

Lesson 36
Three Aspects of Prayer
Col 4:2-6

Col 4:2-6 Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. 3 And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. 4 Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. NIV

In this passage, Paul exhorts his readers to vigilance and prayer.

I. The Function of Prayer

- a. **Rationalism** teaches that prayer is useless because an omniscient God would already know what is needed better than the one who is praying.
- b. God has, nevertheless **ordained prayer** as a means of accomplishing His will in the world and has instructed believers to present their petitions. Matt 7:7-11

Matt 7:7-11 "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened. 9 "Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? 11 If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him! NIV

- c. God uses the prayer of His servants to bring about His plans and purposes and Sovereign will. In a limited sense, this creates a **partnership** between God and the believer. Phil 2:13

Phil 2:13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. KJV

- d. When we pray, according to His will, things happen in the **spiritual realm**, but, we can not know what those things are because Scripture only gives us a limited view. Daniel 10:12-14

Dan 10:12-13 Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words. 13 But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia. KJV

- e. When we pray, our prayer moves God **to act**, yet without diminishing the importance of, or changing in the slightest, His Sovereign plans and purposes.
- f. Answered prayer bolsters the faith of believers and gives them a sense of spiritual **achievement** as vessels fit for the Master's use.
- g. When a believer prays, as a **living part** of the Body of Christ, he is allowed to share in the work that Christ is doing on the earth today.

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John 14:12 I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.

II. The Privilege of Prayer

- a. With the advent of Christ, every other **ground** of prayer that had existed was dismissed, whether it was by promise or by covenant. John 16:24

John 16:24 Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. KJV

- b. The name of the Lord Jesus Christ is the **only name** that commands the attention of the Father and favorably inclines Him to do whatsoever is asked for His sake. John 14:13-14

John 14:13-14 13 And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. 14 You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it. NIV

- c. In the spiritual realm, the name of Christ is **equivalent** to the person of Christ.
d. Praying in the name of Christ requires that the **one praying** in that name be a living part of Christ in the New Creation. He 10:19-20

Heb 10:19-20 Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, 20 By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; KJV

- e. It also assumes that the petitions being asked for are in direct line with the plans, purposes and the glory of Christ. Anything other than that is **disqualified**.
f. Our prayer ought to be a prayer that Christ might pray; to which He would sign His name, and thus, is **limited** to the things that comport with His will, plans and purposes.
g. The believer having been saved from the **self** and vitally united with Christ, is no longer concerned with the things of the self. 2 Cor 5:17-18; Col 3:3 2

Cor 5:17 Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. KJV

Col 3:3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. KJV

- h. The things of the self **belong** to the new sphere wherein for me to live is Christ and, Christ is all in all. Phil 1:21; Eph 1:23

Phil 1:21 For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. KJV

Eph 1:22-23 And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, 23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all. KJV

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- i. It should be considered **abnormal** for a believer to pray merely for his or her own selfish desires irrespective of the will of God and the Glory of Christ. John 15:7
- j. Since **acceptable** prayer is possible only on the ground of the shed blood and by virtue of the vital union with Christ, the prayer of the unsaved cannot be accepted by God.

III. The Scope of Prayer

- a. Before true prayer can be offered, the heart must be **conformed** to the mind of Christ. John 15:7

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. KJV

- b. Under such heart adjustment the believer will ask only those things which fall into the will of the Father. The believer **earnestly** desires only what the Father desires for him.
- c. We have perfect liberty to ask "**whatsoever**" because the Father is working in us to do the things He has ordained for us to accomplish. Eph 2:10

Eph 2:10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. KJV

- d. The Spirit filled believer is **helped** to pray for the things that the Father wills for him. Rom 8:26-27; Jude 20

Rom 8:26-27 In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. 27 And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will. NIV

Jude 20 But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit. NIV

IV. Application

- a. When you examine your own prayer life, to what extent do your prayers meet the criteria of being according to the will of the Father?

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- c. God uses the prayer of His servants to bring about His plans and purposes and Sovereign will. In a limited sense, this creates a _____ between God and the believer. Phil 2:13
- d. When we pray, according to His will, things happen in the _____, but, we can not know what those things are because Scripture only gives us a limited view. Daniel 10:12-14
- e. When we pray, our prayer moves God _____, yet without diminishing the importance of, or changing in the slightest, His Sovereign plans and purposes.
- f. Answered prayer bolsters the faith of believers and gives them a sense of spiritual _____ as vessels fit for the Master's use.
- g. When a believer prays, as a _____ of the Body of Christ, he is allowed to share in the work that Christ is doing on the earth today. John 14:12

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- c. In the spiritual realm, the name of Christ is _____ to the person of Christ.
- d. Praying in the name of Christ requires that the _____ in that name be a living part of Christ in the New Creation. He 10:19-20
- e. It also assumes that the petitions being asked for are in direct line with the plans, purposes and the glory of Christ. Anything other than that is _____
- f. Our prayer ought to be a prayer that Christ might pray; to which He would sign His name, and thus, is _____ to the things that comport with His will, plans and purposes.
- g. The believer having been saved from the _____ and vitally united with Christ, is no longer concerned with the things of the self. 2 Cor 5:17-18; Col 3:3
- h. The things of the self belong to the _____ wherein for me to live is Christ and, Christ is all in all. Phil 1:21; Eph 1:23

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- j. Since _____ prayer is possible only on the ground of the shed blood and by virtue of the vital union with Christ, the prayer of the unsaved cannot be accepted by God. Isa 1:14-15; Prov 15:29

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- a. Before acceptable prayer can be offered, the heart must be _____ to the mind of Christ. John 15:7
- b. Under such heart adjustment the believer will ask only those things which fall into the will of the Father. The believer _____ only what the Father desires for him.
- c. The will of the Father notwithstanding, however, we have perfect liberty to ask “_____” because the Father is working in us to do the things He has ordained for us to accomplish. Eph 2:10
- d. The _____ believer is helped to pray for the things that the Father wills for him. This is needed because the believer is to a great extent ignorant of the character of God, the reason of his dealings, the principles of God’s government, and his own real needs. Rom 8:26-27

IV. Application

- a. When you examine your own prayer life, to what extent do your prayers meet the criteria of being according to the will of the Father?