



Lord
TEACH US TO PRAY

Warren W. Wiersbe, Prayer: Basic Training (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1988), 21–32.

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- This request from one of the disciples (Luke 11:1) gave evidence of real spiritual insight.
- We must learn how to pray. While praying is as natural to the Christian as breathing is to a mammal, even breathing must be studied and practiced if it is to be correct.
- Singers and public speakers work on their breathing so that they get the most out of their voice and don't injure it. The fact that we have been praying since childhood is no guarantee that we know how to pray effectively.

- John 17:1 gives us some guidelines to follow for effective praying.

John 17:1 (NKJV) Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: “Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You,

1. Posture is not essential

- Was our Lord kneeling or standing when he offered this prayer? We don't know.
- All we do know is that He lifted up His eyes to heaven.
- Most people bow their heads and close their eyes when they pray, but Jesus lifted His head and focused His eyes on heaven.

- Many people fold their hands when they pray, but I don't find this practice anywhere in Scripture.
- The Jews were accustomed to lifting up their hands, open to God, expecting to receive something!

1 Timothy 2:8 (NKJV) I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting;

Many Different Prayer Postures

- Many different prayer postures are recorded in the Bible, and all of them are acceptable.
- Some people bowed their knees when they prayed (Genesis 24:52; 2 Chronicles 20:18; Ephesians 3:14).
- When Jesus prayed in Gethsemane, He began by bowing His knees (Luke 22:41); He then fell on His face as He talked to the Father (Matthew 26:39).
- It was Daniel's practice to kneel when he prayed (Daniel 6:10), but King David sat when he talked to God about the promised kingdom (2 Samuel 7:18).

- Abraham stood when he interceded for Sodom (Genesis 18:22). So there are many postures for prayer.
- The important thing is the posture of the heart.
- It is much easier to bow the knees than to bow the heart in submission to God. While the outward position can be evidence of the inward spiritual attitude, it is not always so. Again, the important thing is the posture of the heart.

2. Praying To The Father Is Essential

- The biblical pattern for prayer is to the Father, in the name of the Son, and in the power of the Spirit.
- Jesus addressed His Father six times in this prayer.
- Four times He simply said “Father”; the other two times, He called Him “Holy Father” and “righteous Father” (verses 11 and 25).
- From this, I gather that it is not wrong for us to use suitable adjectives when we address our Father in heaven.

- We address the Father, of course, because prayer is based on kinship; we are sons and daughters of God.
- In what we traditionally call “The Lord’s Prayer” (Matthew 6:9–13), Jesus taught His disciples to pray, “Our Father....” Jesus never prayed “Our Father.”
- The biblical pattern seems to be that we pray to the Father, in the name of the Son, and through the power of the Spirit.

We Must Pray

- We must pray for the will of God for our lives, and the lives of others.
- We cannot expect God to answer unless we pray in His will:

1 John 5:14–15 (NKJV)

14 Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.

15 And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.

We Find God's Will In His Word

- We discover the will of God primarily through the Word of God:

Colossians 1:9–10 (NKJV)

9 For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;

10 that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;

- It is one of the ministries of the Spirit to teach us from the Word, so we can fulfill the will of the Father.

John 16:13–14 (NKJV)

13 However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.

14 He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you.

The fact that prayer is based on kinship suggests that the Father is obligated to listen when His children call.

- In fact, it is more than an obligation: it is the Father's delight when His children fellowship with Him and share their needs.

Matthew 7:11 (NKJV) If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!

- The Father's heart reaches out in love to His own, and He longs to share good things with them. And the better we know our Father, the easier it is to pray in His will.

3. Yielding To The Father's Will Is Essential

- A story is told of a storm passed over the Florida coast and left a great deal of wreckage behind. The next day, as the men were cleaning up their little town, one man said, "I'm not ashamed to admit that I prayed during that storm last night." One of his friends replied, "Yes, I'm sure the Lord heard many new voices last night." That sounds like the season we are in right now.
- Prayer is not like those little red boxes we see in buildings and occasionally on street corners, marked USE ONLY IN EMERGENCY. We should always pray.

- I enjoy sharing good things with my children, but if they only spoke to me when they were in trouble or need of something, our relationship would quickly deteriorate.
- Unless we do the will of God, our living will negate our praying.
- “Father, the hour has come....” What hour? The hour for which He had come into the world. The hour when He would die on the cross, be buried, rise again, and finish the great work of redemption.
- We pray to be in the will of God the Father.

John 17:1 (NKJV) Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: “Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You,

- Phillips Brooks who said, “The purpose of prayer is not to get man’s will done in heaven, but to get God’s will done on earth.”
- If we want to pray in the will of God, then we must live in the will of God.
- Prayer is not something that we do; it is something that we are.

- It is this deep relationship between practice and prayer that helps us understand such promises as Psalm 37:4 (NKJV) Delight yourself also in the LORD, And He shall give you the desires of your heart.
- If we delight in the Lord and seek to please Him in everything, then something is going to happen to our desires.

Our Desires Change When We Want To Please The Lord.

- His desires become our desires. We start to say as our Lord, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work” (John 4:34).
- Our praying, then, is simply the reflection of God’s desires in our own heart.
- Living in the will of God makes it possible for us to “pray without ceasing” (1 Thessalonians 5:17).
- This command doesn’t mean that we are to go around mumbling prayers. The desires of our heart express our real praying.

- God does not only hear words; He sees hearts.
- So, when we live in the will of God, the desires of our hearts should become more and more godly; and these desires are prayers that continuously ascend to the Lord.
- God in his mercy can and does answer “emergency prayers,” but He prefers that we be in constant communion with Him.
- (In fact, if we seek to live in His will, we will have fewer emergencies!)
- If prayer is an interruption to our lives, then something is wrong.

4. The Glory Of God Is Essential

- The glory of God is essential and should be our primary concern.
- “Father, the hour has come; glorify Thy Son, that the Son may glorify Thee.”
- The word glory is used in one form or another eight times in this prayer. What does it mean?
- In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word translated “glory” means “weight, that which is important and honorable.” (*Paul’s phrase “an eternal weight of glory.”*)

2 Corinthians 4:17 (NKJV) For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,

- In the New Testament, the Greek word translated “glory” means “opinion, fame.” Theologians tell us that the “glory of God” is the sum total of all that He is, the manifestation of His character.
- The glory of God is not an attribute of God, but rather is an attribute of all His attributes! He is glorious in wisdom and power, glorious in His mighty works, and glorious in the grace He gives to us.

- The “The Lord’s Prayer” teaches us to put God’s concerns before our own.
- We pray, “Hallowed be Thy Name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done” before we bring up our needs-daily bread, forgiveness, and protection from sin.
- When our praying centers on the glory of God, we see our needs and requests in a proper perspective.
- Difficulties that seemed so important tend to shrink to their appropriate size when measured by the glory of God.

- Whatever we pray about, in the will of God and for the glory of God, it will be granted by our heavenly Father.
- When we are available to bring glory to God “on the earth” (verse 4), then God is available to provide what we need.

John 17:4 (NKJV) I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.

- “If God answers this request,” we should ask ourselves, “will it bring Him glory? Jesus prayer life brought the Father glory!

5. Praying In Faith Is Essential

- Suppose the Master had looked at His situation through human eyes alone. Could He have prayed as He did? No; it would have been impossible.
- Or, suppose He had looked around. What would He have seen? A small band of men, all of whom would fail Him in one way or another.
- Peter would deny Him three times.
- At that very hour, Judas was bargaining with the Jewish council and selling Jesus like a slave. Peter, James, and John would go to sleep in the Garden when they should be encouraging their Lord. And all of the men would forsake Him and flee.

- Yet by faith, Jesus prayed:

John 17:10 (NKJV) And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them.

- By faith, He prayed for them as they would be sent into the world to share the Gospel message.
- In spite of their past failures, these men would succeed!

John 17:20 (NKJV) “I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word;

- These weak men would invade a world that hated them and bring many to the feet of the Savior. Jesus saw all of this by faith.
- If our Lord had looked ahead without faith, He would have only seen arrest, conviction, and death on a cross.
- Humanly speaking, it was defeat; but by faith, He saw it as it was-victory!

- He said to Andrew and Philip, John 12:23 (NKJV) But Jesus answered them, saying, “The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified.”
- We would have said, crucified. But he looked beyond the cross to the glory that would come.

Hebrews 12:2 (NKJV) looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

- When we pray by faith, we start seeing things from the divine perspective. Faith enables us to believe the invisible.

2 Corinthians 5:7 (NKJV) For we walk by faith, not by sight.

- God is continually seeking to bring us back to these fundamentals.
- It is easy for us to get detoured by some external thing, and my Father has to remind me that effective praying must come from the heart.
- We must repeatedly examine our relationship to the Father to make sure we are in His will, and that we want to be in His will.

Doing The Will Of God From The Heart

Ephesians 6:6 (NKJV) not with eye service, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart,

- True prayer is the by-product of our personal “love relationship” with the Father.

Doing The Will Of God From The Heart

John 14:21 (NKJV) He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.”

- Lord teach us to pray.