

LifeWay Explore the Bible Series for Nov. 14: Fundamental facets of a fulfilling prayer life_110804

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Fundamental facets of a fulfilling prayer life

Luke 11:1-54

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People often ask the purpose of prayer if God knows all of our needs. If prayer is perceived as a conversation between two lovers, it is easy to understand why God wants us to pray to him.

Many Chinese poems tell stories of departed lovers in a far distant land. What a joyous thing to receive a love letter from another person, even if it is only a few sentences.

When we communicate with God through prayer, our relationship with him will grow. Prayer is more than making a plea to God for something we need. God loves us, so he wants to have intimate talks with us. He expects

us to have the same desire to talk to him.



After Jesus had finished his prayer, his disciples asked him how to pray. The disciples must have seen Jesus was enjoying his prayer life. We all enjoy talking to our loved ones. Conversation is a very delightful experience between two lovers.

Everybody knows how to pray, but not all of us enjoy prayer. The enjoyment Jesus had in his prayer life must have aroused the interest of his disciples. They wanted to know the secret of his prayer. As a matter of fact, Jesus did have some secrets in his prayer life that allowed him to enjoy praying to the heavenly Father. He will reveal those secrets to us in these few verses on the principles of a Christian prayer.

Put God first in prayer

Luke gives us a shorter version of the Lord's Prayer than Matthew (Matthew 6:9-13), but it will teach us all we need to know about how to pray and what to pray for. Our prayer should start with God our heavenly Father. We call God our Father to recognize our relationship with him is a Father-child relationship. This means God has given us life. He loves us and wants to protect and provide for us.

We, as children, sometimes may not want to talk to our father; but God, as our heavenly Father, always wants to talk to us. Whenever we talk to him, he is always here to listen and to talk to us.

Placing God and his concerns first in our prayer is important. We tell our Father we want his name to be glorified and held in reverence in our daily lives. We want people to glorify his name and hold his name in reverence when they learn about him in our words and deeds. When we sink into a deep thought on how to revere God's name, our prayer will be transformed

into close and intimate talk to God.

Any meaningful conversation should not be a monologue between two persons. When we talk with a person, we want to know their concerns and talk about those concerns. Seeking God's will in our prayers is an interesting thing to do. Ask, listen and wait, and we will know God's will.

Many Christians do not know how to listen to God. Listening is reading and searching in God's word. Prayer and Bible reading and searching should go hand in hand. George Muller told us we should pray with an open Bible. When we learn God's will through prayer, we also should pray that God will give us strength to do his will. Only when we submit to God's will and do it accordingly can his will can be done on earth.

Pray for ourselves

Our God is not only a God of spiritual things. He is the God of our whole life, so he will take care of our daily needs. This is the reason why Jesus teaches us to pray for our daily needs (v. 3). God may not want us to be millionaires, but he will provide for our needs. Praying with contentment is the attitude Jesus teaches. We will be contented with whatever God gives us to meet our needs. It also teaches us to rely on him, not the things he gives.

If we just ask for a one-day provision, we do not need to pray a long prayer or use long sentences. Jesus wants us to pray for our spiritual growth and spend time on it. First, we need to deal with our sins. We need to ask forgiveness every time we pray. God has promised to forgive us if we ask him (1 John 1:9).

If we can be forgiven by God, we should forgive others. God already has prepared to forgive us even before we ask. God does not like sin, but he loves us, so he has no hatred in his heart against us, even before we ask for forgiveness.

We should do the same thing. We may not like what others have done to us, but we love people, so we should not have hatred in our hearts, and forgive them anytime they ask.

Temptation in the New Testament means any testing situation. Sometimes a test will become temptation to us if we yield to it. Jesus teaches us to pray not to be led into temptation. God will not lead us into temptation, even though he allows tests to get in our way. Jesus wants us to pray to ask God's help and strength to overcome testing so we will not fall into temptation. God will walk us through all the trials and tests if we ask him.

Discussion questions

- Do you enjoy your prayer life?
- What will you pray for in your daily prayer?
- How can you improve your prayer life to make it more enjoyable?

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