

Pray Without Ceasing - A Briefly Comprehensive Topical Study of Prayer

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Prayer: Intro comments and questions

1. Prayer is like walking. You can read about it, but you only truly learn to do it...by doing it.
2. Prayer can be difficult to sustain (keep going). Why?
 - a. Compare to exercise = results can take a long time to show up. What's required? Faith, believing that results will come, that God will hear and respond.
3. Prayer through different seasons of life. Sometimes better, sometimes worse.

Does God hear everyone's prayers?

1. Example: Facebook posts asking for prayers, or simply sharing some tragedy or another.
 - a. People's typical responses? "Praying!" "Sending prayers your way!" "Sending happy (or positive) thoughts your way!"
2. What does Scripture say about the prayers of non-Christians? (Or non-believers, since we'll be looking at both the OT and NT.)
 - a. Isaiah 1:15
 - b. Isaiah 59:1-2
 - c. Psalm 24:3-4
 - d. Psalm 34:15-17
 - e. Psalm 66:18-20
 - f. Proverbs 28:9
 - g. James 1:5-7
 - h. James 4:3-4
 - i. 1 Peter 3:7
3. What is the only prayer of a non-believer that we know God will hear and answer?
 - a. A prayer of repentance and faith
 - b. Luke 18:9-14 - the Biblical example of the sinner's prayer

Why should we pray?

1. Romans 8:15
 - a. Because God is our Father
2. Philippians 4:6-7

- a. Because we tend to be anxious...about everything?
 - b. Paul tells us to let our requests be made known to God.
 - i. Doesn't he already know them? Yes, but just as Fledge the flying, talking horse said of Aslan in *The Magician's Nephew* by C. S. Lewis, "He [Aslan, or in our case, God the Father] likes to be asked."
 - c. What's the result?
 - i. The peace of God will guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.
3. 1 Peter 5:6-7
 - a. Because God cares for us.
 4. 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18
 - a. Because it's God's will for us.
 5. Because God is our Father who cares for us. Because we tend to be anxious about life, but through prayer we can have peace in Christ Jesus. And because it is God's will for us.

When should we pray?

1. 1 Thessalonians 5:17
 - a. Always - without ceasing
 - b. What does this look like, practically?
2. Matthew 6:11-13
 - a. Daily
3. Hebrews 4:14-16
 - a. In our time of need
4. We should pray daily, in our times of need, and always.

How should we pray?

1. 1 John 5:14-15
 - a. According to his will
2. Matthew 6:5-6
 - a. Not like the hypocrites, to be seen by others
3. Matthew 6:7-8
 - a. Not like the Gentiles, heaping up empty phrases and many words, hoping to be heard
 - b. God is not impressed with long, fancy prayers
4. Matthew 6:9-13
 - a. Jesus said, "Pray then like this:"
 - b. So is this the only prayer we should be praying? Exactly as he gave it to us?
 - c. Walk through this prayer, line by line...
5. Luke 18:1-8
 - a. Persistently, without losing heart
6. ACTS - A pattern for prayer

- a. Adoration
 - i. “Adoration is to offer worship to God for who he is in all of his character, glory, holiness, and beauty. If we begin a time of prayer by acknowledging the amazing attributes of God and praising him for those things, it sets our mind in the right frame for communion with him.” The curriculum
 - ii. Psalm 145:1-9
- b. Confession
 - i. Confession is “bringing our specific acts of sin to God.”
 - ii. 1 John 1:6-10
 - iii. Psalm 139:23-24
 - 1. Can’t think of any sins? This may help.
 - iv. Psalm 51
 - 1. NO SLIDE
- c. Thanksgiving
 - i. “If you were just able to take a breath, you have reason to thank God. Thanksgiving is an attitude that we should bring to prayer, but we can also take time to identify certain things that we are thankful for. These can range from the simplest joys in our lives, such as the ability to hear a bird’s song, to physical blessings like a house [to live in] or good health to the gift of salvation and the opportunity to commune with [God] in prayer. The opportunities to thank God are endless.”
 - ii. 2 Corinthians 8:16
 - iii. Ephesians 5:20
 - iv. Colossians 1:3-4
- d. Supplication
 - i. Supplication “means to make a request. It can be for ourselves or on behalf of others (which is sometimes called *intercession*), but it is asking God to act in a certain way...this is not a demand of God, but a request that is in line with his will.”
 - ii. Matthew 6:9-13
 - iii. Ephesians 3:14-19

Closing thoughts

1. Read the closing summary in the curriculum, “Applying God’s Word”
2. Questions from “Applying God’s Word”
3. Is prayer a 2-way conversation?