



Wednesday, April 24, 2019  
Dr. Landon Dowden

**PRAYING FOR OUR FAITH FAMILY**  
**What is a Healthy Church – Lesson #9**

**Some introductory questions:**

1. What are some of your favorite prayers in the Bible? Why?
2. When you think of “prayer warriors” who comes to your mind?
3. What are some prayers you’ve seen God answer?
4. What are some questions you have about prayer/praying?
5. What are your prayer habits?
6. How do you teach those you are discipling to pray?
7. What are you praying for now?

**God desires for us to pray.** (James 5:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:17; Luke 22:40; 18:1; 6:28; 1 Timothy 2:1; Matthew 6:9)

- When and where do we pray most? (Manner)
- Why do we pray? (Motivation)
- What do we pray? (Message)

**Paul was a prayer warrior for the Church.**

- Romans 1:9-10; 1 Corinthians 1:4; Ephesians 1:16; Philippians 1:3-4; Colossians 1:3; 1 Thessalonians 1:2; 2 Thessalonians 1:11; 2 Timothy 1:3; Philemon 1:4

**What was Paul praying for the Church?**

- Romans 15:13-14; Ephesians 1:15-23; 3:14-21; Philippians 1:9-11; Colossians 1:9-14; 1 Thessalonians 3:11-13; 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12; 2:16-17; 3:5; 3:16

**Matthew 6:5-15 IN A SENTENCE: When you pray, seek God’s glory and not your own.**

Keener: Jesus’ sample prayer is not a prayer for the complacent person satisfied with the treasures of this age. This is a prayer for the desperate, who recognize that this world is not as it should be and that only God can set things straight.

**I. SEEK GOD’S GLORY IN WHERE AND WHY YOU PRAY.**

- The hypocrites loved public prayers because they wanted public praise (It hasn’t changed for our day).
- If the majority of our praying is done in public then we have a problem.
- If we are more concerned that others hear our prayers than God then we have a problem.



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- Stott: The question is: which spectator matters to us - the more earthly or heavenly men or God? We have to become so conscious of God that we cease to be self-conscious.
- Carson: Could it be that the prime reason we do not see more prayers answered is because we are less concerned with bringing our requests to God than with showing off before men?
- Solution:
  - In your praying, let your desire to talk with your Father be greater than your desire to be heard.
    - Closet was smallest room in house – private – Jesus is not saying we should never pray out loud or corporately – His emphasis is that talking with the Father should be the main motive.
- Carson: Do I pray more frequently and more fervently when alone with God than I do in public? Do I love the secret place of prayer? Is my public praying simply the overflow of my private praying?

## II. SEEK GOD'S GLORY IN HOW YOU PRAY.

- Don't let our praying be based more on superstition than reality.
- Don't try to manipulate God – there is no room for flattery (praise with a motive) in our prayers.
  - Empty phrases = any and every prayer which is all words and no meaning, all lips and no mind or heart. It is a torrent of mechanical and mindless words.
  - Stott: Jesus forbids his people any kind of prayer with the mouth when the mind is not engaged.
  - The praying of Christians must be real – sincere as opposed to hypocritical, thoughtful as opposed to mechanical.
    - Jesus is not saying don't repeat (He did in Gethsemane).
    - Jesus is not saying don't pray long (He did through several nights).
    - Jesus is not saying don't pray about something more than once (He taught his disciples to persevere in prayer).
    - Jesus IS saying let prayer be purposeful, not mechanical.
    - Jesus IS saying let prayer be intelligent not just emotional.
- Keener: Effective prayer is not a complex ritual but a simple cry of faith predicated on an assured relationship.
- If our Father knows what we need before we ask, then why do we ask?
  - Calvin: Believers do not pray with the view of informing God about things unknown to Him, or of exciting Him to do His duty, or of urging Him as though He were reluctant. On the contrary, they pray in order that they may arouse themselves to seek him, that they may exercise their faith in meditating on his promises, that they may relieve themselves from their anxieties by pouring them into His bosom; in a word, that they may declare that from Him alone they hope and expect, both for themselves and for others, all good things.
  - Luther: By our praying, we are instructing ourselves more than we are Him.



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### III. SEEK GOD'S GLORY IN WHAT YOU PRAY.

- **OUR FATHER - Matthew 6:9**

- How often do you linger on the truth that God is your Father?
  - Packer: If you want to judge how well a person understands Christianity, find out how much he makes of the thought of being God's child, and having God as his Father.
  - In thinking on God as our Father, how does that influence how we think about each other?
    - "our" = settles the selfishness of man (not I, me, or my, but our).
    - We pray holding up to God what is best for all, not just for one.
- Where is God? What is the significance of the phrase "in heaven?"
  - Stott: The words 'in the heavens' denote not the place of His abode so much as the authority and power at His command as the Creator and Ruler of all things. **Thus He combines fatherly love with heavenly power and what His love directs His power is able to perform.**
  - Crawford: All that comes from heaven will make life more heavenly.

- **PRIORITY IN PRAYER**

- Are God's concerns given a position of priority in our prayers? Are we preoccupied with His name, His kingdom, and His will?
  - Stott: In the Lord's Prayer, Christians are obsessed with God. True Christian prayer is always a preoccupation with God and His glory. For the Christian, our top priority concern is not our name, kingdom, and will, but God's. Whether we can pray these petitions with integrity is a searching test of the reality and depth of our Christian profession.
  - MacArthur: God's supreme purpose for prayer, the purpose beyond all other purposes, is to glorify Himself. Prayer is, above all, an opportunity for God to manifest His goodness and glory.
- **HIS NAME, KINGDOM, AND WILL**
  - Hallowed
    - Hagiazo – to sanctify, to treat as holy, to revere; to attribute to God the holiness that already is, and always has been, supremely and uniquely His.
    - To hallow God's name is to revere, honor, glorify, and obey Him.
    - Crawford: Every significant spiritual awakening since Pentecost had in its beginning stages a return to the holiness of God.
    - Hallowing begins in our hearts.
      - 1 Peter 3:15a, "but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy,"
      - MacArthur: When we sanctify Christ in our hearts we will also sanctify Him in our lives.



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- Your Name
  - Represents all that He is – His character, plan, and will. (Exodus 34:5-7)
  - Psalm 9:10, “And those who know your name put their trust in you, for you, O LORD, have not forsaken those who seek you.”
  - Piper: The better we know the name of God, the more we will trust him. And the more we trust him, the more risks we will take for the sake of his glory. And the more risks we are willing to take for the sake of his glory, the more bold we will be in our witness, the less dependent we will be on material comforts, and the more readily we will volunteer for active duty on the frontiers.
  - Psalm 20:7, “Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God.”
  - Jesus gives the clearest teaching about what God’s name means, because Jesus Christ was the perfect manifestation of God’s name. (John 17:6)
- Your Kingdom come
  - MacArthur: To pray “Your Kingdom come” is to pray for the program of the eternal Deity to be fulfilled, for Christ to come and reign as King of kings and Lord of lords. His program and His plan should be the preoccupation of our lives and of our prayers.
  - Baileia (kingdom) = does not refer primarily to a geographical territory but to sovereignty and dominion.
  - This was a central concern in Christ’s sermons. (Luke 4:43; Acts 1:3)
  - Is His Kingdom what we seek first? (Matthew 6:33)
- Your Will be done
  - Keener: We who long for God’s will on earth in the future ought to live consistently with our longing in the present, working for God’s righteousness and seeking his will here.
  - God’s will is “good and acceptable and perfect” (Romans 12:2) because our Father in Heaven is infinite in knowledge, love, and power.
  - Stott: It is folly to resist God’s will and wisdom to discern, desire, and do it.
  - Carson: The most wonderful feature of the Kingdom coming will be the perfect accomplishment of the Father’s will, without rebellion, prevarication, delay, evil agencies, and those mysterious twists by which God now works even through men’s evil. In the consummated Kingdom, God’s will shall be done openly, plainly, freely, without exceptions or caveats, and without the painful necessity of framing it in terms of opposition to evil.
  - Carson: We need to realize that if we are praying that God’s will be done on earth, we are committing ourselves to two important responsibilities:
    - First of all, we are committing ourselves to learning all we can about His will.
      - In studying God’s Word (and will), what have we learned this week that has prompted change in our lives?



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- Secondly, if my heart hunger is that God's will be done, then praying this prayer is also my pledge that, so help me God, by His grace I will do His will, as much as I know it!
- **GOD'S PROVISION, PARDON, AND PROTECTION (MacArthur)**
  - Stott: Having expressed our burning concern for His glory, we now express our humble dependence on His grace.
  - God's Provision
    - Give us this day our daily bread.
    - Whether God gives in one act or continuously, the giving is because God is owner (Psalm 50:10; Haggai 2:8) and because God has resources to give (Philippians 4:19; James 1:17; 1 Corinthians 4:7)
      - In what ways, has our "wealth" contributed to our thanklessness?
    - Luther: Bread is a symbol for everything necessary for the preservation of this life, like food, a healthy body, good weather, house, home, wife, children, good government and peace.
    - Jesus' emphasis is upon the necessities not the luxuries.
    - Stott: It is an expression of ultimate dependence on God who normally uses human means of production and distribution through which to fulfill His purposes.
    - **Keener: If God provided for a whole people through forty years of landless wandering and unemployment, how much more should we trust him for our basic needs!**
  - God's Pardon
    - Because man's greatest problem is sin, his greatest need is forgiveness.
    - Our forgiveness of others does not earn us the right to be forgiven. Rather, it demonstrates the authenticity of our own experiencing of forgiveness and its flow from us to others.
    - Stott: If we have an exaggerated view of the offences of others, it proves that we have minimized our own.
  - God's Protection
  - And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
    - Stott: Do not allow us so to be led into temptation that it overwhelms us, but rescue us from the evil one.
    - Crawford: This last request of the Lord's Prayer acknowledges three things:
      - The problem of human sin.
      - The inability of the human to adequately cope with this temptation to sin.
      - The fact that both the problem and the temptation should be turned over to God.
  - The three petitions
    - Stott: The three petitions cover, in principle, all our human need – material (daily bread), spiritual (forgiveness of sins), and moral (deliverance from evil).
    - What we are doing whenever we pray this prayer is to express our dependence upon God in every area of our human life.



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- Stott: Moreover, a Trinitarian Christian is bound to see in these three petitions a veiled allusion to the Trinity, since it is through the Father's creation and providence that we receive our daily bread, through the Son's atoning death that we may be forgiven and through the Spirit's indwelling power that we are rescued from the evil one.

### **SUMMARY**

- Christian prayer is God-centered (concerned for God's glory) in contrast to the self-centeredness of the Pharisees (preoccupied with their own glory). And it is intelligent (expressive of thoughtful dependence) in contrast to the mechanical incantations of the Gentiles.
- Stott: Jesus teaches us that God is our Father in the heavens. We need to remember that He loves His children with most tender affection, that He sees His children even in the secret place, that He knows His children and all their needs before they ask Him, and that He acts on behalf of His children by His heavenly and kingly power. If we thus allow Scripture to fashion our image of God, if we recall His character and practice His presence, we shall never pray with hypocrisy but always with integrity, never mechanically but always thoughtfully, like the children of God that we are.

### **THE LORD'S PRAYER IN ANOTHER WAY (author unknown)**

- I cannot say "our" if I live only for myself.
- I cannot say "Father" if I do not endeavor each day to act like His child.
- I cannot say "who art in heaven" if I am laying up no treasures there.
- I cannot say "hallowed be thy name" if I am not striving for holiness.
- I cannot say "thy Kingdom come" if I am not doing all in my power to hasten that wonderful event.
- I cannot say "thy will be done" if I am disobedient to His Word.
- I cannot say "in earth as it is in heaven" if I'll not serve Him here and now.
- I cannot say "give us this day our daily bread" if I am dishonest or seeking things by subterfuge.
- I cannot say "forgive us our debts" if I harbor a grudge against anyone.
- I cannot say "lead us not into temptation" if I deliberately place myself in its path.
- I cannot say "deliver us from evil" if I do not put on the whole armor of God.
- I cannot say "thine is the kingdom" if I do not give the King the loyalty due Him from a faithful subject.
- I cannot attribute to Him "the power" if I fear what men may do.
- I cannot ascribe to Him "the glory" if I am seeking honor only for myself.
- And I cannot say "forever" if the horizon of my life is bounded completely by time.



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- I. A HEALTHY CHURCH MEMBER IS A PRAYER WARRIOR. (Anyabwile)**
- a. Prayer is a vital part of the Christian life.
  - b. But prayer remains for many Christians a difficult task, a duty without joy and sometimes seemingly without effect.
  - c. God's house was to be a place of prayer for all people.
    - i. The early church was devoted to prayer (Acts 1:14; 2:42)
  - d. What is prayer?
    - i. Goldsworthy: The gospel is primarily about the work of the Son. How we know the Son will determine how we view our relationship with the Father who speaks to us through His Word. How we view that relationship will determine, in turn, how we come to God in prayer and with what confidence. Prayer will never again be a sentimental excursion or an instinctive hitting of the panic button. Nor will it be the presumption of an innate right to demand God's attention. Rather it will be the expression of our entry into God's heavenly sanctuary, which has been procured for us by our Great High Priest.
    - ii. In prayer, as children united with Christ, our advocate and high priest, the heir of all things, we stand before God receiving a full hearing.
    - iii. "We involve ourselves in the business that God has with the world" by praying "towards the fulfillment of God's revealed purposes for the whole universe" through "the gospel and its God-ordained outcome." Prayer is "thinking God's thoughts after Him" – thoughts that will always be heard and answered.
  - e. How and when shall we pray?
    - i. Pray constantly. (1 Thessalonians 5:17; Romans 12:12; Colossians 4:2; 3:1-2; 4:12)
    - ii. Pray in the Spirit. (Romans 8:26-27; 8:14-17; Ephesians 6:18)
      1. When we pray in accord with God's will, which is revealed in His Word, then we will pray in the Spirit.
  - f. For what and for whom shall we pray?
    - i. Pray for laborers and shepherds (Matthew 9:36-38)
      1. Pray that the Lord would help and strengthen those who labor in the Word during times of distress, suffering, and weakness. (Philippians 1:19-20)
      2. Grant boldness to pastors in proclaiming the gospel. (Ephesians 6:19-20)
      3. Grant opportunity for the spread of the ministry and the gospel. (Colossians 4:3-4)
    - ii. Pray for all the saints (Ephesians 6:18)
      1. We can pray for their sanctification. (1 Thessalonians 4:3)
      2. We can pray against temptation and for watchfulness. (Matthew 26:41)
      3. We can pray that they would be filled with the Spirit (Galatians 5:16-25) and nearly anything else the Bible commends for Christians.
    - iii. Pray for those in authority. (1 Timothy 2:1-3; Romans 13:1-2; Ephesians 6:1-3)



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- iv. Pray for those who abuse and persecute us (Luke 6:28; Matthew 5:10-12; 45-47; 18:21-35)
- g. Do you have a specific plan for prayer? Review your current plan or write a new plan for prayer that includes:
  - i. Private and group/public times of prayer;
  - ii. Times and places of prayer;
  - iii. Specific individuals and groups of people to pray for;
  - iv. Gospel and church concerns;
  - v. Passages of Scripture you find encouraging and helpful in prayer.

**A final thought on prayer from E. M. Bounds:**

- “The most important lesson we can learn is how to pray. Indeed, we must pray so that our prayers take hold of God. The man who has done the most and the best praying is the most immortal, because prayers do not die. Perhaps the lips that uttered them are closed in death, or the heart that felt them may have ceased to beat, but the prayers live before God, and God’s heart is set on them. Prayers outlive the lives of those who uttered them – outlive a generation, outlive an age, outlive a world.”