

Christian Prayer

Pray without ceasing;

1 Thessalonians 5:17

There are many misconceptions about prayer and what prayer is. Prayer is your direct communication to God. Prayer can be said in many different ways and at any time of the day or night. Prayer can be said or sang. How you pray does not matter as long as it is God honouring. Many think that you need to be on your knees with your hands together in order to pray and to be heard and answered by God, but this is simply not true. All that God requires from you is your honesty and a humble spirit. James reminds us that we receive not because we ask not and when we ask wrongly (James 4:3).

Many people have misunderstood prayer. Many think that you ask God for something in prayer and He gives it to you. This is not true as you will discover during this lesson. God only gives us what is best for us. God promises to bless us and keep us spiritually safe. He never promised to make us millionaires and give us everything that our flesh desires.

We do not always know what is best for ourselves, but God does. He made us in His image. God will only grant His people, His will. If we ask against His will, do not expect a heartily response from God. We will also discover how to pray according to God's will in the lesson.

Psalm 145:18 says, "The Lord is near to all who call upon Him, To all who call upon Him in truth." Proverbs 15:29 continues this psalm, "The Lord is far from the wicked, But He hears the prayer of the righteous."

In Colossians 4:2 Paul exhorts the believers to be fervent vessels of prayer. Paul writes, "Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving." Prayer is a Christian's most dangerous weapon. We can pray for the lost and speak to God Himself through prayer. Prayer will always cast out doubt and lead to faithfulness. Prayer will build us up in righteousness and truth.

Prayer will strengthen us when we are weak, and prayer will comfort us when we are downcast. Romans 12:12 tells us, "rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer." This is what God asks of us. As we pray, He will enable us and equip us for a full spiritual life with strength and hope.

Prayer honours and glorifies God alone and not us. This is why God will never answer selfish requests from us. What I mean by this is God will never answer a prayer that asks for a big house, many holidays, and expensive cars and to make us a millionaire. God will not honour a prayer that glorifies the sinner and is intended for our own selfish ends. God will answer prayers that asks for health needs, spiritual needs, mental needs, and necessary financial and other needs.

God is not a god of the luxury and earthly riches but the modest and the humble. We must have truth and righteousness in mind when asking the Lord in prayer.

What is Prayer?

Prayer, is you talking to God with an open heart. This is not done with a memorised prayer such as the Lord's Prayer or the twenty third Psalm or any other prayer that is written in a book. Prayer is you and God nothing else. There is nothing wrong with using written prayers if they are God honouring and from your heart. If we rely on the written words too much that will hinder our prayer life because we will depend more on what someone else has written and not on the voice of our own heart and soul. God wants to hear your prayer not the prayer of another. Prayer is personal between you and the Lord. We are to pray to God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Bible says there is only one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus. See 1 Timothy 2:5.

Jesus tells us exactly what to do in prayer in Matthew 6. Let us turn to Matthew 6 and learn what the Lord Jesus said about prayer.

In verse 5 we are told to pray sincerely and not be as the _____.

In verse 7 Jesus tells us not to use _____.

Vain repetitions are a prayer said over and over again just for the sake of saying it. Many believe that the more you say a prayer the more God hears. Vain repetitions are not what God wants. For example, praying the Rosary is in vain and is vain repetition. This is because part of the practice is praying to Mary. The mother of Christ is not a mediator between God and man. Christ is the only one that can mediate between God and man. Those in Heaven have no idea of what happens on earth. Mary cannot hear prayers, nor can she intercede for sinners.

In verse 8 Jesus said _____

Verse 9-15 is a sample prayer for us to follow by the Lord.

Jesus told us to do the following.

1. Address God the Father in our prayers, not saints or people who have died before us.
2. To honour the holy name of God.
3. To ask for God's will to be done on earth like it is in God's Heavenly Kingdom.
4. To ask for God to supply all our daily needs such as food and water.
5. To ask God to forgive us for all the times we have fallen short of His commandments.
6. To ask to be delivered from all temptations (James 1:13-14).

Turn to John 14 and read verses 13 and 14. We need to be careful not to misuse these verses. This is not a formula to be added on to every prayer to make it sound spiritual or to get our prayers answered. What Jesus is saying here is because of His finished work on the cross, we can come to Him with our prayers. Read Ephesians 2:18 and Hebrews 4:14-16.

Turn to Psalm 66:18 and write the verse out below.

God will only answer prayers from the heart that have a right attitude towards Him. Read 1 John 3:20-22.

Continuing in the Book of Psalms turn to chapter 38 verse 18. Write out the verse.

Psalm 32 verse 5 says,

Proverbs 28:13 is another good verse to remember when considering prayer. Fill in the blanks below.

He who _____ his _____ will not _____, But he _____ confesses and _____ them will find _____.

Who should we pray for?

Turn to 1 Timothy 2. We find who God wants us to pray for. List the three groups of people that God instructs us to pray for.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

In verse 3 Paul says that it is acceptable and pleasing to God for us to pray for all men, for kings and for all people in positions of authority. True prayer is when we pray for others and the needs of others.

Why do you think God wants us to pray for all men and people in positions of authority and leadership?

In John 17 Jesus prays for three main things list them below.

1. _____ (in Verses _____)
2. _____ (in Verses _____)
3. _____ (in Verses _____)

Ephesians 2:18 says, “for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father.”

Prayer is simply direct contact with God. The verse above is a good summary of prayer. It means we have a line of communication to God’s Heavenly throne at any time of the day.

Why Pray?

- To relate to God and to ask for His help.
- To talk to the Father and the Son.
- For comfort in times of need.
- Jesus told us to pray.

- For hope and guidance in the future.
- To know God's will.
- To ask for forgiveness of sin.
- To be obedient to our Father.

You will know God's hand is upon your prayer life as He shapes you into the Christian He wants you to be. If you ask God to show you His will for your life, I can guarantee He will. 1 John 5:13 and James 1:5 testifies to this truth. If we pray according to God's will He will always hear us and answer.

The Lord may not give you the answer that you were hoping for or want but nevertheless He will give you His answer.

Lesson Summary

In this lesson we have learnt about prayer, what it is and what it is not. Prayer is not a vehicle to get what we want, but a connection line to God to strengthen us and guide us. Some examples of what we should pray for are spiritual growth, physical, mental, and financial needs, family, friends, workmates, and acquaintances. We should pray for peace on earth, governments, and nations. We are also to pray for wisdom, understanding of the Bible, for our Church, elders, preachers and teachers of God's Word, Evangelists, and all in authority within the local body of believers.

As you have now studied God's Word on prayer, you should be clearer on what prayer is. Prayer is talking to God from your heart. God wants to hear what is on your heart, not someone else's. Prayer is personal between God and yourself. Prayer does not mean you need to be on your knees and your hands together. Without prayer your Christian life will be useless, you cannot walk with God and not pray. Prayer is the breath of life to the soul. If we do not get enough breath the spiritual life will decay and die. Praying is breathing for your soul. Just like your body needs food, so your soul needs prayer. You need to pray.

Prayer is a form of serving, obeying, and trusting God. God commands Christians to pray (Philippians 4:6-7). A lack of prayer shows a lack of faith and trust in God's Word. We pray to demonstrate our faith in God (Ephesians 3:20). Prayer is our only way to seek God. Prayer is our only way to defeat Satan and his demons. As a result of Christ's life and death, we can overcome the forces of evil. We have God's promises in Christ and through fervent and righteous prayers (James 5:16-18).

Remembrance verse

1 John 5:14

This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.