

# The Berea Baptist Banner

*"Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth" Ps. 60:4*

## Prevailing Prayer

By Milburn R. Cockrell  
(1941 - 2002)

You probably recall from the Book of Genesis the night that Jacob wrestled with the Angel of the Lord. As the morning began to dawn the struggle ended. The Angel of the Covenant touched the hallow of Jacob's thigh, causing him to be lame the rest of his life. Jacob now realized he could no longer count on his own strength in this contest, and he was

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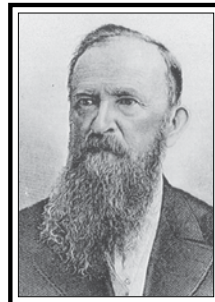
## Agreement in Prayer

By J. R. Graves  
(1820 - 1892)

**"I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven"** (Matt. 18:19).

Is there a richer promise within the lids of the Bible? And can we have **"any thing,"** concerning which we may agree to ask? What

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## Prayer and Salvation

By Rosco Brong  
(1908 - 1985)

**"For everyone who shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved, How then shall they call to him whom they did not believe? And how shall they believe him of whom they did not hear? And how shall they hear without a preacher? . . . So then the faith is from hearing, and the hearing is through the**

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## The Christian and Prayer

By Tom Ross  
of South Point, Ohio

**"And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples"** (Luke 11:1).

### PRINCIPLES OF PRAYER

There is probably not a subject in the Christian world today that has been as neglected as the science of prayer. Preachers not only neglect to teach on prayer in the pulpit, if the sad truth be known, the reason



why is because they practice it so little in their closets. We can expect little power in our churches if there is little praying among

our pastors and church members. We need to return to the sacred and delightful duty of prayer if we are to ever expect the winds of revival to sweep over our churches. Spirituality, godliness, and purity

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## The Promise of Answered Prayer

By Paul Stepp  
of Indore, West Virginia

Something that we, as Christians, often talk about is how that God is a God Who hears prayers. We constantly remind ourselves and others about the need that we have for prayer unto God, and how our prayers are heard by a God that is able and willing to answer our prayers. The Lord Jesus Christ said in the Beatitudes, **"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened"**



(Matt. 7:7-8). This is a very familiar passage that concerns prayer; and probably all of us have heard this passage

preached on many times. Now I want us to think about prayer, and how God has given us a promise in regards to our prayers.

Specifically, what, let us think about, are some ways in which we must pray? The Lord has promised to answer our prayers, and this is something that we take great comfort in. But, He has also

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**"for, behold, he prayeth"** (Acts 9:11).

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The purpose of the Berea Baptist Banner is as follows:

1. To honor God and to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. To preach the gospel to lost sinners.
3. To spread the whole counsel of God's Word.
4. To encourage God's preachers and to strengthen His churches in the most holy faith.
5. To motivate God's children to a closer fellow-ship around His Word.
6. To inform people of world events in light of Bible prophecy.
7. To condemn and expose error wherever it may rear its ugly head.
8. To stimulate Christian growth in grace.
9. To make the Devil and his demons as mad as possible.

## Prevailing Prayer

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mindful that only the Lord could help him. Though wounded in the struggle, he still had great courage and persistence. He clung to the Angel of the Lord and refused to let Him go until He blessed him.

The Angel then asked, **"What is thy name? And he said, Jacob. And he said, thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed"** (Gen. 32:27-28). In Hosea 12:3-4 I also read this concerning Jacob: **"He took his brother by the heel in the womb, and by his strength he had power with God: Yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed: he wept, and made supplication unto him: he found him in Bethel, and there he spake with us."** It is plainly seen from this last text that Jacob prayed, or made supplication, to the Angel of the Lord. Jacob's prayer gives us the key as to how to pray a prevailing prayer, for the prayer of the patriarch was such.

### WHAT IS IT?

Prevailing prayer is a prayer which obtains the blessing that it seeks as did Jacob. It is to have **"power with God"** and to **"prevail."** It is the prayer which effectually moves God. When I say it moves God I do not mean that prayer changes the mind of God. The mind of God is exempt from change and His will is immutable (Job 23:13). But I still say that prayer moves God. It produces such a change in us as renders it consistent for God to do as it would not be consistent for Him to do otherwise.

Most students of the Scriptures concede that Jacob wrestled that night with the eternal Son of God in one of His preincarnate

forms. The patriarch said of this experience that he had **"seen God face to face"** (Gen. 32:30). He called the place **"Peniel"**, which means "the face of God." Hosea tells us Jacob **"by his strength he had power with God"** (Hos. 12:3). Jacob's wrestling was only the sign of that spiritual conflict by which he obtained the honorable victory, even fervent prayer.

Mark carefully the words of Jacob to the Angel of the Lord: **"I will not let thee go, except thou bless me"** (Gen. 32:26). Jacob is seen here clinging to Jehovah-Jesus. Clinging to the pleading Christ is the all-conquering attitude of the soul who would prevail with God. The prayer warrior must cling to Christ with a stubborn trust. We must wrestle with God and refuse to be overcome until we obtain from His goodness the petition we desire. So prevailing prayer is wrestling with God until the blessing comes.

### PRAYER AVAILS MUCH

In James 5:16 it is written: **"The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."** The Revised Version has it: **"The supplication of a righteous man availeth much in its working."** This verse is adorned with a number of jewels of luster Divine. First, for a prayer to be answered, the man who prays it must be a righteous man. Second, a formal prayer is of no worth. One must really pray. Too many say prayers but never pray. Third, if prayer is earnest and by a righteous man like Jacob was, it will have great power with God. There is more power in that kind of a prayer than the Atomic Bomb. Such a prayer is God-moving.

I cannot understand how the mighty God, Who rules the universe by His sovereign power,

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can be affected by the prayer of one of His children, but James 5:16 says He is. Although He rules and reigns according to His counsel and purpose, He somehow permits the cries of His children to fit into His plans. The supplications of the elect were considered by God in His eternal purpose and plan. The God of the Bible is a prayer-hearing God!

## IT IS DEFINITE PRAYER

Jacob did not pray at random without any distinct or definite object in mind. He made supplication to the Angel of the Lord for deliverance from his enraged brother, Esau. This was the blessing he sought and obtained. This was the distinct object before his mind when he wrestled with the Angel. It was by this definite prayer that he gained his P.W.G. in the Divine school; that is, his Power With God.

If we would engage in prevailing prayer there should be definite objects for which we plea. We often ramble in our prayers and get nothing because we do not really desire anything. We chatter about a number of topics, but our soul does not concentrate on any one object. We must never approach the throne of grace without thinking beforehand what we want to ask God for. No one would go to the store and not know what article he wants. No person would fire his gun without knowing what the target was. Then why fall down on our knees without knowing what petition we desire of Him?

No wonder we have no power with God! Our attempts at praying are so poor that we do not even know what to ask God when we pray unto Him! We cannot get a blessing without asking for

one! A vague petition for grace is not effectual prayer. A general entreaty for God's strength and protection through the day that is dawning is not enough. An indiscriminating invocation for the guidance of the Holy Spirit will not get the attention of God. The prayer which prevails with God must be minute and detailed as well as earnest.

All the effectual prayers of the Bible were for a definite thing. Abraham prayed for the righteous in Sodom. Moses interceded for Israel. Joshua asked for the sun to stand still. Hannah prayed for a son. Elijah requested no rain for three and a half years. The early church prayed for Peter. Solomon prayed for wisdom.

## AN EARNEST PRAYER

You cannot read the account about Jacob without seeing that he was earnest in his petition. Hosea disclosed: **"He wept, and made supplication unto him"** (Hos. 12:4). He begged for the blessing with tears in his eyes. His prayer was like that of our Savior. Hebrews 5:7 says: **"Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared."** In Luke 22:44 it is again written of Him: **"And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground."**

Hezekiah prayed a prevailing prayer, just like Jacob did. The Prophet Isaiah told Hezekiah that he would die. This message caused Hezekiah to **"pray unto the LORD"** and to weep sore (II Kings 20:1-3). Isaiah was then told to return to Hezekiah and say: **"Thus saith the LORD, the God of David thy father, I have**

**heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will heal thee: on the third day thou shalt go up unto the house of the LORD"** (II Kings 20:5). Here was a man who was a prince of God, a man who had power with God and prevailed!

Hannah prayed earnestly for a son (I Sam. 1). She prayed unto the Lord **"in bitterness of soul"** and **"wept sore"** (I Sam. 1:10). She **"poured out"** her soul **"before the LORD"** (I Sam. 1:15). This sincere petition prevailed with God. Later she declared: **"For this child I prayed; and the LORD hath given my petition which I asked of him"** (I Sam. 1:27).

The psalmist spoke of prayer as pouring out the soul to God: **"I cried unto the LORD with my voice; with my voice unto the LORD did I make my supplication. I poured out my complaint before him; I shewed before him my trouble. When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, then thou knewest my path"** (Ps. 142:1-3). Paul spoke of prayer as the travail of the soul: **"My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you"** (Ga. 4:19). The Galatians had backslidden and Paul was agonizing in prayer for them like a parent would over a wandering child. This same apostle urged the Christians at Rome to **"strive together with me in your prayers to God for me"** (Rom. 15:30).

Epaphras, a member of the church at Colosse, was **"always labouring fervently for"** his brethren in prayer (Col. 4:12). Elijah prayed **"earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit"** (Jas. 5:17-18).

These men prayed prevailing prayers before God, and so should we.

Prayer without fervency is like a sacrifice without fire, a body without a spirit, a bullet without powder. Prayer without earnestness is no prayer; it is speaking, not praying. A stillborn child is no heir, neither is a prayer that wants life the heir to any promise of God. Lifeless prayer is no more prayer than painted fire is fire. Fervency is to prayer as fire to the license; it makes it ascend to Heaven as a sweet perfume.

Do you desire to engage in prevailing prayer like Jacob and Elijah did? Then pray with all your heart, with emotion and with zeal, wrestle with God, weep before Him, agonize before the throne of grace. Be earnest and intense in your requests to God, and you will have power with God. Pour out your soul with tears and strong crying to the God of Heaven, and Heaven will hear you! Oh, God help us to always pray a prevailing prayer before thee!

## PERSEVERING PRAYER

It would seem that Jacob was very persevering in his prayer to the Angel of the Lord. He refused to let Him go until He had blessed him with the petition he desired. If we would prevail in prayer to God we must persevere in the grace of praying.

I believe that we all can agree that it is far easier to begin a habit of prayer than it is to keep it up. We find it hard to fix our thoughts upon God and spiritual things, so as to hold on till the blessing comes. Too many times we become weary of praying, and we heed the suggestion of Satan that prayer is of no use. Do you ever feel a secret inclination to hurry your prayers? to shorten

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them? or to omit them? This is a direct temptation from the Devil. By causing us to leave off prayer, Satan robs us of the blessing of prevailing prayer.

Oh, my brethren, let us recall that our Savior taught that **“men ought always to pray, and not to faint”** (Luke 18:1). The apostle said: **“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit”** (Eph. 6:18) and again: **“Continuing instant in prayer”** (Rom. 12:12). We are admonished in I Thessalonians 5:17: **“Pray without ceasing.”** May we never cease to **“cry day and night unto him”** (Luke 18:7), for this is the duty of all His elect.

## A PRAYER IN SUBMISSION TO GOD'S WILL

The night wrestler of my text knew that God only could grant the blessing he sought. He plead with tearful eyes that the Messenger of the Covenant might grant his request. He knew the blessing could be given, or withheld, at God's pleasure. While his prayer was sincere and earnest, it was nevertheless in submission to the good pleasure of God. We know that Jacob did pray according to the will of God because God granted his petition.

Jesus Christ is our great example in praying according to the will of God. He prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane: **“Not as I will, but as thou wilt”** (Matt. 26:39). He again said: **“I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me”** (John 5:30). Still again He declared: **“I do always those things that please him”** (John 8:29). Being mindful of this, I have no problem in knowing that He also said: **“Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that**

**thou hearest me always..”** (John 11:41-42).

To pray for a thing contrary to God's will is to tempt the Lord God; it is not prayer but rebellion. We must pray according to God's promise and predictions, for only those prayers that are in submission to His will are heard by Him. I John 5:14-15 says: **“And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.”**

Someone may be saying: “I know you must pray according to the will of God, but my problem is that I often don't know what the will of God is. How then can I pray a prevailing prayer?” You must depend upon the Holy Spirit Who has been sent to aid you in your prayers to God. When there is no clear precept from the Bible, when providence is dark, when we know not God's will for our life, let us lean upon our heavenly Assistant sent down from the Upper World. Romans 8:26-27 reads: **“Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.”**

## THE PRAYER OF FAITH

Truly Jacob believed that Jehovah-Jesus was able to grant the blessing he sought; otherwise, he would not have asked Him. The patriarch believed He would grant it, if he held on to Him till the blessing came. Jacob's prayer

was a **“prayer of faith”** (James 5:15).

We must expect to obtain the things for which we ask in prayer. We need not look for an answer if we pray without faith, for faithless prayer is fruitless prayer. A number of prayers are not heard because we do not believe that God will grant our petitions. **“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and unbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord”** (James 1:5-7).

Jesus Christ urged us to pray the prayer of faith. In Mark 11:24 He declared: **“Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.”** When we pray let us pray with confidence in God's power and ability to answer our prayers, for the Lord said: **“According to your faith be it unto you”** (Matt. 9:29).

## TREMENDOUS POWER OF PRAYER

There is tremendous power available to God's children, which is seldom tapped. Prayer has explosive power; it is spiritual dynamite! It gets things done. It works miracles. It provides irresistible energy. Prayer puts us in contact with the Supreme Power of the universe. It puts us before the throne of the Almighty!

When we enter the secret chamber of intercession, let us remember that while we pray God is really doing the things we are asking for. As we pray for the gospel to be sent to sin-darkened lands, God baffles the powers of darkness and moves

the hearts of kings. As we pray, God breaks down the barriers to evangelization, loosens the bands of superstition, and opens the pathway to forbidden lands. As we pray, God opens the purses of His children and thrusts forth laborers into the fields white unto harvest. What a tremendous responsibility is ours! All the power of an omnipotent God is ready and waiting to be put into triumphant, irresistible action at the prayer of one of His children! What a unique privilege is offered us! The very host of Heaven is marshaled against the powers of darkness at the cry of one of God's elect.

## CONCLUSION

Prayer is to the soul what air is to our lungs; it is the life-breath of true Christianity. It is one of the first acts of the saved soul (Acts 9:11). It is the means of causing our spiritual life to flourish, and the lack of it causes it to decay. When we cease to watch and pray we enter into temptation (Matt. 26:40-41).

Thank God for the privilege of prayer! Heaven be praised that we, like Jacob, can become a prince of God and prevail with God. Men would do well to fear men and women who know the secret of prevailing prayer.

“John Knox was a man famous for his power in prayer, so that Queen Mary of England used to say that she feared his prayers more than all the armies of Europe. And events showed that she had reason to do it. He used to be in such an agony for the deliverance of his country, that he could not sleep. He had a place in his garden where he used to go to pray. One night he and several friends were praying together, and as they prayed, Knox spoke and said that deliverance had come. He could

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not tell what had happened, but he felt that something had taken place, for God had heard their prayers. What was it? Why, the next news they had was, that Mary was dead!" (*Revivals of Religions*, p. 72, 1886 edition).

Those who scoff at the concept of prayer have missed one of the greatest blessings this side of Heaven. They have by-passed a hidden dimension of reality more real than life itself. They are ignorant of the great Creator Who answers the prayers of His people. They are unaware that the Bible calls the prayers of the saints sweet perfume to God (Rev. 5:8).

Prayer is not a waste of time. It is obtaining mercy and grace to help in the time of need (Heb. 4:16). It is tarrying before the throne of grace; wrestling with God; agonizing in His presence, until we **"be endued with power from on high"** (Luke 24:49). It is asking and receiving the petitions that we desire of Him. We can pray prevailing prayers. Our prayers can be God-moving, Hell-defeating, Devil-routing, sinner-saving, Christ-exalting and worker-producing! Oh, my brethren, let us go often to the throne of grace, pray earnestly before our God, and tarry long in His presence! The Lord says to us: **"Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not"** (Jer. 33:3).



## Agreement in

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a boundless grant! Have we had no desires? Have we never seized upon this promise, and been agreed to ask? And our prayers

not answered? Why? We either have not complied with the conditions of prevailing prayer, or God is not true. If we have failed to comply with the conditions, doubtless it has been because we have misunderstood them. Is it not desirable to secure so great a blessing? Let us then endeavour to understand the condition, **"agree. . .touching anything."**

What are we to understand, then, by being agreed, **"as touching"**?

I. *We must be agreed in prayer.* Prayer implies desire. To pray, we must have desires---then:

1. We should be agreed in our desires for the object. To agree in word is not to agree in desires. How often the prayer and heart disagree! But desire also implies motive. We must then:

2. Agree in motive. Not only our desires must be the same, but our motives the same; still we might agree in motive and our motives be purely selfish:

(1) To have our congregation enlarged, and made more respectable; it flatters the pride of the human heart, to be connected with large numbers.

(2) To compel our enemies to acknowledge that God blesses us, or our church.

(3) To have our children, and our friends converted.

3. We must be agreed in good motives. To have our congregation enlarged, not merely because it is the one to which we belong, or to have our children and friends converted only because they are ours. Our motive in desiring a revival should be because God's name would be honoured and glorified in the conversion of sinners, whether they were our own, or our neighbor's children. When we begin to love souls, rather than persons, then we may hope that our motives please God.

The prayer of Moses when he pleaded with God for Israel (Ex. 32:11) is a beautiful illustration of the proper motive in prayer. He pleaded God's honour in the salvation of Israel. So great was his love for souls and the honour of God, though the Lord promised to make of him a great nation in case he cut off that people, yet he pleaded for them. He had no selfishness in his heart. A selfish prayer is a God-displeasing, God-dishonouring prayer.

4. We must agree, also, **"touching the time"** when we desire the blessing to come. Many Christians pray for a revival of religion in their churches who would be astonished, and disappointed, if God suddenly answered the language of their prayers, without regard to the feelings of their heart.

They would be sadly disappointed if their prayers were answered, because they would not feel that they could lose their time from their business, their crops, or their professions. Christians usually pray for a revival when it will best suit their convenience.

When are campmeetings and protracted meetings appointed? Invariably, those seasons when there is little else to be done, after planting, or working crops, or harvesting. We imitate the sin of Jews, in thus bringing the lame, the halt, the blind, and the torn of beasts, and that which is ready to perish, and offer it to God for a sacrifice. It is not sacrifice, for it is worthless to use his idle time. If we could be making two or three dollars per day, we would never offer it to God--would never think of passing it away in meetings. Now, the same time would hardly ever meet the convenience of two persons, differently employed---and how can they agree as **"touching"** the

time when they would be willing to receive the blessing? But we must agree on the time, and on the present time, for present time is God's time. He has no promises for the morrow. His time must be our time. We must be willing to receive when He is willing to give, and that is **"today."**

5. We must agree to ask in faith. This is made one of the conditions of prevailing prayer. **"But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed"** (James 1:6). Unbelief is a sin, and if we ask, doubting God's Word, He will be displeased. We must absolutely believe that our prayers will be answered.

II. *We are to agree in everything that is essential to obtaining the blessing.*

1. We must agree in feeling the necessity of a revival.

The term *re-vival* implies excitement. There never was a revival without more or less excitement. There was no small excitement when the Holy Spirit was poured out on the day of Pentecost. The apostles acted and talked like men **"full of new wine,"** and when thousands were convicted at the same time there was, no doubt, some little confusion; and when the three thousand happy converts lifted up their voices together and praised God, "there must have been noise enough." Many of our good brethren like revivals, but will seriously object to any excitement, or confusion, or noise with it. "Take it calm," say they; "don't be excited about it. Take things in a rational way; so much noise and crying and praising aloud do no good. God is not deaf, or a great way off, that He cannot hear. Noise does no good."

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# Agreement in

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These are like those persons who were near blind Bartimeus when he heard that Jesus was passing by, and began to cry out: **"Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me!"**

"Don't cry so loud! Noise doesn't do any good. He can hear you---be calm and quiet about it." And many charged him that he should hold his peace (keep peaceable), but he cried out the more the great deal."

Those tender-eared brethren will be greatly troubled in Heaven, unless they void their present notions, for there will be a great noise though "it doesn't do any good," when the "ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands" shout with a loud voice, "Worthy the Lamb that was slain," and every creature respond in loud Alleluias.

We do not advocate more sound than sense, *i.e.*, more excitement than religion, but many of our brethren have more fastidiousness than religion.

2. We must agree in regard to the importance of a revival. We must feel it so as to desire and seek it with unutterable agony---more than our meat or our drink: "Ye shall find me, saith God, when ye seek for me with all your heart." **"For so soon as Zion travailed she brought forth her children."**

3. We must agree in regard to the measures essential to promote a revival or religion in the Church.

In humiliation and prayer, and turning to God, and examining the state of our own hearts, and setting the temples of our hearts in order. Forsaking every appearance of evil.

4. In removing every impediment:

(1) In discipline, cut off the dry

and fruitless branches.

(2) By mutual confessions, "confessing our faults one to another."

(3) By forgiving our enemies. **"If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift"** (Matt. 5:23-24). **"If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses"** (Matt. 6:15).

5. We must be agreed in labouring to promote it.

6. In determination to persevere, Elijah prayed seven times, ere there appeared a cloud as large as a man's hand. The importunate widow should be our exemplar.

We learn from this subject:

1. Why so many prayers offered in the Church are mere mock offerings, improper desires---improper motives---no agreement; also:

2. The hypocrisy of those who profess to be praying for a revival of religion, while they are doing nothing to promote it. Would you not pronounce that man a hypocrite who professed to desire a crop, yet did nothing to secure one?

3. Why so many of the children of Christian parents live and die unconverted? And how that two pious parents might insure the salvation of their children, could they but be agreed as "touching it." We cannot be too thankful that it is promised to two.

4. Why this is generally understood to mean something different from what it says. It is read wrong, *i.e.*, as if it read "ask" instead of "agree."

5. How a few individuals are often more successful in gathering in and building up a church, than

a much larger number. They are agreed: Three agreed can do more than 300 disagreed.

6. We learn when glorious things may be expected for the Zion of God---when churches are agreed to accomplish the work, when the people have **"a mind to work."**

7. Finally, we see the awful guilt of the Church, and Christian parents, in neglecting their duty in this respect. The salvation of sinners and our children, is entrusted into our hands. To us He hath given "the keys of binding and loosing." Will we by our prayers unlock the gates of Heaven to them, or by our neglect lock them down to Hell? Let us this day decide the character in which we will appear to them, ---as hypocrites, or as consistent Christians, who love their souls.



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**word of God"** (Rom. 10:13-17, improved translation).

Can or should a lost sinner pray, and if he does pray, will God hear him? One preacher tells the sinner to "accept Christ"; another urges him to "come to Christ"; a third demands that the sinner "repent" and "turn to God"; a fourth says "believe" or "trust" Him; still another invites the sinner to "ask God to save you for Jesus' sake." Are there so many different ways to be saved? Or are these just different ways of directing sinners to the one Way, Jesus Christ?

Our answer must depend upon whether these and other invitational expressions are scripturally explained and understood.

### A PUZZLED PREACHER

Specifically, I have at hand a

letter from a good and faithful brother asking some questions about Romans 10:13 and context---questions of general interest and deserving sincere and earnest attention. I shall try to give honest and scriptural answers to these questions after a careful examination of our text.

First of all, if we recognize the Bible as God's Word, we must agree that this Word is truth and therefore is in perfect harmony with itself. If our interpretations of different portions of Scripture conflict, our interpretations must be wrong. ALL Scripture is **"God-breathed"** and profitable (II Tim. 3:16).

### CALLING IN TRUTH

One time a preacher was arguing that a sinner cannot be saved without praying or asking God to save him. Then how about the mute, who has no voice with which to call? Oh, of course, "prayer is the heart's sincere desire," and he need only call upon God from his heart. Then cannot any sinner be saved the same way, calling upon God from his heart, but without audible voice? Must any prayer be audible to human ears in order for God to "hear" it?

In fact, under the name of "Wisdom," God declares to rebellious sinners: **"Because I have called, and ye refused;. . . I also will laugh at your calamity;...then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me"** (Prov. 1:24-28).

Again we read, **"As he cried, and they would not hear; so they cried, and I would not hear, saith the LORD of hosts"** (Zech. 7:13).

And again, **"Your iniquities**

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# Small Drops

By Joseph M. Sidders of  
Temperance, Michigan

"My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass: Because I will publish the name of the LORD: ascribe ye greatness unto our God" (Deuteronomy 32:2-3).



## CHARITY

I had just stopped for lunch at my favorite fast food diner when, as I walked in, I saw an older lady wrestling with her cane, her tray of food, and her soft drink with a crooked lid on it. Though the restaurant had nearly 20 other people in it, none seemed to be bothered by the need of this woman. I quickly got to her and offered to carry her tray to her table for her, fixing the lid on her cup as we walked. She offered to pay me for this kindness, but honestly the joy it brought me to be able to help her far outweighed anything else she could offer.

It is during this winter time of year that we tend to think more of charity than other times. When the Bible uses the word 'charity,' it is speaking of love. Paul says it best when speaking to a prideful church in I Corinthians 13:3, **"And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing."**

Doing something nice for others should be an act of love. Biblically, even 'pity' is defined as having compassion on or showing mercy for someone else. Both love and pity are acts of freely, unconditionally giving something of ourselves for someone else's benefit.

Charity (love) can be as simple as that. Charity, as Paul writes, goes the distance. It is kind and warm. Charity is not spiteful or braggadocios. It is not empty but

rather very full. True charity, true love, has the ability to fill both the receiver and the giver.

It would have been great to have been able to buy this woman's meal, or to have placed a hundred dollar bill on the table for her, but that was not the need she had. Jesus, as He was speaking to the disciples of how to pray, told them of our immense need for communication with the Father. He told us to not be ashamed of our need. **"For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"** (Luke 11:10-13).

As charity is also unselfish, let us put our pride aside today to seek how we may love our friends, family and neighbors. Communicate with those around you to determine the needs they have. Love others enough to pray for solutions to the existing problems and hurt all around us, and when able, provide your love selflessly through small acts of service and kindness. **"And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity"** (I Cor. 13:13).



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**have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you that he will not hear"** (Isa. 59:2).

Space forbids multiplied quotations from Scripture to show that a mere calling upon God with the lips, while the heart remains unbelieving and rebellious, is an abomination to God (Prov. 28:9). But on the other hand, **"The LORD is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him IN TRUTH"** (Ps. 145:18).

## CONTINUING SALVATION

It is too bad that even good preachers and other Christians are sometimes more interested in winning theological arguments than in simply declaring the message of God's Word and leaving some room for the Holy Spirit to interpret and apply the truth in individual hearts.

Really, salvation has its past, present, and future aspects, including besides salvation from the legal penalty of sin (justification), salvation from the practice of sin (sanctification) and salvation from the presence and effects of sin (glorification).

So to win an argument, we must say that the promise of Joel 2:32, Acts 2:21, and Romans 10:13 refers only to the continuing and eternal salvation of believers already saved by faith. But I am not sure that this would be quite fair or completely adequate interpretation.

True, when Paul analyzes the promise in our text, he shows that logically, the word of salvation must be preached, heard, and believed, in this order, before there can be the kind of calling upon God to which the promise of salvation is attached.

It is good to have this analysis, and if heeded it will deliver us from the folly of supposing that a sinner can "pray through" to forgiveness without accepting the terms of the gospel.

Nevertheless, human beings are seldom logical, especially in religious matters. Probably most sinners do some vain praying before they have the saving faith that enables them to call upon God **"in truth."** And it is doubtful that there is often any lapse of time between the first exercise of true faith and the first (inner) expression of true prayer.

## QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Now we come to some of the questions in the letter before me:

1. *Should unsaved sinners ever pray?* Yes, of course, everyone should do all kinds of "good" works, rather than bad. But sinners need to learn that **"they that are in the flesh cannot please God"** (Rom. 8:8) and that all their righteousness **"are as filthy rags"** (Isa. 64:6). Still, it is better for sinners to pray, as sincerely as they can, than to blaspheme, or to forget God entirely.

2. *Is "believing on Jesus" the way to be saved from the penalty of sin?* Yes, see John 3:18; Rom. 3:26.

3. *Is "calling on the name of the Lord" the way to be saved from the penalty of sin?* I know of no Scripture that says so, exactly. As Paul explains it, a true calling on the name of the Lord is an expression of faith.

4. *Would it be improper to urge sinners to "Ask the Lord to save you for Jesus' sake, and trust Him to do it"?* This is not quite scriptural language, and yet I find it difficult to see how a sinner could be led far astray by it unless it is so emphasized

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that it becomes a sort of magic formula of mere words without scriptural meaning.

6. *In Romans 10:14 does the first sentence mean believe historically or is the belief mentioned there a heartfelt trust?* Of course, logically, there must be saving faith before there can be a saving call, **"in truth."** If the sinner will not believe the promises of God he is calling God a liar (I John 5:10), and his call is a call of hypocrisy.

6. *Is "calling on the name of the Lord" what we would call prayer?* Yes---although "prayer" can include much else. Jesus tells us of a Pharisee who **"prayed thus with himself"** (Luke 18:11). This Pharisee addressed God formally, but certainly he did not call upon Him in the sense of Romans 10:13.

7. *Should I continue to urge the lost to "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ" or should I, in addition to or instead of this, urge them to "Call on the name of the Lord"?* Indubitably the scriptural emphasis is on faith, and you need never apologize for urging the lost---and the saved---to believe---and to keep on believing---on or in the Lord Jesus Christ.

I do doubt the necessity of much urging of the lost to call on the name of the Lord. When spiritually convicted of their sins and brought to a saving knowledge of Christ, they "just naturally" come to, receive, and call upon Him.

Saved people are generally the ones that need to be reminded to **"pray without ceasing"** (I Thess. 5:17).



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will continue to dwindle if a spirit of prayer is not rekindled in our churches.

The practice of prayer was very important to the Lord Jesus Christ. Luke records Jesus praying more than any other of the writers of the Gospel. Jesus prayed at His baptism (3:21), in the wilderness (5:16), before calling the twelve (6:12-13), at Caesarea Philippi (9:18), before His transfiguration (9:28-29), before He gave the principles of prayer as recorded in our text (11:1-4), for Peter (22:41), in Gethsemane (22:41), on the cross (23:34), and finally in His post resurrection body at Emmaus (24:30). If Jesus Christ, the Head and Lawgiver of His churches, was often found praying should not those who profess to follow Him and carry out His commission also be much engaged in this sacred duty?

The disciples in our text had heard the powerful prayers of Jesus. His entire being was engaged in sweet communion with His Father. As the disciples listened to the earnest outpourings of His heart they were much impressed with the prayers of Jesus. As they heard Him pray they must have thought that they needed to be enrolled in the Master's School of prayer because they exclaimed: **"Lord, teach us to pray. . ."** Oh, that the hearts of God's people would today long for instruction in the science of prayer even as the disciples of old did! In Luke 11:1-13 Jesus goes into great detail concerning the principles of prayer. May God teach us to pray through His Word and Spirit so that we might glorify His name and serve Him with greater earnestness and zeal.

### THE PRIVILEGE OF

### PRAYER

The first principle illustrated by Christ is that prayer is a grand and glorious privilege reserved for those who can call God their Father. The worldling whose heart is as cold as a stone cares little for the prayer closet. They may recite written formal prayers, but they know nothing at all of the spiritual communion with God that is enjoyed by one whose heart has been changed by the power of God. Proverbs 21:27 declares: **"The sacrifice of the wicked is abomination: how much more, when he bringeth it with a wicked mind?"** The wise man also observed: **"The LORD is far from the wicked: but he heareth the prayer of the righteous"** (Prov. 15:29). The communion and closeness of talking with God is enjoyed by those who are called His children. Those who have embraced Jesus as Lord and Saviour are entitled as sons to enter in to **"the secret place of the Most High"** (Ps. 91:1).

As the disciples heard their Lord speaking of His Father with familiarity and enjoyment, they were led to perceive that prayer was truly a privilege and a delight to the soul. They were impressed to seek the Lord so that they could engage in such a spiritual privilege. I wonder if our seasons of prayer cause our faces to shine with the glory and peace of God in such a way that others are led to seek the sacred privileges that we enjoy as children of God? Could it be that we have ceased to view prayer as a glorious privilege to be enjoyed? Could it be that we now view prayer as a drudgery and a duty to be performed rather than a delightful employment of the soul? Perhaps the reason why the children and young people of our churches take little delight in the things of God is because we

as the people of God have ceased to enjoy the things of God. Our cold hearts need to be warmed again so that we anticipate and look forward to seasons of prayer and opportunities for worship and service. May God revive our hearts and lead us back to the throne of grace where we may drink deeply of the fountain of intimate communion with the Holy One! Prayer is a sacred privilege that every child of God should take advantage of each and every day.

### THE PLACE OF PRAYER

When the disciples heard Jesus praying they found Him in a certain place. The Scripture does not record whether Jesus was sitting, kneeling, or standing. Nor does it say that His head was bowed or His eyes were closed. Nor is the length of His prayer recorded. It does say that He was praying in a certain place. The point that I am making is that true prayer is not necessarily a posture or a certain form. It is an outpouring of the heart of the child of Christ that finds its release at the throne of God. Jesus stopped in the midst of His busy day at a certain place to direct His heart to the throne of God in prayer.

If we are to expect the blessings and power of God to be showered upon our lives we must take time out each and every day and resort to the place of prayer. The secret place where we can quietly and earnestly commune with God in prayer. I fear that many of us allow the cares and responsibilities of daily life to draw us away from the place of prayer. We should look forward to that time and place in our day when we can retire from the clamor and business of the world and spend time alone with God in prayer. Dear reader, have you taken time out of your

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## Narrow Paths

By Doug Newell IV of  
Clendenin, West Virginia

"Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matthew 7:14).

### PAUL'S PRAYER LIST

**"...that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day; Greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy"** (II Timothy 1:3-4).

Paul loves Timothy and always prays for him. How much do we pray for our loved ones? How much do we pray for our friends? What joy to know someone is praying for you. Knowing someone who has your interest at heart and goes to the throne of grace on your behalf is a great encouragement. Let us turn this around. If you tell someone you will pray for them, do you? What a terrible lie, to tell someone they are in your prayers, and you have yet to pray for them. What deception to say, "I'll pray" and forget about it and move on. The hypocrites love to be heard of men, and to let people know they will pray, and probably have a prayer list five pages long. Paul prayed night and day for Timothy, and you could take that to the bank.

Paul wanted to see Timothy again and likely remembered when they last saw each other and left, and what a tearful parting it was. The degree of sadness when they parted would be matched by the degree of joy at seeing each other again. What a friendship! If you have such a friend, treasure them and protect that friendship, because they are certainly a rare thing in this world. Paul had fair-weather friends who

left him when things got tough, but Timothy was a true friend. Proverbs 17:17, **"A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity."** Paul is about to get after Timothy a little bit, and to light a fire under him, but because they are friends, Timothy is not going to pout and get angry, because he also knows Proverbs 27:6, **"Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful."** Timothy's tears were genuine because his love for his friend was genuine.

### DESPISED AND REJECTED

"I don't know why people don't like me? What's not to love?" Bob sat on the porch, trying to unravel the enigma of how anyone could be upset with him. "I don't know man," his friend replied "you're pretty awesome. Humble too."

The older you get, the more you understand that some people are just not going to like you. But you also may begin to realize there are more than a few justifiable reasons. I am a sinner, saved by grace. I still battle remaining sin, and will until I die, so I know I offend people. I open my mouth when I should not and keep it shut when I should open it. My jokes fail. My words come out wrong and offend. My words come out right and wrongfully give offense. I'm a sinner, and I would guess that most of the times when I am not liked, they are more than justified in their charge.

**"He is despised and rejected of men"** (Isaiah 53:3). But Christ

was despised and rejected. Jesus was scorned by the Scribes, hated by the Pharisees, and mocked by the Romans. Why did men despise him? He healed the sick, raised the dead, and fed the hungry. The Messianic Psalm tells us Jesus delighted to do the law of God. He did not refrain himself from preaching righteousness. Jesus did not hide this truth, but declared God's faithfulness from the great congregation (Psalm 40:7-10). And he was despised. He was rejected.

For example, in Matthew 12, Jesus explains the true nature of the Sabbath Day. The Sabbath was given to man, by God, for the good of man. Only a wicked sinner and depraved heart could despise God for giving people a day off to rest. The ensured everyone got to rest their bodies from work and rest their souls by meditating on God. The Pharisees had so twisted the meaning of the Sabbath, men were in subjection to the Sabbath, rather than blessed by the Sabbath. But Jesus showed the true meaning of the law, revealed God's truth, and set men free from the bondage of legalism. Then, to illustrate the point, Jesus heals a man, demonstrating how God would have mercy and not sacrifice in these matters. How did the Pharisees react? **"Then the Pharisees went out, and held a council against him, how they might destroy him"** (Matt. 12:14).

The Lord Jesus lived a sinless life. He was perfect in every action, pure in every thought. Jesus never misspoke. Jesus never lost His temper and shouted things He wished to take back. Jesus did not live with the regret of wasted words, or wasted thoughts. Every day, every moment, His life was directed to loving the Father and doing His will and loving his

neighbors. He delighted to do the will of the Father. Jesus was not proud. He was not hypocritical. He always told the truth. He was never a false friend or never betrayed friend or enemy. He never disrespected Joseph or smarted off to Mary. There was no "rebellious phase." He was compassionate to the downcast. He was kind to the unkind. He loved the unlovable. He died for His enemies and made them His friends. What a glorious Saviour! Which makes these words, which are still true, so shocking. He is despised and rejected of men.



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day to go to the place of prayer? Whether it is in our cars on the way to work or kneeling at our bedside, we must follow the example of our blessed Lord and find a place of prayer where we can commune and speak with our Heavenly Father.

### THE PATTERN FOR PRAYER

**"And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth. Give us day by day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil"** (Luke 11:2-4).

In these verses Jesus gives the disciples a pattern or guideline for prayer that is pleasing to God. The fact that this passage differs from the one in Matthew six proves that the Lord was not necessarily teaching that the form of this prayer should be daily repeated, but rather that the guidelines

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set forth should be remembered. Prayer should not be entered into haphazardly. Our hearts and minds should be prepared to speak to the Most High. The pattern of prayer set forth by Jesus in these verses will enable us to approach the throne of God in the right spirit.

1. When we pray we are encouraged to address God as our Father. This immediately should flood our hearts with joy, wonder, and humility. Could it be that we who were once children of the devil, alienated from the life of God, and rebels against His holy laws could now be addressing the Most High as our Father? Every time we bow our unworthy heads and utter Father our minds should remember the great love our Father has bestowed upon us by saving us and washing us in the precious blood of His dear Son. Our hearts should burst with worship and thanksgiving of God for changing our lives and making us **“accepted in the beloved”** (Eph. 1:6). If He is our Father, then we must be the eternal objects of His love and favor. Every child delights to keep company and converse with a loving, compassionate Father. What an encouragement to spend much time conversing and communing with our Heavenly Father. He loves us, is concerned for our welfare, and delights in hearing us come to Him with our praise as well as our problems. If He is our Father, we are also reminded that He has authority over us and that we must render loving submission to Him in every area of our lives. How much our prayer lives would be enriched if we would only remember that the one we are praying to is our

Father!

2. Our Saviour then directs our minds to the dwelling place of God. Our Father excels all earthly Fathers because He is exalted above all, His dwelling place is in Heaven. There is none higher than God. He is the sovereign who dwells as a Majestic Monarch in Heaven. Our affections are to be set upon things above which is why Jesus directs us to pray to **“Our Father which art in heaven.”** When we understand that God is above all in sovereignty and power our spirit of murmuring and complaining should at once cease. The God who dwells above knows what is best for our lives and has written the chapters of Providence for our good and His glory. We are also reminded of the fact that if our Father is in Heaven He must know all our thoughts, hear all our words, and see all our actions. Hebrews 4:13 declares: **“Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.”** Such thoughts of His omniscience should inspire us to live holy lives.

3. The Saviour then reminds us that we are to hallow or reverence the name of God. If He is our Father who dwells as the Most High in the heavens, then His name is worthy of our deepest respect and reverence. Children bring shame upon the name of their earthly father through disobedience and inappropriate behaviour. If we are to reverence the name of God then we are to conduct ourselves as children who are desiring to bring honor rather than reproach upon His holy name. II Timothy 2:19 states: **“Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his, And, Let every**

**one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”** To hallow the name of God implies reverential fear. Proverbs 16:6 declares: **“By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: and by the fear of the LORD men depart from evil.”** All acceptable service to God is associated with godly fear as characterized by hallowing His name. Hebrews 12:28-29 declares: **“Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God is a consuming fire.”** Dear saint of God, when you take the name of God upon your lips in prayer, do you realize that He alone is worthy of your deepest respect and admiration? When others take His name in vain or speak lightly of Him, our hearts should be smitten and our ears should burn with righteous indignation. Obedient children are submissive, respectful children who cherish and honor the good name of their Heavenly Father.

4. We are instructed to pray for the coming of the Lord's kingdom. There is coming a grand and glorious Millennial day when God's will in Heaven will be executed upon the earth. The purpose of the earth will reach its grand consummation when Jesus Christ reigns as king upon it and the knowledge of the Lord shall be universal. It will be a time of unsurpassed spirituality, worship, and peace like the earth has never known or experienced. Alas, that day has not yet come, but the saints of God are directed to anticipate the glorious thousand year reign of Jesus upon the earth. One way in which the saints of God may show that they are anticipating the coming kingdom is to behave now as though they

were the loyal subjects of the King. We are presently part of a spiritual kingdom in which Christ is to reign supreme upon the throne of our hearts. We have been commissioned as ambassadors to show forth the glories of our King until He returns. How can we possibly show forth His glory if we are not joyfully and faithfully serving Him until He returns? Our attitudes and behaviour manifest whether or not we are His loyal subjects as Romans 14:17-18 implies: **“For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men.”** Jesus associated readiness for His coming with watchfulness and prayer in Matthew 24:42 and 44 which state: **“Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. . . Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.”** Jesus directs the saints to fervently attend the throne of grace in order to prepare them for the coming of the Lord.

5. We are then directed to pray each day for our daily bread or sustenance. Our dependence upon God and His care for us is implied by this petition. We are reminded that if we are to be sustained physically and spiritually on a day to day basis we must rely upon our God to nourish and strengthen us. How gracious our God is to provide His children with the things they have need of on a daily basis! He gives us food to enrich our bodies and the manna of Heaven (His Word) to enrich our souls. We are truly a people blessed of God and gratitude, appreciation, and a spirit of thankfulness should

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naturally flow from our lives.

6. The Lord then reminds us of our frailty. We are sinners who break God's righteous commands either by omission or commission on a daily basis. Because of our wanderings and disobedience we are to seek forgiveness from God in prayer. Prayers with no confession of sin and humility over our failings are not heard by God according to Psalms 66:18 which states: **"If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me."** God detests our sin because it breaks our fellowship with Him. But He delights when we openly and honestly confess our sins and restores us to fellowship and communion. How foolish it is for us to attempt to hide our sins from God and then expect Him to bless our lives. I John 1:8-9 declares: **"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."** Jesus instructs us to confess our sins and seek forgiveness from God because we will be spiritually prospered by so doing. Proverbs 28:13 states: **"He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy."** We are also reminded of the unfailing grace of God in this petition. Our hearts should be humbled when we think that God would be so gracious to forgive us when we fail Him. How thankful I am that God is not like men who harbor bitterness and resentment when you offend them. God freely forgives and restores to fellowship when we confess our sins and seek His forgiveness. There is no sin so black and foul that the blood of

the Lord Jesus Christ can't cleanse and forgive.

7. We are also reminded that effectual prayer can only be uttered when we have a forgiving spirit in our hearts toward those who have wronged or offended us. Jesus implies that He takes it for granted that we naturally forgive those who have offended us. God's people are not to harbor an unforgiving, bitter, resentful spirit. God will not bless such an attitude. Those who pray best are those who are able to humbly forgive the most. When we consider the amount and enormity of the sins that Christ has forgiven us of, then surely we will be able to find it in our hearts to forgive others of lesser offenses. We can expect little power and liberty in prayer where a spirit of unforgiveness and pride reigns supreme. May God teach us to emulate our Lord and follow the admonition of Ephesians 4:31-32 which states: **"Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."**

8. The last guideline included in Jesus's pattern in prayer is a recognition of our proneness to evil and our need to be delivered from it. If we are to conquer temptation to do evil we must daily be found on our knees humbly pleading with God to deliver us from it. Included in this petition is a desire to remove from our lives anything that would feed our fleshly lusts and cause us or others to stumble in our Christian walk. Romans 13:14 states: **"But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof."** Rather than promoting

our unlawful desires, we are to war against them as I Peter 2:11 commands us: **"Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul."** Our world is filled with ungodliness and temptation. Satan is a roaring lion who stalks the people of God desiring to ruin their testimony and effectiveness for the Lord. In order to combat these foes we must spend time in prayer asking God to deliver us from evil.

## THE POSITION OF PRAYER

**"And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him? And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee. I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth"** (Luke 11:5-8).

In these verses Jesus is illustrating the principle of the proper position that should be taken in prayer. The man who came to ask for the loaves of bread had nothing. He was in dire need of help so he sought assistance outside of himself. This must be the attitude that we approach the throne of grace with. We must recognize our own poverty if we are to enjoy the Lord's bountiful provision. When we come to God in prayer we are to take a position of humility, not demanding things of God, but rather humbly asking Him. Those who are filled with pride and self-sufficiency rarely pray aright.

Notice also that even though the man came at an inconvenient season of the night he knew that his request would be granted because he was approaching a friend. Even though his friend was reluctant to rive up and give him the bread, the man doing the asking obviously came to his door in faith expecting to receive something from his friend. Our position in prayer must not only be one of dependence and humility but also of faith. Hebrews 11:6 declares: **"But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."** If we are to be effective prayer warriors we must come to God in persevering faith, asking for things in faith, and expecting Him to answer in faith. James 1:6-7 declares: **"But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord."** Each time the Lord enables us to pray in faith we should anxiously await His answer and expect Him to undertake for us. God is pleased when we come to an end of our own self-reliance and come to Him expecting Him to miraculously intervene in our lives. Prayer is such a spiritual duty it must of necessity be linked with a position of genuine faith.

Notice also that the man was seeking to benefit someone besides himself. His desire for bread was not selfish. Rather he offered up supplication so that his visitors would be adequately fed. A proper position in prayer is to be found offering up supplications to God for others. We should not just pray for our own needs

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## The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

Submit your questions on any Bible topic.

1. Why was the temple veil rent at the death of Christ and not at His resurrection?

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Matthew 27:50-51 declares: **“Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent.”** The rending of the Temple veil after Christ had offered up His Spirit to the Father and died on the cross, signified that the work of redemption was finished. Jesus Christ, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, had completed the work His Father had given Him to do. His perfect life, obedience, merits, righteousness, and precious blood had been offered in the stead of all that the Father had given Him in the Covenant of Grace. The rending of the veil signified that the death of Jesus Christ was the fulfillment of all the Old Testament types and shadows relating to the worship of the Tabernacle and the Temple. The veil was torn from top to bottom, signifying it was a miraculous work of God alone. The veil was so thick that one Rabbi said that two teams of oxen would not have been able to tear it in two. Imagine how startled those were who witnessed this miraculous event! The veil was rent in twain, thus revealing the mystery of the Most

Holy Place, the ark with the mercy seat, and the symbolic presence of God. The blood shedding and death of the Lord Jesus Christ had opened up the way to God! There would be no more need of priests or yearly sacrifices to atone and cover sins. The Lord Jesus had just offered the one sacrifice that did not merely cover sin, but actually put away sin. Now all that Christ died for could come into the very presence of God by virtue of His perfect offering and precious blood. Hebrews 10:19-22 reveals: **“Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus. By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And having an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.”** Complete freedom, forgiveness, liberty, and access to God had been purchased for the elect by the blood of Jesus Christ.

The reason why the Temple veil was rent in twain in conjunction with the death of Christ is because the Temple veil was associated with the Day of Atonement when the high priest would offer the blood upon the mercy seat. It was a yearly sacrificial ritual that pointed in type to the death of the true Lamb of God, the Lord Jesus Christ. The rent veil signified that the redemptive, sacrificial work of Christ was finished on the cross. His resurrection from

the dead proved that the work was accepted and that all the sins of God's elect had been put away, thus securing for them justification and peace with God. Romans 4:25-5:2 states: **“Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.”** The significance of the rent veil was directly linked to Christ's death and blood shedding. His resurrection signified that His work had secured justification, peace, and everlasting life for all the elect.

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At my first reading of this question I was prepared to give this detailed answer about **“the holy place,”** the **“bells”** on the high priest robe, and our access to **“the holy place.”** But after I sat down and was prepared to answer the question I realized what the questioner was actually asking.

Before I answer the question, the veil being rent has always fascinated me and I am so blessed that it was. But to me it is not just that the veil was rent from top to bottom, **“And the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom”** (Mark 15:38), but the Saviour's final words (or saying) that blesses me the most.

It is ironic that John is the only

one of the four gospel writers that gives us these final words of Jesus. Also John is the only one of the four that does not mention the rending of the veil.

To answer this question we need to understand the importance of these final words that Christ spoke, **“It is finished.”** To answer that will answer the question being asked.

Concerning John 19:30 **“It is finished,”** A. W. Pink makes this statement, “Eternity will be needed to make manifest all that it contains.” So it will be impossible for me to give a complete discourse on this question. Rather I will give a short synopsis of why I believe the temple veil was rent at Christ's death and not at His resurrection.

**“When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost”** (John 19:30). When Jesus said, **“It is finished”** that is exactly what he meant. He finished all that was required of Him by God and the law. **“After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst”** (John 19:28). At this point God's wrath was appeased. Pink says this, “The costly ransom was given, the great conflict had been ended, sin's wages had been paid, Divine justice satisfied. True, there was the committal of His spirit into the hands of the Father, which immediately followed His word here; there was His resurrection, ascension, and session on high, but these are the fruit and reward of that work which He completed. Nothing more remained for Him to do; nothing more awaited its fulfillment; His work on earth was consummated.”

I agree, when Jesus said **“It is finished,”** it was! Everything was

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## The Berea Baptist Banner Forum

*Submit your questions on any Bible topic.*

2. Did Adam and Eve experience pain in the Garden of Eden before the fall?

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The first law in our study is that God is a Creator of perfection. Always. He did not create divinity or immutability in Adam and Eve, but He did create perfection. **“Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions”** (Eccl. 7:29). The choices that Adam and Eve made changed that perfection into ruin, but until sin entered via the fall of man in Genesis 3 after seventy-five years of paradise, there, simply put, was NO knowledge of evil, and that includes pain. Selah! Think about it!

The clearest revelation to what Adam and Eve's bodies were like before the fall, would be to examine the body of Eve's seed, the Messiah, Jesus Christ. Jesus was born of a virgin, because He could not have a “fallen nature or body” such as all of Adam's seed. As the Son of the woman/Eve and simultaneously, the Son of God, Christ Jesus was born with a body in that “prefall” condition that Adam, the first son of God, was also created in. Remember, Adam was created in the image of God (Gen.1:27). That would be after the pattern of Jesus Christ in His 100% human body. Selah! Think about it!

As we examine the human

body of Jesus, we notice that a big change was made at His death and resurrection. After that event, His body was glorified! It could appear/disappear at will (Luke 24:31, 36), did not need food/drink anymore to survive (John 21:13) and just naturally (or rather supernaturally) was what we expect in our future. **“So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory”** (I Cor. 15:54).

But the body that Jesus was “born” with is more analogous to Adam and Eve's bodies. External forces weighed upon Him in His earthly walk, in that His body was “able” to be weary (deprived of sleep- Luke 8:23); “able” to be hungry and thirsty (deprived of necessary food and drink- John 4); “able” to feel pain at His scourging, pummeling and ultimately His crucifixion (deprived of protection and defense- Matthew 27).

But that is the kicker here- all of these feelings of pain, hunger, thirst, weariness, etc were externally inflicted upon the body of Jesus, because of deprivation. Internally, He had not the corrupt blood composition of fallen Adam and Joseph, but rather the internal chemistry of primal Eve, through the virgin Mary, whom the Holy Ghost overshadowed in divine conception. The Son of Man, Who was the Son of God (Luke 3:38). In all of His thirty-three and a half years on this earth,

the son of Mary never got sick, because of His perfect immune system, that did not allow for “fallen” viruses, bacterias, etc within His pure red blood cells, plasma and hemoglobin. None of His body cells were depraved or “sin-infected,” so there was no possibility of cancer, heart disease, smallpox or any internal affliction in His pure body.

This is therefore, the original state of Adam and Eve. Pure, sinless and holy on the inside. But what about the outside? Externally is where all the woes came upon our Saviour in affliction, right? Nasty Pharisees, arrogant Romans, and even to a degree, the hot, dusty roads; the crowds of jostling disease-ridden Jewry and no place to lay His blessed head on cold, hard nights. That is where the suffering of Christ Jesus and His human body came in. So how would the external afflictions affect Adam and Eve's bodies?

Behold! the environment of the pristine Garden of Eden! Perfection was not only in the internal bodies of Adam and Eve, but the God of perfection had also created a perfect external milieu. **“The LORD is thy keeper: the LORD is thy shade upon thy right hand. The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night. The LORD shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul”** (Ps. 121:5-7). No hot, dusty roads to produce exhaustion or thirst. No crowds of diseased jostlers, no homeless wanderings for these choice citizens of Paradise. These naked bodies did not even need clothes (Gen. 2:25), much less blankets, walls or locked front doors. Every need was supplied, even before they could envision calling it a need. **“Be not ye therefore like unto**

**them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him”** (Matt. 6:8). God's sovereign protection and provision was the rule, with zero exceptions in the Garden of Eden.

Before the Fall, then, could Adam and Eve feel pain? Hypothetically, the answer is, yes, without a doubt. However, the nerve endings on their fingers, tongues and toes were used exclusively to explore, taste, feel and sensate at the vibrant wonders of their glorious world that God had created them for and into, perfection. Realistically, they could feel warmth, so their bodies were “capable” of being burnt. They could relish the “cool” evening (Gen. 3:8), so the sensory ability was also there to feel cold chills shiver down their spine. When the Fall occurred, the physical nature and composition of the first husband and wife would not have changed, else Christ in that same, litesome body would not have been “able” to feel heat, cold, pain and all of the myriad sensations this externally mutated Creation still yet has to offer.

The more wondrous question is whether Adam and Eve did feel pain, before the Fall? That answer is an unequivocal “NO!” Praise God! Their “uncursed bodies” in an “uncursed environment” would never know “evil” pain or “evil” anything, until the tree of knowledge of good and evil was violated. Before the Fall, we see the sovereignty of God in decree and purpose, not just Creation. **“Because thou hast made the LORD, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation; There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. For he shall give his angels charge over thee,**

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## Forum #1

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done! And as soon as that veil was rent, God's elect people had full access to the Throne of God, that holy place where only the high priest could go, was now given to us to go anytime we are pleased to do so, all because of the finished work of Jesus Christ. Praise the Lord!

It is ironic (but I am not real surprised, considering that is how the Holy Spirit works) that a few days after I read this question the following was the devotional for the morning reading from *Morning and Evening* by C. H. Spurgeon:

**“Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord”** (Zechariah 3:1).

In Joshua the high priest we see a picture of each and every child of God, who has been made nigh by the blood of Christ, and has been taught to minister in holy things, and enter into that which is within the veil. Jesus has made us priests and kings unto God, and even here upon earth we exercise the priesthood of consecrated living and hallowed service. But this high priest is said to be “standing before the angel of the Lord,” that is, standing to minister. This should be the perpetual position of every true believer. Every place is now God's temple, and his people can as truly serve him in their daily employments as in his house. They are to be always “ministering,” offering the spiritual sacrifice of prayer and praise, and presenting themselves a “living sacrifice.” But notice where it is that Joshua stands to minister, it is before the angel of Jehovah. It is only through a mediator that we poor defiled ones can ever become priests unto God. I present what I have before the messenger, the angel of the covenant, the Lord

Jesus; and through him my prayers find acceptance wrapped up in his prayers; my praises become sweet as they are bound up with bundles of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia from Christ's own garden. If I can bring him nothing but my tears, he will put them with his own tears in his own bottle for he once wept; if I can bring him nothing but my groans and sighs, he will accept these as an acceptable sacrifice, for he once was broken in heart, and sighed heavily in spirit. I myself, standing in him, am accepted in the Beloved; and all my polluted works, though in themselves only objects of divine abhorrence, are so received, that God smelleth a sweet savour. He is content and I am blessed. See, then, the position of the Christian—“a priest—standing—before the angel of the Lord.”

All this Christ did with those final words, **“It is finished!”** And not only that but we now have such a relationship with our God, **“For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father”** (Rom. 8:15). (“Abba” means “papa”—a term of endearment) that we can call Him “Papa,” all because of the finished work of Jesus Christ. God Bless!

ROGER REED



The temple veil represented the death or separation of man from God. When Jesus Christ suffered our merited death, it destroyed the separation between God and man, so the veil was rent between

the Holy and the Holiest of Holies. **“Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And having an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water”** (Heb. 10:19-22). Selah! Think about it!

The precise moment of the rending of the temple veil is at the second shout from our Saviour on the Cross. A comparison of the Gospel readings reveal this shout to be **“it is finished!”** **“Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent”** (Matt. 27:50-51). **“When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost”** (John 19:30). This shout was followed by Christ's final benediction from the cross in **“And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost”** (Luke 23:46).

So when the temple veil was rent, accompanied by the victorious cry of **“it is finished!”**, the Lord was telling all the world that the atonement was finished! The Passover Lamb had been provided by God and His Sacrifice was complete. The separation of God from His children was totally obliterated. The burden of the Law was fulfilled. The work of the Messiah in sovereign grace was achieved. The vicarious substitutionary death of Isaiah 53

was perfected. The Son of God had given His all—His blood and His life to the work of saving His people from their sins. **“It is finished!”** Symbolically, yet literally, the veil in the temple of God's worship was rent in twain. As Christ's body/veil was rent in twain. Selah! Think about it! You can see the glory now!

The ripping of the veil opened up the very person of God. The aura above the Mercy Seat where God promised to meet with His people (Ex. 25:22) was now accessible to ALL of God's children, not just the High Priest (Jesus Christ, both pictorially in the Old Testament, and manifest literally in the New Testament). Because of the blood, Christ emerged from behind the curtain in the glory of God, manifest in the flesh. He comes out to us, and we can go in to Him. Praise the Lord!

Sure, the resurrection was necessary in three days. Salvation is not complete without the whole picture of baptism—the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ, but the resurrection unto life was ALREADY assured by the power of Christ taking OUR death upon His immutable self to destroy it completely at the Cross of Calvary. **“It is finished!”** **“Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many”** (Matt. 27:50-53).

The veil was not rent at the resurrection, just as the graves were not then opened for these parabolic

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## Forum #1

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saints that God resurrected to validate Christ's resurrection. The power of the opened grave was secured at the invincible death of Jesus Christ. Freely, Christ was able to exit the grave, after the 72 hours from Wednesday night at 6pm to Saturday night at 6pm, because the battle was won on Calvary. So, too, these risen saints did not have to have the stone rolled away- the seal broken on resurrection day- the veil was already torn three days earlier, and the justification was triumphantly validated by the regenerating power of God that had no lawful detractors and no legal restraints any longer. **"And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead"** (Acts 17:30-31). The rent veil, above all else, says: **"It is finished!"** Selah! Think about it!

MATTHEW STEPP



## Forum #2

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**to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone"** (Ps. 91:9-12). They could not dash their foot against a stone.

How marvelous is that? Not that the toe was incapable of feeling pain as we carelessly stub it against a root jutting out into the road. But that angels had charge over Adam and Eve and God's predestined decrees would not ever allow the hammer

to hit the fingernail. It would always be painless and perfect. It would always be glorious joy forevermore. That is our future, no doubt, but as we zoom back in to Adam and Eve, it was just as surely, their past, as they looked in the rear-view mirror as they departed the garden of paradise. Now, both internal and external death (separation from God's presence and blessings) was released upon them as they plunged into the abyss of depravity. "Ouch!" was a new word in their vocabulary, as they stumbled into the thorny bushes to hide from God, the Holy Judge. "That hurts, Adam!" sorrows my imagination, as we now know the grief of pain, all too well. Selah! Think about it!

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This is a question that is largely speculative and philosophical. We do not have a clear indication from Scripture that Adam and Eve did or did not experience pain prior to the Fall.

The only hint that would lead me to believe that they did experience pain or at least the potential for experiencing pain is that God put Adam to sleep before removing one of his ribs in order to make Eve. Genesis 2:21-22 records: **"And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto**

**the man."** Why would God put Adam in a state of deep sleep prior to removing one of his ribs? Perhaps it is for the very same reason doctors use anesthesia on patients prior to surgery, to spare them the experience of pain. Perhaps God put Adam to sleep so that he would not experience the pain of opening his flesh and removing a rib.

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**"Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception, in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return"** (Gen. 3:16-19).

The above Scripture shows the results of Adam and Eve's sin. It is my belief that there was no pain or suffering before the fall. These Scripture's bear this out with the wording. God would not have had to tell Adam and Eve these things if they already existed. The result of sin brought these changes.

This is a quote from *The*

*Covenants of the Bible* from the chapter the Adamic Covenant by the late Milburn Cockrell:

"When Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit at the insistence of the serpent, their eyes were opened and they saw their nakedness. They made aprons of fig leaves to cover their shame. When the Lord came to visit with them, they hid from Him among the trees of the garden.

At the fall, man for the first time acquired a knowledge of the happiness of holiness and the misery of a sinful condition. Shame, remorse, and a sense of guilt feelings to which he had before been a stranger now filled his mind. Man had a conscience for the first time in his existence. By the opening of his eyes, I understand the eyes of the conscience which smote him for what he had done. He saw a loving God provoked and his nature corrupted. He was stripped and deprived of all the joys of the Paradise-state.

Before he sinned he welcomed the visits of the Almighty. Sin broke fellowship between God and man. This is why the visit of God was a terror to Adam. He had a guilty conscience which accused him. This is the period of time called by Bible scholars "the Dispensation of Conscience." It is well described in this manner; for ever since the fall man has been conscious of sin and holiness."

One day we will see the earth restored to its original condition, when all the sin has been purged with fire from its face. No sin of any kind will remain, and we will inhabit it once again as it was intended from the beginning (II Pet. 3). No pain, no suffering, no death, we will never experience these things again (Rev. 21:1-2). God Bless!

ROGER REED



# The Christian and

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to be met but also for the needs of others. We need to pray for those who are lost, those who are less fortunate, those who are backslidden, for other members of the church, for the pastor, and for our missionaries. The list of supplications that we could offer up on behalf of others is endless. May God grant us the grace to obey the admonition of Ephesians 6:18 which states: **"Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints."**

## PERSEVERANCE IN PRAYER

**"And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened"** (Luke 11:9-10).

The story of the importunate man and Jesus' comment upon the story illustrates the principle of perseverance in prayer. We are not merely to ask once and give up, or seek the Lord once and then forget it. We are to beseech God in perseverance for the things which lay heavy upon our hearts. We are to bombard Heaven with the prayers and supplications the Spirit of God has laid upon our hearts. God at times delays His answers to our prayers to develop patience and perseverance in us. How often are we guilty of giving up in prayer when we should be following the command of Christ in Luke 18:1 which states: **"...that men ought always to pray, and not to faint."** I Thesalonians 5:17 commands us to: **"Pray without ceasing."** As we patiently

persevere in prayer our hearts are encouraged and our faith is nourished when God answers and intervenes on our behalf in a miraculous way. Dear saint of God, don't give up on praying or upon God. Wait patiently upon Him, and He will grant the desire of your heart in His own time and in His own way.

## THE PROMISE OF PRAYER

**"If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"** (Luke 11:11).

There is a great promise associated with persevering prayer. If we ask, God will give. If we seek He will cause us to find. If we knock He will open. If we seek Him for our needs, as a Father we are promised in His Word that He will provide. We have an evil nature as human fathers, and yet we seek to meet the needs of our children. God is infinitely good and Holy. He has promised to meet our needs and answer our prayers that are according to His will.

I fear that we have allowed the Charismatics to rob us of the promises associated with prayer. Many times we don't receive simply because we don't ask. James 4:2-3 declares: **"...yet ye have not, because ye ask not, ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts."** We are not promised by God that He will answer our unlawful desires that will not profit our spiritual lives or further His cause. But we can be assured that if we ask

according to His will He will not only hear but grant our requests. Jesus promised this in John 14:13-14: **"And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it."** The only boundaries for prayer then is the honor and glory of God. If we begin to pray for growth in grace, more power in prayer, more faith, greater usefulness, a greater hatred of sin, holiness, etc. then we can be assured that God will hear and answer. Our problem is that we often do not pray with the promises of God and His will in mind. Rather we pray with an eye on our selfish desires. It is the height of folly to presume that God will answer our prayers when we ask amiss to consume our requests upon our own lusts. May God enable us to have a renewed confidence in the promise associated with scriptural praying. I John 5:14-15 declares: **"And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him."**

If we could only believe the promise associated with prayer how our prayer lives would be revitalized! We must take God at His Word and pray with earnestness and confidence in His promises. He is a good God who never fails to perform that which He has promised. May we take great comfort in that fact as we spend time on our knees.

## CONCLUSION

If the simple principles of prayer as taught by our Lord were studied and put into practice, I believe there would be an increased spirituality in our churches. There

would be more power to walk with God. Our faith would be nourished and strengthened as we witness the mighty hand of God answering our prayers. Dear reader, have you been praying? If not, why not? May God open our eyes to see what an important place prayer is to have in our lives. May God not just give you grace to read about prayer but to practice this sacred exercise on a daily basis. Then and only then can we expect the power of God to rest upon us and our churches.



## The Promise of

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taught us the specifics about how, when, why, and where to pray. In other words, He has promised to hear our prayers, but He has also levied certain requirements upon us---which requirements and truths we must uphold, if we desire that our God would hear and answer our prayers according to our expectations. So, let us look at some of the keys to answered prayer.

Certainly God will hear our prayers, and certainly He will answer our prayers. But from our perspective, we don't usually consider our prayers to be answered unless the precise result that we expect is delivered to us. Sometimes God does answer us in the exact way in which we expect Him to answer our prayers. However, many times He does not do exactly as we had anticipated Him doing, and perhaps the anticipated result is not completely realized.

I want us to be sure to understand that there is more to prayer than a simple request and then a fulfilling of that request in the way in which we desire. A lot of folks today---

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even many supposed Christians--tend to treat our God as if He were a modern day drive-thru. They seem to think that they can just put in their requests unto God and then they can pull up to the window and have their requests fulfilled. These folks must not realize just how wonderful, awesome, fearful and sovereign our God is! We must not come before Him on a whim! Nor should we take lightly the wonderful blessings of prayer!

It is true that God has promised to answer our prayers, but it is also true that He has given us instructions concerning our prayers. I think it would be good for us to look at some ways in which we can pray and consider our prayers to have been answered.

## BE FAITHFUL

One of the first aspects of prayer which we usually consider is the necessity of faith in prayer. The Lord Jesus Christ told His disciples, **"Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done. And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive"** (Matt. 21:21-22). The Lord wanted His disciples to believe in Him and to trust Him. He wanted them to have every confidence in his abilities to hear and answer their prayers. And I believe the Lord still expects the same attitude from us today.

We read in James 1:5-6: **"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But**

**let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed."** James also tells us in James 5:15, **"And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him."** If you notice, James, in all of these verses, speaks of prayers being answered as a result of faith. It wouldn't do us any good to pray to a God that we didn't believe could answer our prayers. And, any Christian that comes before the Throne of Grace without faith, is just as well off if he did not pray at all! Do not waver in your faith and confidence in God! Surely He can do anything that it is His will to do. Therefore, if we will pray unto Him and we will do so in faith, then we can trust that He will hear us and answer us.

In the Old Testament when Elijah brought the prophets of Baal together so that he could prove, in the sight of all Israel, that the Lord was God (see I Kings 18), we find that Baal could not even hear his followers. However, Elijah's God (and our God) not only heard Elijah, but He was also able to answer him.

When you look more closely at the Scriptures we have just read in the Book of James, you will notice that all of these things which are prayed for are things that it is right and proper and good for men to pray for. Now, we will talk some more about this later, but let me just say at this point that faith in prayer is necessary, but to pray for something that is approved of God (such as wisdom or health in sickness or the forgiveness of sins) is also necessary in order to be sure of the promise of answered prayer.

## KEEP HIS

## COMMANDMENTS

We read in I John 3:22: **"And whatsoever we ask, we receive**

**of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight."** God has placed certain requirements upon us as to what we should do. And God has placed certain restrictions upon us as to what we should not do. These are all included in His commandments unto us. When we abide by these commandments, then we can fully expect Him to hear our cries and answer our prayers.

David once said in Psalms 34:15, **"The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry."** The faithful and the righteous in this world are the ones that can expect to have their prayers answered. Surely, it would not do us much good to pray unto God--and expect Him to hear us and answer us---if we are willingly pursuing evil and contaminating ourselves with the sins of the world. Again we read in John 15:7, **"If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."** Those folks that will love and obey and keep the Word of God, will, when they pray, have their prayers answered in such a way as they might expect.

You know, it is always a pleasure to consider the fact that the Son of God prayed while He was here on this earth. As you think about this, it becomes obvious that He always received what He prayed for, because what He prayed for was in perfect conjunction with the will and the purpose of God. He always did what His Father sent Him to do---He did not vary from His commandments or expectations in the slightest way. If we conform ourselves to God in that same manner, we have the same assurances of answered prayer as what the Son of God did when He walked this earth during His earthly ministry.

## DO NOT ASK AMISS

Let's read what James has to say in James 4:1-3, **"From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts."** To me, this idea of asking amiss generally revolves around our fleshly desires. Sometimes we ask for things that we want, rather than for things that we need. This is a great problem in Christianity today. Christians today have a hard time distinguishing between their wants and their desires. We must be sure of our petitions before we offer them up. It is nearly sacrilegious to make a request of our sovereign God that is centered on a want or some selfish desire. It's not as if we are wasting His time, but the principle is the same.

And, when we are faithful unto God; and when we are righteous in our doings; and when we keep His commandments; then, I believe, we will find that we will more and more, ask for those things that we ought to ask for. In other words, if we will conform ourselves unto God, then we will find out that the occasions that we "ask amiss" will be fewer and fewer.

## ACCEPT HIS WILL

We read in I John 5:14-15, **"And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him."** This is hard for Christians to conform to as well. We are so accustomed to a religion that inserts man's will

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and his abilities at the top of our doctrines, that we have a difficult time subjecting our will to God's will, much less anyone else's will. However, to put it plainly, we do not always know best---but God does.

To me, this concept of submitting our will to the will of God is a part of the culmination of answered prayer. Surely, if we will grow and learn and behave ourselves in the Holy Spirit, then, inevitably, our will and our desires will be more and more in line with the will and desire of God Himself. Therefore, when we pray unto God---just as Jesus Christ did while He was here on this earth---our requests will be heard and answered, because they are the same desires that God Himself has!

Let's read Job 38:1-8, **"Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said, Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge? Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me. Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it? Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof; When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy? Or who shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth, as if it had issued out of the womb?"**

These verses demonstrate to us the futility and the absolute absurdity of any man thinking that he knows more than God when he prays. And yet, that is the attitude of probably the vast majority of Christians

today. Who are we to oppose the will and the desire of God? And yet, if we persist in asking amiss; or if we persist in asking for wants rather than needs, it is not likely that God will consistently answer our prayers.

I know that God instructs us to be persistent in our prayers---we read about this in Luke 18:1-8: **"And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint; Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?"** Certainly this widow woman was persistent in her requests and her desires. But, we can see that her requests and desires were also just and needful.

So, along with being persistent, our prayers should be in accordance with, and subject to, the will of God. We read about this in Mark 14:35-36, 39-41, **"And he went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt. . . And again he went away, and prayed, and spake the same**

**words. And when he returned, he found them asleep again, (for their eyes were heavy,) neither wist they what to answer him. And he cometh the third time, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: it is enough, the hour is come; behold, the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners."** In prayer, as in all things, the Lord Jesus Christ is our ultimate and best example. And, even as He submitted Himself to the will of God---and this is not a show of weakness, but rather, this is proof of subjection and obedience---even so, we should submit ourselves to the will of God, even in our prayers.

## HAVE A CLEAR CONSCIENCE

I suppose that to have a clear conscience is important in all of our service unto God. But, especially, we must be careful to cleanse our hearts and minds when we come into the presence of the Great King! We read in Mark 11:24-26, **"Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them. And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses."**

These verses mention the need for faith and belief in God. But, these verses also emphasize our need to forgive one another. How many church members do you know that will hold grudges against others---even against other brothers and sisters in Christ? And, how many churches do you know, where you can plainly see the animosity or lack of kindness between brothers and sisters in Christ? I have had folks tell me

that they cannot get along with this preacher or with this brother or with this sister. Don't you think that these thoughts and attitudes will impede the prayers of the saints of God? Ought we to not just frankly forgive our brothers and sisters? And, if not, then how can we expect our Father to forgive us our own sins? Are you and I pure enough that we condemn others of their sins against us, and expect that we have no sins for which God or man might have to forgive us?

I think that we do God and our brothers and sisters a disservice if we do not forgive one another, and seek to come before God with pure hearts, and with pure motivations. It is then, when we have sanctified our hearts and minds, and when we have cast out the distractions and the sins and the grudges of the flesh---it is then that we can come before God in prayer, and expect that He will hear us and answer us according to our desires.

## IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST

Finally, let's read what Jesus Christ had to say to His disciples in John 16:24. **"Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full."** While the Lord Jesus was here on this earth, His disciples did not pray in the name of Jesus Christ. But, since He has ascended into Heaven, and is, even now, on the right hand of God interceding on our behalf, it now behooves us to pray unto God in the name of Jesus Christ.

All of these other things that we have mentioned are very important. It is important that we have faith in God's power, that we obey God that we do not ask amiss, that we accept His will, and that we have a clear conscience. But, all of these things would not do us any good, if it were not for the fact

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that Jesus Christ has made the way clear for us! He has opened the very doors of Heaven, into the presence of God the Father. Now, we can come before Him and offer up our thanksgiving and praises; and we can come before Him and present our prayers and our supplications.

I think that it does us all good, every time we pray, to remind ourselves that prayer is a blessing and a privilege---and prayer is only granted to us through and by our blessed Saviour, Jesus Christ. Therefore, it is quite appropriate, that, when we pray, we announce unto God and to others that we are praying in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

## CONCLUSION

It is true that God promises to answer our prayers. When we pray to God, we have an invincible and sovereign God that we pray to. What a wonder and a comfort it is to have our God to pray unto! There is no other God like Him! Those of us that are saved are beneficiaries of the blessing of prayer---and we ought not to take this blessing for granted.

Think about this also: It is a blessing that God doesn't always give us what we want in exactly the way we desire it. He knows better than we what we need. I am glad that He does, and I am glad that when I don't pray for what I should or in the manner that I should, He still hears, and He answers my prayers in the way that they should be answered so that, ultimately, only His name is glorified. We read in Romans 8:26-27, "**Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be**

**uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God."**

Remember, if we pray according to the will of God, and if we do these other things that we have mentioned, our prayers most certainly will be answered and they will be answered in precisely the way that we expect them to be answered. However, when we don't pray in a way that reflects all of these things that we have talked about, our prayers are still heard and answered, but perhaps we don't receive what we anticipate, because we haven't observed all of the requirements of prayer. Only when our expectations are totally in line with God's expectations, can we expect our prayers to be answered according to our expectations. Don't let us be quick to speak against God when we don't get exactly what we request. The problem is not with Him, it is with us. And the answer that we receive is exactly the answer that we should receive. And, the answer that we receive is exactly what we should have been praying for all along---that God's will be done.

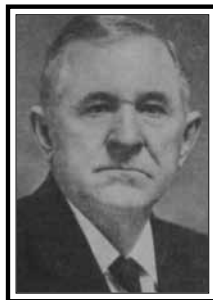


## Prayer

By J. W. Porter  
(1863 - 1937)

"Behold, he prayeth" (Acts 9:11).

In our great desire for organization and in magnifying methods, there is danger lest we forget the privilege and power of prayer. All of God's blessings are conditioned on prayer



and without faithful fervent prayer there can be no acceptable service. Perhaps, as never before, there is a crying need for a revival of the spirit and practice of prayer. A mighty revival, whether local or worldwide, is impossible without prayer. If a multitude of our churches would cease trying to "work up" a revival and earnestly strive to pray one down, they would meet with infinitely more of success. The truth is, many professed Christians have lost faith in prayer, and hence in a prayer-hearing and a prayer-answering God.

Probably no more pertinent question could be propounded than---What is prayer? It is not, as some seem to surmise, an address to the people in the presence of the Lord. All too often we "say our prayers" instead of praying. Paul had been "saying his prayers" for many years, but the first time he really prayed God looked down from His throne on high and said, "**Behold, he prayeth.**" Would God He might say the same thing of us, at this moment. Some of us are sadly conscious of the fact that many of our so-called prayers have been but perfunctory performances. There have been many definitions of prayer. One of the simplest and best perhaps is that it is "talking with God." Mr. Spurgeon has said that it is pulling the bell-rope and hearing the bell ring by the throne of God. Martin Luther, with his martial spirit, said that prayer was bombarding the heavens. Another saint has described it as "begging and thanking." This definition would probably be more complete had he said it was praising, thanking and begging. A poet claims that prayer is---

*"The soul's sincere desire,  
Unuttered or expressed."*

"What is prayer? The converse of the soul with God. Faith speaking to God. As our senses put us in

connection with visible things so does faith with things unseen; and prayer is the voice of faith. Faith pleading with God. The utterance of strong desire, pleading with prevailing arguments and irresistible warrants."

It is worthy of note that man is the only being that prays. The lower animals are blessed with instinct, but not with the instinct to pray. Yet man prays instinctively, even the unregenerate man. It is natural for the little child to pray and just as natural for the aged man or woman. We may repress the instinct to pray, but when all else fails we turn to prayer. The origin of prayer was probably with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. We know that there were sacrifices in the time of Abel and there could have been no sacrifice without sacrificial prayers. As it has been said, we do not read that men began to "**call upon the name of the Lord**" until after Seth was born, but we may be quite sure this was not the origin of prayer. There has been no nation where prayer of some kind has not been known. Pythagoras said:

*"In all thou dost, first let thy prayers ascend,*

*And to the gods thy labours first commend;*

*From them implore success, and hope a prosperous end."*

The Christian finds ample authority for prayer in the fact that Christ commands it and commends it, and is ever ready to listen to the supplications of His children. In the Kensington Museum there is a picture of Dr. Johnson waiting outside in the anteroom of royalty, waiting his turn for an audience. The King of kings never keeps us waiting, but will give us a hearing at any moment. Martin Luther says: "I have so much business today that I shall not be able to get through it with less than three

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hours' prayer." Many of us, under like pressure, would have been disposed to have made the three hours three minutes. If we expect God to guide us we must ask His guidance. The pillar of cloud and fire await us for the asking. In *The Victory Life* there appears the story of Dr. J. J. Lucas, who was for forty-five years a missionary in India. Dr. Lucas says: "The most real thing in my life is the sense and presence of God's guidance." In 1870 he was under appointment to go as missionary to India. Word was sent to him and ten other missionaries who were to accompany him to be ready to sail October 8<sup>th</sup> on the steamship *Cambria*. Passage had been engaged and all were ready to go. It was then urged that they remain over Sunday and be given a farewell service. The missionaries listened to the entreaty and agreed to remain. The party finally sailed on October 12<sup>th</sup>. The *Cambria* went down at sea and all were lost save one, and he, when rescued, was demented.

"Chinese" Gordon used to put a handkerchief at the opening of his tent when he prayed, thus saying to the world he must not be disturbed when he was talking to God. Let the soul alone in the "closet" whisper its longings into the listening ears of the Eternal.

*"The way is dark, my Father! Cloud on cloud*

*Is gathering thickly o'er my head, and loud*

*The thunders roar above me. See I stand,*

*Like one bewildered! Father, take my hand,*

*And through the gloom*

*Lead safely home, Thy child."*

Well may we ask how should we pray. First of all, and above all, we should entreat the Lord to **"teach**

**us to pray."** We may cultivate the act of praying; but God only can teach us the science of prayer. There are, however, some things that are absolutely essential to prevailing prayer. Among these faith probably deserves the first place. Whatever else prayer may require, faith is absolutely essential. It is at this point that a multitude of our prayers miscarry. Probably the greatest surprise that could come to some people would be for God to answer their prayers. Many even forget what they pray for. It is hardly reasonable to expect God to remember what we ask for when we ourselves forget it. As faith without works is dead, so is prayer without faith. God will not regard the prayer that is not made in fervent faith. If we would exercise the same faith in our Heavenly Father that the child has in the earthly parent, God would hear and answer our prayers. We should confidently look for and expect an answer to our prayers. Just as one writes a letter and expects an answer, so should we expect a reply to our prayers. The little girl that prayed that God would send her brother and then went home and brought him, demonstrated a real faith in her prayers. It is told of an engineer that a woman asked him what time his train was due at a certain station. He told her the time the train was due, to which she replied, "My daughter is dying and that will be twenty minutes too late." The old engineer went to the telegraph office and obtained permission to run twenty minutes ahead of time. Passing the woman on the way to his engine, he said, "Get aboard; if God will give me ten minutes, I will make up the other ten minutes." It is our duty to pray according to our ability and to get up from our knees and help God answer our prayers.

We should pray in real earnest. Cold prayers never warmed a

human heart or moved the heart of God. It is said that one went to Demosthenes and asked him to plead his cause. He heard him without attention while he told his story without earnestness. The man, noting his inattention, cried out, "It is true." "Ah," said Demosthenes, "I believe you now." Jacob wrestling with the angel through the lonely night is a splendid example of earnest prevailing prayer. Daniel, in spite of the royal decree, with his windows opened towards Jerusalem, inspires us to faith in earnest prayer.

Martin Luther heard that Melancthon was dying. When he approached the bedside the symptoms of death were quite apparent. Melancthon aroused himself and seeing Luther said: "Oh, Luther, is this you? Why don't you let me depart in peace?" "We can't spare you, Philip," was the reply. Luther fell upon his knees and wrestled with God for more than an hour for the recovery of his friend. Again Melancthon said, "Dear Luther, why don't you let me depart in peace?" The reply was, "We cannot spare you yet." Luther then ordered some nourishment, which was refused with the question, "Dear Luther, why will you not let me go home and be at rest?" Luther then added, "Take this soup or I will excommunicate you." He took the soup and soon regained his wonted strength. When Luther returned home he said to his wife, "God gave me my brother Melancthon back in direct answer to prayer." Who will doubt but that his life was graciously spared in answer to the prayer of his friend?

*"Oh, how praying rests the weary,  
Prayer can turn the night to day;  
Ere you left your room this morning,  
Did you think to pray?"*

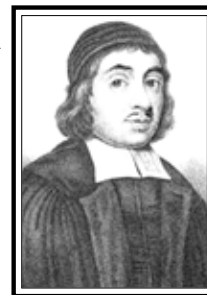


# A Godly Man Is A Praying Man

By Thomas Watson  
(1620 - 1686)

**"Everyone that is godly shall pray unto thee"** (Ps. 32:6).

As soon as grace is poured in, prayer is poured out: **"but I give myself unto prayer"** (Pa. 109:4).



In the Hebrew it is, "but I prayer." Prayer and I are all one. Prayer is the soul's traffic with heaven. God comes down to us by His Spirit, and we go up to Him by prayer. Caligula placed his images in the

Capitol whispering in Jupiter's ear; prayer whispers in God's ear. A godly man cannot live without prayer. A man cannot live unless he takes his breath, nor can the soul, unless it breathes forth its desires to God. As soon as the babe of grace is born, it cries; no sooner was Paul converted than **"behold, he prayeth"** (Acts 9:11). No doubt he prayed before, being a Pharisee, but it was either superficially or superstitiously. But when the work of grace had been done in his soul, behold, now he prays.

A godly man is on the mount of prayer every day; he begins the day with prayer; before he opens his shop, he opens his heart to God. We burn sweet perfumes in our houses; a godly man's house is 'a house of perfume'; he airs it with the incense of prayer; he engages in no business without seeking God. Scipio never entered the Senate House without first ascending the Capitol, where he did his

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# A Godly Man Is

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devotions. A godly man consults God in everything; he asks His leave and His blessing. The Greeks asked counsel at their oracles; so a godly man enquires at the divine oracle (Gen. 24:12; I Sam. 23:3-4). A true saint continually shoots up his heart to heaven by sacred ejaculations.

**Question:** Is prayer a sign of a godly man? May not a hypocrite pray eloquently and with seeming devotion?

**Answer:** He may: "they seek me daily" (Isa. 58:2). But a hypocrite does not pray "in the Spirit" (Eph. 6:18). A man may have the gift of prayer, and not have the spirit of prayer.

**Question:** How shall we know that we have the spirit of prayer?

**Answer:** When the prayer which we make is spiritual.

**Question:** What is it to make a spiritual prayer?

**Answer 1:** When we pray with knowledge. Under the law, Aaron was to "**light the lamps**" when he burned the incense on the altar (Ex. 30:7). Incense typified prayer, and the lighting of the lamps typified knowledge. When the incense of prayer burns, the lamp of knowledge must be lit: "**I will pray with the understanding**" (I Cor. 14:15). We must know the majesty and holiness of God, so that we may be deeply affected with reverence when we come before Him. We must put up such petitions as are exactly adequate and agreeable to God's will. "**Be not rash with thy mouth, to utter any thing before God**" (Ecc. 5:2). The Lord would not have the blind offered to him (Mal. 1:8). How can we pray with affection when we do not pray with judgment? The Papists pray in an unknown tongue. Christ may reply to them as he did to the mother of

Zebedee's children, "**Ye know not what ye ask**" (Matt. 20:22). He that prays he knows not how, shall be heard he knows not when.

**Answer 2:** A spiritual prayer is when the heart and spirit pray; there are not only words but desires. It is excellent when a man can say, "Lord, my heart prays." Hannah prayed "**in her heart**" (I Sam. 1:13). The sound of a trumpet comes from within and the excellent music of prayer comes from within the heart. If the heart does not accompany duty, it is speaking, not praying.

**Answer 3:** A spiritual prayer is a fervent prayer: "**The effectual fervent prayer . . . availeth much**" (Jas. 5:16). The heart, like the mainspring, should carry the affections in a most zealous and rapid manner; fervency is the wing of prayer by which it ascends to heaven. Prayer is expressed by sighs and groans (Rom. 8:26). It is not so much the gifts of the Spirit as the groans of the Spirit which God likes. Prayer is called a "**wrestling**" (Gen. 32:24) and a "pouring out of the soul" (I Sam. 1:15). Prayer is compared to incense (Ps. 141:2). Incense without fire makes no sweet smell. Prayer without fervency is like incense without fire. Christ prayed with "strong crying and tears" (Heb. 5:7); crying prayer prevails. When the heart is inflamed in prayer, a Christian is carried as it were in a fiery chariot up to heaven.

**Answer 4:** A spiritual prayer is such as comes from a broken heart: "**The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit**" (Ps. 51:17). The incense was to be beaten to typify the breaking of the heart in prayer. It is not the voluble tongue but the melting heart which God accepts. "Oh," says a Christian, "I cannot pray like others." As Moses said to the Lord, "**I am not eloquent.**" But can you weep and sigh? Does your

soul melt out at your eyes? God accepts broken expressions when they come from broken hearts. I have read of a plant that bears no fruit, but it weeps forth a kind of gum which is very costly. So, though you do not flourish with those gifts and expressions like others, yet if you can weep forth tears from a contrite heart, these are exceedingly precious to God, and He will put them in His bottle. Jacob wept in prayer and had "**power over the angel**" (Hosea. 12:4).

**Answer 5:** A spiritual prayer is a believing prayer: "**whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive**" (Matt. 21:22). The reason why so many prayers suffer shipwreck is because they split against the rock of unbelief. Praying without faith is shooting without bullets. When faith takes prayer by the hand, then we draw near to God. We should come to God in prayer like the leper: Continued from page 44 "**Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean**" (Matt. 8:2). It is a disparagement to Deity to have such a whisper in the heart, that "God's ear is heavy and cannot hear" (Isa. 59:1). What is said of the people of Israel may be applied to prayer— "**They could not enter in because of unbelief**" (Heb. 3:19).

**Answer 6:** A spiritual prayer is a holy prayer: "Wherefore lift up pure hands" (I Tim. 2:8). Prayer must be offered on the altar of a pure heart. Sin lived in makes the heart hard and God's ear deaf. Sin stops the mouth of prayer. It does what the thief does to the traveler— puts a gag in his mouth so that he cannot speak. Sin poisons and infests prayer. A wicked man's prayer is sick of the plague, and will God come near him? The lodestone loses its virtue when it is spread with garlic; so does prayer when it is polluted with sin. "**If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord**

**will not hear me**" (Ps. 66:18). It is foolish to pray against sin and then to sin against prayer. A spiritual prayer, like the spirits of wine, must be refined and taken off the lees and dregs of sin: "that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness" (Mal. 3:3). If the heart is holy, this altar will sanctify the gift.

**Answer 7:** A spiritual prayer is a humble prayer: "**LORD, thou hast heard the desire of the humble**" (Ps. 10:17). Prayer is the asking of an alms, which requires humility: "**the public an, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner**" (Luke 18:13). God's incomprehensible glory may even amaze us and strike a holy consternation into us when we approach near to Him: "**O my God, I . . . blush to lift up my face to thee**" (Ezra 9:6). It is comely to see a poor nothing lie prostrate at the feet of its Maker. "**Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes**" (Gen. 18:27). The lower the heart descends, the higher the prayer ascends.

**Answer 8:** A spiritual prayer is when we pray in the name of Christ. To pray in the name of Christ is not only to name Christ in prayer, but to pray in the hope and confidence of Christ's mediation. As a child claims his estate in the right of his father who purchased it, so we come for mercy in the name of Christ, who has purchased it for us in His blood. Unless we pray thus, we do not pray at all; no, we rather provoke God. As it was with Uzziah, when he wanted to offer incense without a priest. God was angry and struck him with leprosy (II Chron. 26:16-19). So when we do not come in Christ's name in prayer, we offer up incense without

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# A Godly Man Is

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a priest, and what can we expect but to meet with wrath?

**Answer 9:** A spiritual prayer is when we pray out of love to prayer. A wicked man may pray, but he does not love prayer. **“Will he delight himself in the Almighty?”** (Job 27:10). A godly man is carried on the wings of delight. He is never so well as when he is praying. He is not forced with fear but fired with love. I will **“make them joyful in my house of prayer”** (Isa. 56:7).

**Answer 10:** A spiritual prayer is when we have spiritual goals in prayer. There is a vast difference between a spiritual prayer and a carnal desire. The goals of a hypocrite are secular and carnal. He looks askint in prayer. It is not the sense of his spiritual needs that moves him but rather lust. **“Ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts”** ( Jas. 4:3). The sinner prays more for food than for grace. This, God does not interpret as praying but as howling: **“ They howled upon their beds: they assemble . . . for corn and wine”** (Hosea 7:14). “Give me only riches” (Ovid). Prayers which lack a good aim lack a good answer. A godly man has spiritual goals in prayer. He sends out his prayer as a merchant sends out his ship, so that he may have large returns of spiritual blessings. His design in prayer is that his heart may be more holy and that he may have more communion with God. A godly man engages in the trade of prayer so that he may increase the stock of grace.

**Answer 11:** A spiritual prayer is accompanied with the use of means. There must be works as well as prayer. When Hezekiah was sick he did not only pray for recovery, but he laid “a lump of figs to the boil” (Isa. 38:21). Thus it is in

the case of the soul when we pray against sin and avoid temptations. When we pray for grace and use opportunities to the full, this is laying a fig on the boil which will make us recover. To pray for holiness and neglect the means is like winding up the clock and taking off the weights.

**Answer 12:** A spiritual prayer is that which leaves a spiritual mood behind upon the heart. A Christian is better after prayer. He has gained more strength over sin, as a man by exercise gets strength. The heart after prayer keeps a tincture of holiness, as the vessel favors and relishes the wine that is put into it. Having been with God on the mount, Moses’ face shone. So, having been on the mount of prayer, our graces shine and our lives shine. This is the sign of a godly man—he prays in the Spirit. This is the right kind of praying. The gift of prayer is ordinary, like culinary fire. But spiritual prayer is more rare and excellent, like elemental fire which comes from heaven.

**Use 1:** Is a godly man of a praying spirit? Then this excludes from being godly:

1. *Those who do not pray at all.* Their houses are unhallowed houses. It is made the note of a reprobate that “he calls not upon God” (Ps. 14:4). Does that poor creature who never asks for alms think that he will get any? Do those who never seek mercy from God think that they will receive it? Truly, then God should befriend them more than He did His own Son. “He offered up prayers and supplications with strong cries” (Heb. 5:7). None of God’s children are tongue-tied. **“Because ye are sons. God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father”** (Gal. 4:6). Creatures by the instinct of nature cry to God: **“the young ravens which cry”** (Ps. 147:9). “The lions

seek their meat from God” (Ps. 104:21). Not to cry to God is worse than brutish.

2. *Others pray, but it is seldom*—like that profane atheist of whom Heylin speaks, who told God that he was no common beggar; he had never troubled Him before and if He would hear him now, he would never trouble Him again.

3. *Others pray, but not “in the Holy Ghost”* ( Jude 20). They are more like parrots than weeping doves. Their hearts do not melt in prayer: they exercise their inventiveness more than their affection.

**Use 2 :** As you would prove the new birth, cry **“Abba, Father”**; be men of prayer. Pray at least twice a day. In the temple there was the morning and evening sacrifice. Daniel prayed three times a day. No, he so loved prayer that he would not neglect prayer to save his life (Dan. 6: 10). Luther spent three hours every day in prayer.

**Objection :** But what need is there of prayer, when God has made so many promises of blessings?

**Answer :** Prayer is the condition annexed to the promise. Promises turn upon the hinge of prayer: **“I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel”** (Ez. 36:37). A king promises a pardon, but it must be sued for. David had a promise that God would build him a house, but he sues for the promise by prayer (II Sam. 7:25). Christ Himself had all the promises made sure to Him, yet He prayed and spent whole nights in prayer.

Therefore if you would be counted godly, be given to prayer. Prayer sanctifies your mercies (II Tim. 4:5). Prayer weeds out sin and waters grace.

That I may encourage Christians and hold up their heads in prayer, as Aaron and Hur held up Moses’ hands (Ex. 17:12), let me propound these few considerations:

1. *Prayer is a seed sown in God’s*

ear. Other seed sown in the ground may be picked up by the birds, but this seed (especially if watered with tears) is too precious to lose.

2. *Consider the power of prayer.* The apostle, having set out the whole armor of a Christian, brings in prayer as the chief part (Eph. 6:18). Without this (says Zanchius), all the rest are of little value. By prayer, Moses divided the Red Sea. Joshua stopped the course of the sun and made it stand still ( Josh. 10:13). No, prayer made the Sun of righteousness stand still: **“And Jesus stood still”** (Matt. 20:32). Prayer is the entrance to all blessings, spiritual and temporal. When Aurelius Antonius went against the Germans, he had in his army a regiment of Christians, who upon their earnest prayer obtained rain for the refreshment of his army and because of the power of their prayers, he called them “the thundering regiment.” Prayer has a power in it to destroy the insolent enemies of the church. We read that **“the two witnesses”** have a flame on their lips—fire proceeds out of their mouths which devours their enemies (Rev. 11:3, 5). This fire is certainly to be interpreted of their prayers. David prayed, **“Lord . . . turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness”** (II Sam. 15:31). This prayer made Ahithophel hang himself. Moses’ prayer against Amalek did more than Joshua’s sword. Prayer has a kind of omnipotency in it; it has raised the dead, overcome angels, cast out devils. It has influence upon God Himself. Jacob’s prayer held God: **“I will not let thee go, except thou bless me”** (Gen. 32:26). Prayer finds God free, but leaves him bound.

3. *Jesus Christ prays over our prayers again.* He takes the dross out and presents nothing but pure gold to His Father. Christ mingles

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# A Godly Man Is

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His sweet odors with the prayers of the saints (Rev. 5:8). Think of the dignity of His person—He is God; and the sweetness of His relationship—He is a Son. Oh then, what encouragement there is here for us to pray! Our prayers are put in the hands of a Mediator. Though, as they come from us, they are weak and imperfect, yet as they come from Christ, they are mighty and powerful.

4. **The sweet promises which God has made to prayer:** “he will be very gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry” (Isa. 30:19). **“Then shall . . . ye go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart”** (Jer. 29:12,13); and **“before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear”** (Isa. 65:24). These promises keep the head of Continued from page 45 prayer above water. God is bound with His own promises, as Samson was bound with his own hair. Let us, then, close ranks and with our Saviour pray yet more earnestly (Luke 22:44).

Let us be importunate suitors, and resolve with Bernard that we will not come away from God without God. Prayer is a bomb which will make heaven's gates fly open.

**Question:** How shall we go about praying aright?

**Answer:** Implore the Spirit of God: **“praying in the Holy Ghost”** (Jude 20). The Holy Ghost both indites prayer and inflames it. God understands no other language but that of His Spirit. Pray for the Holy Ghost that you may pray in the Holy Ghost.

# Requirements In

(Continued from page 24) ♦

**ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.”**

Then in I John 5:14 we read, **“This is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask anything ACCORDING TO HIS WILL, he heareth us”** (emph. EGC). It must be according to His will. And in James 1:6-7 we read, **“Let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.”** If we cannot believe that we will receive the thing we are asking for it is better for us not ask for it at all. But if we are to qualify as one who is effectual in his prayer life, here is the clincher, **“If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you”** (John 15:7). This word **“abide”** (MENO) means to continue in. It does not mean that we can pay our Lord a visit on Sunday, and keep His Word in us during the Sunday School hour and still receive what we ask for. It means that we are to just be at home in Christ, He is talking about fellowship with Him here. We must continue in sweet fellowship with our dear Lord, and keep His Words ever at hand if we would prevail in prayer.

## TO SUM IT ALL UP

For us to be able to pray an effectual prayer we must first be born again. We must pray to the Father in the name of, or on the merits of Jesus Christ, and according to His will. It must be done in, and by, the power of the Holy Spirit, and in all humility. It must be specific, and at the same time it must be in according with His will and His Word. It must be

earnest (not frantic), and whole heartedly. It must be in faith, nothing wavering. Unless we can believe that we will receive it, we should not ask for it. To ask just to be asking without faith is sinful. We should always thank God for past blessings before we ask for more of them. He likes to be appreciated you know. We must keep His teachings, and do the things that are pleasing to Him, and we must continue to just be at home in Him, and to just let His Word be at home in us if we are to prevail with Him in prayer.

Is it any wonder that so many prayers never get through the ceiling? Is it any wonder that so many who call themselves praying never get an answer? God does not play with us, so let us ask ourselves, Do I qualify for effectual praying?



## BEREA BAPTIST BANNER Financial Report 11-1-2018 to 11-30-2018

Beginning Balance .....	\$1,622.47
<b>RECEIPTS:</b>	
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS .....	300.00
Berea B. C., Stonington, IL .....	60.00
Bethel B. C., Pasadena, TX .....	50.00
Big Creek B. C., Wayne, WV .....	200.00
Briar Creek B. C., Williamsburg, KY .....	150.00
Bruce Allen, Fairmount, GA .....	25.00
Carol Willett, Edgewater, FL .....	50.00
Citrus M. B. C., Inverness, FL .....	25.00
Emmanuel B. C., Oldtown, KY .....	100.00
Faith B. C., Lynn, AR .....	12.50
Gail Knowles, Scarborough, ME .....	20.00
Gary Fields, Dublin, GA .....	20.00
Grace B. C., Rural Hall, NC .....	50.00
Grace M. B. C., Tulsa, OK .....	35.00
Indore B. C., Indore, WV .....	100.00
Landmark B. C., Moncks Corner, SC .....	100.00
The Lord's Church, Goose Creek, SC .....	50.00
Michael Sherman, Ashland, KY .....	35.00
Mt. Pleasant B. C., Chesapeake, OH .....	400.00
New Testament B. C., Goshen, IN .....	100.00
Philadelphia B. C., Decatur, AL .....	100.00
Portland B. C., Plumerville, AR .....	50.00
Southside B. C., Fulton, MS .....	25.00
Sovereign Grace B. C., Silsbee, TX .....	30.00
Victory B. C., Courtland, VA .....	25.00
Subscriptions .....	300.00
Dividing checks .....	150.00
Sub Total .....	\$2,592.50
TOTAL .....	\$4,214.97
<b>EXPENDITURES:</b>	
Printing .....	490.00

Postage .....	494.42
Wages .....	2,300.00
FICA .....	175.96
Dividing checks .....	150.00
Bank Charge .....	13.00
Total Expenditures .....	\$3,623.38
ENDING BALANCE .....	\$591.59

## BEREA BAPTIST BROADCAST Financial Report

11-1-2018 to 11-30-2018

Beginning Balance .....	\$1,649.27
<b>RECEIPTS:</b>	
Berea B. C., Mantachie, MS .....	225.00
Briar Creek, Williamsburg, KY .....	100.00
Calvary I. B. C., Sumas, WA .....	100.00
TOTAL .....	425.00
<b>EXPENDITURES:</b>	
Radio Time .....	363.98
Bank charge .....	10.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURES .....	373.98
Interest .....	+02
ENDING BALANCE .....	\$1,700.31

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Grace Landmark Baptist Church of Buckhannon, WV, is seeking a pastor. The church is Sovereign Grace and Landmark in doctrine and practice. Any interested called pastor of like faith may contact Brother Brad Butcher at (304) 669-4738 or (304) 745-6226.

\*\*\*\*\*

The Philadelphia Baptist Church of Decatur, Alabama is seeking the Lord's guidance in calling His eternally appointed man to fill the vacancy left when He called His faithful servant Elder Wm. Doyal Thomas unto his everlasting home September 29, 2018.

If any brother of like faith and order would like to be considered for that pastorate or would like information on the church please call or text Brother Mike Gibson at 256 303-7747 or email Brother James Reynolds at admin@pbcofdecaturalabama.org. or text (ONLY) 931 452-1158.

\*\*\*\*\*

The Lord's Baptist Church in Tacoma Washington is in need of a pastor. For more information please contact Gaylen Russell at 360-879-5565 (home) or 253-495-4567 (cell) or by Email: gaylenr@rainierconnect.com.

\*\*\*\*\*

The Sovereign Grace Baptist Church of Caldwell, KS is in need of a pastor. For more information please contact the church in writing at SGBC, 400 N. Main St., Caldwell, KS 67022, or by phone Brother Darin Wiley 620-863-2431.

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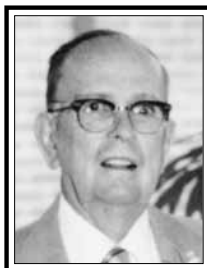
The Victory Baptist Church of Chehalis, Washington is in need of a pastor. Any interested brother may call Gerry Greisen at (360) 985-7975, or Mark Fenison at (360) 751-2929.

\*\*\*\*\*

The Faith Missionary Baptist Church of Cobbitty, South Wales, Australia is in need of a pastor. For more information please contact David Jackson at 4 Station Street, Thirlmere, NSW 2572, Australia or Email: shellie45@bigpond.com.au.

## Requirements In Order to Pray an Effective Prayer

By E. G. Cook  
(1898 - 1986)



All of us should be interested in just what requirements we must meet in order for us to be able to pray an effective prayer. So may we consider some of those requirements? David says in Psalm 5:3, **"In the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee."** So our prayer is to be directed to God. In Psalm 65:2 he says, **"O thou that hearest prayer."** David says God is the one who hears prayer, but under just what condition does He hear our prayer? Jesus Christ says in Matthew 7:7, **"Ask and it shall be given you."** On the surface this seems to be a blank check that we can just fill out to our heart's content. But Peter tells us in II Peter 1:20 that **"no prophecy of scripture is of any private interpretation."** This does not mean that we must go to the Catholic Church, or any other church in order to get the interpretation of a Scripture. It simply means that we are to interpret any given Scripture in the light of all the other Scriptures on the subject.

So, under what conditions can we ask and it shall be given us? Jesus says in Matthew 21:22, **"All things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, BELIEVING, ye shall receive"** (emph. EGC). So one of the conditions that we must meet is that we must believe that we will receive the thing we are asking for. But who is it that believes? In John 9:31 we read, **"We know that**

**God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and DOETH HIS WILL, him he heareth"** (emph. EGC). The Psalmist says in Psalm 80:18, **"Quicken us** (that is, make us alive spiritually), **and we will call upon thy name."** We see here that we must first be born again, be a worshipper of God, and be doing His will. But there are still other requirements that we must meet. In Psalm 10:17 we read, **"LORD, thou hast heard the desire of the humble."** So humility is another requirement that is essential to effective praying.

Then in Philippians 4:6 one translation says, "Don't worry over anything whatever; tell God every detail of your needs in earnest and thankful prayer." So another requirement is that we must not worry. It is a sin for us to worry when we are told not to do that. A person simply cannot worry and trust God at the same time. Those two things just do not go together.

Now that we have seen some of the requirements for effective praying let us consider how we are to pray. In Ephesians 6:18 we read **"Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit."** This simply means that we must thank and praise our wonderful God for past blessings before we supplicate (or ask) for more blessings. And it must be done in the Spirit, that is, we must let the Holy Spirit guide us in our praying. Then in Psalm 119:58 David says, **"I entreated thy favour with my whole heart."** There is no place for half-hearted praying. Then when we have met the requirements we are told in Hebrews 4:16 to **"Come boldly unto the throne of grace."** But, as we come to the throne of grace boldly let us remember it must be done in humility and whole

heartedly. Then in Luke 18:1 Jesus says, **"Men ought always to pray, and not to faint."** That is when we have met the requirements we should not become despondent and quit praying because God does not answer our prayer immediately. In Daniel 10, Daniel prayed for three weeks before the answer came. And the one who hindered the answer to Daniel's prayer is still in the hindering business today.

Then on what ground should we pray? Paul says in Ephesians 2:18 **"Through Him (Jesus Christ) we both (Jew and Gentile) have access by one Spirit unto the Father."** We go to the Father through the Son, in the power of the Holy Spirit. In John 16:23 Jesus says, **"In that day (this church age) ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you."** For us to ask in His name means much more than to just tack on His name at the end of our prayers. It includes His merit before the Father, and, furthermore, it means to be in accord with His will as set forth in His Word. In John 14:13-14 Jesus says, **"Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it."** In John 16:23 He says the Father will give it you, He says He will do it, but there is no contradiction here. In John 10:30 He says, **"I and my Father are one."** By that He means they are one in purpose and in performance. What one does the other does. In John 15:16 we read, **"Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain; that whatsoever**

◊ (Continued on page 23)