

BaptistWay Bible Series for January 18: Praying Jesusâ€™ way

January 5, 2009

There is a story about a boy who was watching a holy man praying on the banks of a river. When the holy man completed his prayer, the boy went over and asked him, “Will you teach me to pray?”

The holy man studied the boy’s face carefully. Then he gripped the boy’s head in his hands and plunged it forcefully into the water. The boy struggled frantically, trying to free himself in order to breathe. Finally, the holy man released his hold.

When the boy was able to get his breath, he gasped, “What did you do that for?” The holy man said: “I just gave you your first lesson.” “What do you mean?” asked the astonished boy. “Well,” said the holy man, “when you long to pray as much as you longed to breathe when your head was underwater—only then will I be able to teach you to pray.”

What does it mean to pray Jesus’ way? In the Gospel of Luke after Jesus finished praying, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples” (Luke 11:1-4).

The purpose of Christian prayer is to cultivate an intimate relationship with God. The prayer taught by Jesus is a model—a guideline to respond to our highest and greatest call as followers of Jesus Christ.

We know prayer takes time, work and discipline: “I have set the Lord continually before me; because he is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad and my glory rejoices; my flesh also will dwell

securely”(Psalms 16:8-9).

Sometimes in the midst of a busy schedule, seeking to develop an awareness of God’s presence seems hard. As you go to school, class or other places you frequent, be open to God’s voice.

Praying Jesus’ way means submission. “God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble” (James 4:6). The praying heart is known by the submission and humility that drive it.

The religious leaders of Jesus’ time could not understand this vital principle; instead they would act with an attitude of self-righteousness, projecting a false demonstration of prayer. Jesus said, “your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” Our prayer should reflect his will in order to see him glorified.

Praying Jesus’ way means to admit our weaknesses. “And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.” There are many distractions and opportunities to not do the right thing—procrastination, plagiarism, not caring for one’s body and many others that become temptation. Earl Wilson once observed, “Ever notice that the whisper of temptation can be heard farther than the loudest call to duty?”

Praying Jesus’ way means trusting God’s promises. “Give us today our daily bread” (6:11). Many times, a person believes to be close to God and to trust him, but never comes to him with needs or problems. People wait until they have no other option to come before the Lord in prayer. It is important to stop depending on ourselves and begin depending on God.

College years are a time of learning to trust in God. First, one learns to adapt to a new environment, and when finished, a new phase of adapting begins. One’s relationship with God is strengthened through times of dependency and trust. “The Lord is faithful to all his promises and loving toward all he had made” (Psalms 145:13).

Praying Jesus' way means learning to forgive others. "For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins" (vv. 14-15).

Going away to college is going to a different and new place to live with people who are different and believe differently. One almost can assert there will be conflict. "Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you" (Colossians 3:13).

Praying Jesus' way is life transforming. Pandita Ramabai was an unusual saint-like, self-sacrificing "mother" to several thousand unfortunate, ill-threaded child widows and destitute orphans. She started schools and the well-known home called the Pandita Ramabai Mukti Mission in 1896. With motherly love, she cared for a family that grew to 2,000 girls, many of whom had experienced the horrors of famine.

The Bible is full of examples of people who prayed and experienced transformation. Abraham trusted God, he was called God's friend. Noah submitted to God regardless of the circumstances. Moses delivered his people from slavery. Esther saved her people from death. David defeated the giant Goliath. Daniel did not compromise his faith. Simeon was able to see the savior before he died. Saul the persecutor became Paul the persecuted. Martha learned Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God. Jesus Christ died for humanity.

Questions to explore

- *What areas of your life do you need to bring to God in prayer: submission, weaknesses, trust or forgiving?*
- Are you allowing the Holy Spirit to transform your life through prayer?