

"Worship in Prayer"

Prayer is man's great opportunity to pour out his heart to God the Father. Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, and this is a Bible study In Search of the Lord's Way. In this lesson, we'll explore ways to make our prayer lives more meaningful

Welcome to In Search of the Lord's Way. We're here to search God's Word for the Lord's Way. The Bible opens up the heart of God for us, and we want to know as much about God as possible. Thanks for spending this time with us. We love to hear that you're watching or listening. And we want to be a part of your life each week.

God has blessed us with the privilege of prayer. Our Father in Heaven keeps His ears open every moment of our lives. We might go to sleep praying to Him, but He never goes to sleep on us. The Bible simply says in 1 Thessalonians 5:17, "pray without ceasing." Now no one can pray twenty-four hours a day. That's not what this passage is saying. Rather, God wants us to make prayer a daily habit and never quit on Him. When we begin to understand our complete dependence on God, we also begin to understand what a privilege it is to pray.

One of the most important moments of life comes when we awaken to our need for God and our inability to manage life on our own. Abraham Lincoln said: "I've been driven many times to my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go." We sometimes think we have everywhere else to go—doctors, lawyers, professors, banks, or schools. Many people have forgotten their need for God. When people imagine that they can get along just fine without God, they cease to pray and start losing their way.

Prayer is the thermometer of our spiritual lives. A person who ceases to pray starts moving away from God. One who prays only when he's in trouble has little understanding of God. Prayer is how we grow close to God how we stay close to Him. And so we need prayer for our spirits just like we need air for our lungs.

We offer the information on this program free. And if you'd like a printed copy or a CD of our study, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or by e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or, if you like, you call our toll-free telephone number. We'll pay for the call. That number is 1-800-321-8633. We also stream this program on our website at www.searchtv.org.

Larry Owsley will lead the Edmond church in song, and then we'll read from Matthew 6 verses 9 to 13.

Our reading today comes from the words of Jesus. When He teaches His disciples how to pray. Matthew chapter 6 verses 9 to 13.

"Pray, then, in this way: 'Our Father who is in heaven Hallowed be Your name. 'Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. 'Give us this day our daily bread. 'And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. 'And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. [For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.']

Lets pray together. Oh Father, we're so grateful that you have loved us in so many ways and have given us Your Word and given us the right to pray and the privilege to pour out our hearts before You. Father we pray that we may live in such a way to honor You and glorify Your name. May Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. In Jesus name, Amen

Prayer is one of the sacred moments of life. Prayer is personal time with our Father in Heaven, in which we reveal our hearts. In prayer we honor and recognize the place God has in our lives. We hallow the name of our Father. To hallow is to honor as holy. God's name is already holy. But we need

to say with our prayers what the twenty-four elders who surrounded the throne of God said in Revelation 4 verse 11, "Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created."

Jesus prayed often and fervently. In Luke 5 and verse 16 that says, that "Jesus Himself would often slip away to the wilderness and pray." In Luke 6:12, before He appointed apostles, Jesus "went off to the mountain to pray, and He spent the whole night in prayer to God." When Jesus was being crucified, he began His death with prayer, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they doing." And He ended His time on the cross in prayer, "Father, into Your hands I commit my spirit" That's Luke 23:34 and also verse 46. If the Lord Jesus Himself had such a need for prayer, certainly we need to pray as well.

The Lord Jesus taught to us pray to "Our Father." When we pray as Christians, we can approach God's throne because of our relationship with Jesus Christ. Jesus didn't say, "My Father"; He said, "Our Father." And every Christian is a child of God. Galatians 3 verses 26 to 27 says, "For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ." Because we're sons of God through Jesus, we have access to the Father. When we pray to the Father, we should pray in the name of the Lord Jesus. The Lord said in John 16 verse 23, "Truly, truly, I say to you, if you ask the Father for anything in My name, He will give it to you."

Our Father lovingly and wondrously invites us to pray. God already knows what's on our hearts. Oh the Lord said in Matthew 6 and verse 8, that "your Father knows what you need before you ask Him." The Lord wants us to pray, because it's important for us to approach God for our needs, to thank Him for all that He has done, and to remind ourselves of our utter dependence upon our Father in Heaven.

The Lord said in Matthew 7 verses 7 to 11, "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. Or what man is there among you who, when his son asks for a loaf, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, he will not give him a snake, will he? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!"

We don't have a reluctant God who ignores us. We don't have to beg God to let us pray. Our God is not like the pagan gods of the Gentiles who cried out with "meaningless repetitions." No. God wants us to pray, just as any father wants to hear from his children. God wants to bless our lives.

But when you ask of God, ask in faith. Jesus said in Mark 11 verses 22 to 24, "Have faith in God. Truly I say to you, Jesus says, that whoever says to this mountain, 'Be taken up and cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says is going to happen, it shall be granted him. Therefore I say to you, that all things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they shall be granted you."

Again, the Bible says in James 1 verses 5 to 8, "But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways."

Sometimes people pray for the wrong things. When we ask God to bless us, we should consider whether what we are asking is God's will. Our desires and God's will are not always the same. The Bible says in 1 John 5 verses 14 to 15, "This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask

anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we also know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.”

Now when you pray, do not ask with selfish motives. The Bible says in James 4 verses 1 to 3, “What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members? You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. You’re envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask. You ask and you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures.”

When people ask God to bless them so they can fulfill the desires that arise from their conflicts and envious ways, God refuses to help. He is not interested in blessing people to further their wrong motives and sinful attitudes. God doesn’t help people sin or fulfill their lusts. Their prayers actually crowd God out, because they’re thinking more of themselves than they are God’s will.

God’s will, He wills that we pray for material blessings. That’s true. After all, Jesus taught us to pray, “Give us this day our daily bread.” But in praying that, we’re not praying for cake but for bread. God will give us bread, which is necessary for life but not necessarily all the luxuries.

Some preachers, to hear their message, think the most important thing is to be lavishly blessed in this life. In the name of God they make outlandish promises while they hope to exploit people. Don’t be deceived by these preachers. God provides for our needs to do His work, but the Lord is not interested in supplying selfish desires.

The Lord teaches us to pray “Thy will be done.” He prayed that in great sorrow while in the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus knew of the pain that He would bear in the scourging and in the crucifixion. Jesus knew that He had to bear the punishment for the sins of the whole world. He prayed in Matthew 26:39, “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as You will.” He didn’t want to bear that cup of wrath; yet He knew He must.

For Jesus doing the will of the Father was more important than His own desires or comfort. He wanted to serve His Father and to bless you and me with forgiveness more than He wanted freedom from pain. You see, there is something worse than physical pain, and that’s for anyone to be lost in sin. Jesus was willing to bear the terrible pain of physical death so that He could deliver us from spiritual death caused by sin.

Now we too, should pray “Thy will be done.” Wouldn’t this be a wonderful world if everyone prayed for God’s will to be done and then practiced the will of God? We need the will of God to be done in our lives! And if people did God’s will, they would cease to be criminals, cease to be violent, and learn how to forgive. This would bring healing. If people would repent of sin and follow the Lord’s way, we would see a tremendous change in our lives, our homes, and our communities and our country.

On the other hand, Psalm 66 verse 18 says, “If I regard wickedness in my heart, the Lord will not hear.” If I allow sin to be the focus of my heart, I can’t imagine that God is willing to hear my prayer and bless me with a positive answer. Sometimes people imagine sin will bring them happiness and explain their behavior with the statement, well “God just wants me to be happy.” No, God doesn’t want that kind of happiness. The Lord desires that we find lasting joy of righteous living, not the temporary happiness of sin.

When you pray to God asking for forgiveness, be ready to grant forgiveness too. If you have an unforgiving spirit, you can’t expect God to forgive you. The Lord said in Mark 11 and verse 25, “Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father who is

in heaven will also forgive you your transgressions." Matthew 6 and verse 14 says, "But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions."

Our prayers can be hindered if we mistreat our loved ones. The Bible says to husbands in 1 Peter 3 verse 7, "You husbands in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she's a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered." We cannot mistreat each other, husbands or wives, parents or children, and expect to be able to live in harmony with God.

Our prayers matter to God! The Lord told His disciples in the Garden in Matthew 26 and verse 41, "Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." When we want to do the right thing, God is there to help. Psalm 34 and verse 15 says, that "The eyes of the LORD are toward the righteous and His ears are open to their cry."

When we pray, let's wait on the Lord to answer. He knows the right time to answer a prayer, but His time may not be ours. We may not be ready for His answer. I love the faith of Jeremiah who suffered much for his faith but he kept close to the Lord. He wrote in Lamentations 3 and verse 25, that "The Lord is good to those who wait for him, to the soul who seeks him." Yes, the Lord wants us to persevere in prayer and not lose heart, Luke chapter 18.

The apostle Paul said in Philippians 4 and verse 19, "And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus." I also recall 2 Corinthians 9 and verse 8, which says "And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed." Oh we need to give ourself to the will of God; and then His grace will abundantly supply your every need.

When you're troubled, pray. The Bible says in Philippians 4 verses 6 to 7, "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." Oh, God will set a guard around your heart and give you amazing peace when you take your concerns and worries to Him.

When Darius, the king of Persia, made a law against praying to anyone but him you remember that Daniel disobeyed. He knew that he needed God. Daniel would rather spend one night in a lion's den than to lose one day in prayer to God. Don't let even one day go by without prayer. Let's pray together. Oh heavenly Father we're thankful that You hear our prayers and that You love us. Help us heavenly Father to bring our wills in harmony with Your will. Help us to love You, to honor You, and to serve You. May Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. In Jesus name, Amen.

God will always act wisely and in our best interests. Romans 8:28 says, "And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose." We can believe God will help us through every struggle. We may not always understand what, how, or why God is doing what He's doing. But God knows what we don't know, and He sees what we can't see. Trust God.

An unknown confederate soldier was found dead with these words in his pocket: I asked God for strength that I might achieve; He made me weak that I might obey. I asked for health that I might do great things; He gave me grace that I might do better things. I asked for riches that I might be happy; He gave me poverty that I might be wise. I asked for power that I might have the praise of men; He gave me weakness that I might feel a need of God. I asked for all things that I might enjoy life; He gave me life that I might enjoy all things. I received nothing I had asked for; He gave me all that I had hoped for.

Oh I tell you let's pray God's will be done in our lives. Friends, please pray for this gospel ministry. Ask God to open a door to us for the word, that we might declare the gospel clearly, boldly, and with love. Ephesians 3 and verse 20 says that God is "able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us." Prayer puts the power of God to work in our lives.

Well we that hope you've been blessed by this series on worship and this lesson on prayer. We've published a wonderful little book on Worship. This book is free to anyone who ask for it. It has five lessons. The lessons that we presented this month in April. And it's free for the asking. Now if you want a copy of the booklet or a CD of this message, "Worship in Prayer" mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or by e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org.

Or, you can call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. Now all our programs also appear on our website at www.searchtv.org. You can also watch the SEARCH program anytime on YouTube. Just go to our channel, "SearchTVMinistry," that's all one word. And we also offer a wonderful things like a Bible Correspondence Course, and those who study it why they grow in their faith. There are eight lessons, and you study at your own pace. We'll be happy to send you that course like all the other things for free.

We do ask that you please attend worship at one of the churches of Christ in the area that's served by this station or network. Oh they love guests, and you'll be so glad that you went and worshipped with them. Now if you're looking for a church home, a sound biblical church home, we'll be happy to help you find one. Well we'll be back next week, Lord willing. So keep searching God's Word with us and tell a friend about this program. God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord's Way.