessary, even foolish to inform Him of things He already knows (i.e. our needs, Matt. 6:32; Phil. 4:6-7; 1 Jn. 3:20)?
4. How can a holy God (Isa. 6:3) have any contact with a sinful human (Rom. 3:23; Heb. 10:19-23)?
5. If God is immutable i.e. does not change), then why pray if God does not change?

Conclusion:

Knowing that God desires a intimate relationship with us and that He works through our prayers to accomplishes His will, would you be willing to spend more time praying? If so, pray this pray with me: