

The Bible Speaks

“The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.” Isaiah 35:10.

10. Living for Christ

How to Pray

1. WHAT counsel does Jesus give to those who seek communion with God in prayer?

“When thou prays, enter into thy closet, and when thou has shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which sees in secret shall reward thee openly.” Matthew 6:6.

NOTE. “Prayer is likely to be undervalued by all but wise people because it is so silent and so secret. We are often deceived into thinking that noise is more important than silence. War sounds far more important than the noiseless growing of a crop of wheat, yet the silent wheat feeds millions, while war destroys them.”-Frank C. Laubach, *Prayer, the Mightiest Force in the World*, page 24.

2. How shall we show reverence when approaching God in prayer?

“For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Ephesians 3:14. “O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.” Psalm 95:6.

3. What, however, is more important than the physical posture?

“Let us lift up our heart with our hands unto God in the heavens.” Lamentations 3:41. See also 1 Chronicles 22:19.

4. In whose name should our petitions be made to God?

“Whatsoever you shall ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you shall ask anything in My name, I will do it.” John 14:13,14.

NOTE “To pray in Christ’s name means something more than adding ‘for Christ’s sake’ to our petitions.... To pray in the name of Christ is to pray as one who is at one with Christ, whose mind is the mind of Christ, whose desires are the desires of Christ, and whose purpose is at one with that of Christ.”-Samuel Chadwick, *The Path of Prayer*, page 52.

“When we pray, of whom are we thinking? Of God or of our selves? When we open our prayers with ‘Our Father,’ do we say it as a spoiled child comes to its parent and says ‘father,’ while it is not thinking at all of the father, but only of what it wants to get from him? When we say ‘Hallowed by Thy name,’ are we really thinking of God’s name, or of ourselves?” - Ralph W. Sockman, *The Highway of God*, page 141.

5. What help are we promised in making our petitions to God?

“Likewise the Spirit also helps our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself makes intercession for us with groaning which cannot be uttered. And He that searches the hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.” Romans 8:26, 27.

6. What are the essential conditions of effectual prayer?

a. Faith. “All things, whatsoever you shall ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive.” Matthew 21:22.

b. Readiness to obey the will of God. “The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and His ears are open unto their cry.” Psalm 34:15.

7. On the other hand, what will prevent God from hearing our prayers?

a. Cherished sin. “If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.” Psalm 66:18. See also Isaiah 59:1-3.

b. Unholy desires. “You ask, and receive not, because you ask amiss, that you may consume it

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upon your lusts.” James 4:3.

8. What test does the Lord often apply before answering prayer?

“He rewards them that diligently seek Him.” Hebrews 11:6.

9. With what determination did Jacob seek to gain an answer to his prayer?

“He said, Let Me go, for the day breaks. And he said, I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me.” Genesis 32:26.

10. How may prayer be made more efficacious?

“When He was come into the house, His disciples asked Him privately, Why could not we cast him [the evil spirit] out? And He said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting.” Mark 9:28, 29.

11. What must ultimately characterize all our prayers?

“He went a little farther, and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me: nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt.” Matthew 26:39.

12. What should always accompany our petition?

“Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.” Philippians 4:6.

13. How frequently did the psalmist approach God in prayer?

“Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and He shall hear my voice.” Psalm 55:17.

NOTE “Our godly forefathers were accustomed to open and close the day with periods of private devotion in which the gaze of God came home to them as directly as the path of light comes across a lake from the setting sun to the feet of the watcher. Such moments left them mellowed and repentant.

“But we in contrast quite usually begin the day with the morning paper and end it with the last news broadcast, both of which turn our minds toward not our own sins but the crimes and misdeeds of others. The result is that the hours which to our grandparents were times of repentance become to us periods of condemnation.” - Ralph W. Sockman, *The Highway of God*, page 48.

14. In the crises of life what example of Christ may we well follow?

a. Before day. In the morning, rising up a great while before day, He went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.” Mark 1:35.

b. All night. It came to pass in those days, that He went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.” Luke 6:12.

15. What should be combined with prayer?

“Watch and pray, that you enter not into temptation.” Matthew 26:41.

NOTE - If prayer is friendship with God, that friendship should rule all our time. Work or play should wait on prayer, not prayer on work and play. But since our age is frenzied, since with all the time gained from time-saving devices we have ever less time to live, this fact is worth stress: prayer saves time, and the saving is genuine. When a man prays, his thought is proportioned and clear: evil memories are purged to save him from distraction, and he can meet responsibility with confidence. Another man may lack concentration, fill time with lost motion, and delay or blunder in decisions; but the praying man is in tune with life.”--George Arthur Buttrick, *Prayer*, page 265.

What We Owe to God

1. To whom do all things in heaven and earth belong?

“The earth is the Lord’s, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.” Psalm