

What's the Point?

The Necessity of Prayer

Prayer, Part 2

Open

- Why should we pray?
- In the last lesson we studied what Jesus had to say to us about prayer. We will start off this lesson by going way back to the beginning, to the book of Genesis and the story of creation, to understand God's first command to humans and what this has to do with prayer.

Genesis 1:26-28

And God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth."

*So God created man in his own image,
in the image of God created he him;
male and female created he them.*

And God blessed them, and God said unto them, "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth."

- God made everything that exists and then He topped off His creation with a being that was in His likeness, and He gave this being authority and dominion over the earth. He commanded him to rule over every living thing and to subdue the earth.
- However, man gave that authority to "the prince of this world" when he sinned against God and was banished from Eden and from eternal life.
- Because God works through people, He needed a person to come and take back all that belonged to Him—that person is Jesus. Matthew 28:18, "*All authority is given unto me in heaven and in earth.*"
- Jesus is Lord of all and He lives within those who are born again, so that those people once again have authority and victory over the land in His name. And Jesus taught us that we should pray and not give up.

So why is prayer a Necessity?

GOD WORKS THROUGH PEOPLE

He's Looking for Praying People

"And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none." Ezekiel 22:30

- Obviously, God created everything and ordered everything and could easily do whatever He wanted at any time. However, God gave humans dominion over the earth, and He gave them the free will to use that dominion for good or for bad.
- Ever since the fall, most people use their power and gifts for their own pleasure, but God knows that there is a remnant of faithful believers who want to honor Him by doing what He wants. He searches the planet to find those whose hearts belong to Him and who are ready to follow His lead.
- **Prayer is the means given to us by God to effect change and to bring about God's purposes.** It is a total laying down of one's life, dreams, desires, and control in total surrender and dependence upon God.
- We do not take up literal weapons when we pray, and it seems in the natural like a waste of time, but **prayer releases God's will on earth as it is in heaven.**
- God is looking for those who will pray and stand before Him on behalf of those who are destined for destruction, so that God can move on their behalf.

He's Given Us the Authority

And God blessed them, and God said unto them, "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." Genesis 1:28

- **God is the ultimate judge and ruler over the universe, but in His incredible plan for His creation, He gave authority to humans to rule over the earth and subdue it.**
- **When Adam and Eve were in God's presence and walking with Him daily, they could easily hear God and discern His will for how they should use this authority.**
- But once they sinned and started relying on their own judgment rather than God's wisdom, they were put out of fellowship and the downward spiral of destructive choices on the planet began. Now people and creation are in bondage to sin.
- For those who have been redeemed by the blood of Jesus, however, we are back in fellowship with God and can hear His Spirit telling us how to use the gifts and power that we have within us for His glory. The Spirit teaches us to pray according to God's will so that His purposes will be done on earth as they are in heaven.

He's Given us the Power

For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds. 2 Corinthians 10:4

- **Have you ever dreamed of being a superhero? Which one?**
- **The war we fight is not in the natural, but in the supernatural.** Our enemies are not those who do not know God, but those dark forces of the devil that seek to kill, steal, and destroy what God has made.

- Our weapons, therefore, are spiritual ones: Prayer and the Sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

TO KNOW GOD AND BE LIKE JESUS

We Seek Him

“And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.”

Jeremiah 29:13

- **In addition to praying for God’s will to be done on earth as it is in heaven, we also spend time with God to know Him more, so that we can become more and more like Jesus whom He sent to us.**
- The bible promises that if we seek God with our whole heart, then we will find Him. We must lay aside everything that distracts us from Him, any idols in our hearts, to see Him and to know Him.
- God spoke through His prophets many times that He did not desire sacrifice or rituals, but that **He wanted the hearts of the people—broken and contrite and totally surrendered to Him. God wants a relationship with us, not a legalistic code of behavior. As we come to Him surrendered, He will reveal more of Himself to us.**
- **Prayer helps us to know God better**

We Imitate Him

“Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.” John 5:19

- God has often spoken to His children through stories, dreams, and visions. Jesus spoke to the crowds this way when He was ministering on earth. He told the people that He could only do what He *saw* the Father doing.
- When we sit quietly before God, He will show us how to live, and we can then imitate Him. As we focus our thoughts and vision on Jesus, He becomes more alive to us and we are able to be more like Him in the same way we become like our friends whom we hang around all the time.
- In John 14:21, Jesus promises that those who love God will be loved by Him and that Jesus will reveal Himself to them. **As He reveals Himself to us, we can begin to imitate His life and character in our own lives. But it takes getting away from the distractions of the world and coming before God quietly in stillness and prayer.**

We Remain in Him

“Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.” John 15:4

- What do you think it means to “remain” in Jesus?
- Jesus promises that as we live in Him (who is the Word Made Flesh), we will bear fruit. **Without Him continually in our lives, we cannot bear fruit that brings glory to God. If we don’t bear fruit we are no different than the worldly people around us.**

- **It is easier to obey Jesus when we hang out with Him in prayer and worship. It is also the only way to see our longings and desires answered, because we must go to Him in order to present our needs before Him.**

IT'S COMMANDED

Pray Always

... Pray without ceasing... 1 Thessalonians 5:17

- **Besides all of these reasons that show why prayer is a necessary part of every Christian's life, it is important to note that the bible instructs us to pray all the time.**
- Jesus told us to pray and not give up praying; Paul taught us to pray, as did Jude, James, Peter, and John. Prayer is all over the Old Testament as well, with famous praying people like Hannah, Elisha, Moses, Daniel, and Abraham. Even a busy king who was often on the run—King David—knew he needed to meet with God and bring his petitions before Him at least daily.
- **God should be the center of our thoughts all the time, especially if we are busy people. It is easy for us to forget Him when things get moving quickly, but that is when we need Him the most.**

Pray Devotedly

Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving. Colossians 4:2

- Prayer is not just some religious thing we do to “put in our time” with God and then go on about our lives. Our time spent in God's presence should be life-changing and life building.
- God wants us to come before Him with thankful hearts and, as we learned in the previous lesson, in humility. **We do not just approach Him when we want something, but we come before Him with hearts ready to hear from Him** and ready to do whatever He speaks to us during that time of prayer.
- **In the world of a young person, there are so many things that will demand time and commitment from us: school, parents, church, friends, sports, homework, college-hunting, life-planning, work, and just plain fun time. We can easily devote our time and energy to so many things that our attention is diverted away from God.**
- **When we pull ourselves away from all of these things, and set our hearts on God, center our thoughts on Jesus, and give ourselves to prayer and study of the word, we show God that He is number one in our lives.** Then we do not derive our purpose and satisfaction from anything but Him, and we can always be thankful for what He has done for us.

Pray to Grow

But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost. Jude 20

- When we pray in the Spirit—praying totally surrendered to the Holy Spirit so that He can pray through us, whether in English or heavenly languages—we not only change things in the world, we also build up our spirits and increase our faith.

- As Christians, we always need to be moving closer and closer to God and growing into mature faith. **If we neglect giving our spirits a workout, though, we will stay stagnant or possibly even slide backwards. However, God has given us a way to build up ourselves and to grow our faith in Him: praying in the Spirit.**

GOD HEARS AND SEES

He Heard Them

“Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words.” Daniel 10:12

- **There are many examples in the Old Testament (and New) of God hearing and answering the prayers of His children. God is not distant deity, uninvolved with the affairs of His creation, He is alive and active and ready to move on their behalf.**
- Daniel prayed to God for understanding about a vision of a great war, and God heard and sent an angel to explain things to him. God heard and answered, though the answer took a little while to get to him.
- **When Solomon dedicated the temple to God, he prayed and God answered by saying, “I have heard your prayer...if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land” (2 Chronicles 7:12, 14).**
- Hannah loved God very much, but she was barren, so in desperation she poured out her soul to God and begged for a son. God opened her womb and allowed her to bear a son, who was Samuel, a great prophet (1 Samuel 1:19-20).

He Hears Us

And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: 1 John 5:14

- **Although we approach God in humility, acknowledging our weaknesses and His strength, we also approach Him in confidence, knowing that He hears us** because of Jesus and that He will answer us because of His great love for us.
- David wrote in Psalm 40, “I waited patiently for the Lord; he turned to me and heard my cry.” In the same way that God heard and answered David, He hears us when we cry out to Him. Again, in Psalm 66:20, we read, ‘Praise be to God, who has not rejected my prayer or withheld his love from me!’ God does not reject or mock our words spoken to Him in all earnestness; He hears and answers.

He Will Hear All the Saints

And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand. Revelation 8:4

- **Revelation uses an image to describe how our prayers ascend up to God like the smoke of incense. All those who belong to God cry out to Him day and**

night, and their prayers rise up to heaven before God's throne (Revelation 8:3) so that He can hear what is on our heart and all of our petitions.

- The next verse says, "Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and hurled it on the earth." **Our prayers are an offering before God, and they bring about change upon the earth. God needs us to pray, though He is the One who acts and answers.**

Close

Ephesians 6:10-18

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.

- Because God works through people, we need to be ready to hear from Him and to pray His will into being. He gave us the power to change the world way back when He first created us, and now that we are redeemed, we must use this power to bring about His purposes in the world.
- We spend time in prayer not only to change things, but to know God better and to become more like His Son whom He sent to earth. We are commanded to remain in Jesus, and it is our joy to do so.
- Because we know that God hears our prayers, we should be ready and willing to pray on all occasions with all sorts of prayers, and we can be sure that He will answer us.

Prayer is the key to unlock any door!