

# THE PRIORITY OF PRAYER

## SESSION #3

**Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread:  
Praying for the Practical Things of Life**

1

### **The Problem of Extremes**

- Our prayers are often plagued by imbalances.
  - **Materialism** — praying only for material, temporal things, like physical health, success at work, safety in travels, etc.
  - **Dualism/Asceticism** — praying only for spiritual things, believing the physical world to be unimportant or uninteresting to God.

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“Many earnest Christians are struck as they pray the Psalms by how often the petition for life and good fortune occurs. From a glance at the cross of Christ there comes to many the unhealthy thought that life and the visible, earthly blessings of God are in themselves at least a questionable good, and in any case a good not to be desired. They take, then, the corresponding prayers of the Psalter to be an incomplete first stage of Old Testament piety, which is overcome in the New Testament. But in doing so they want to be more spiritual than God himself.”



—Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Psalms: The Prayer Book of the Bible*

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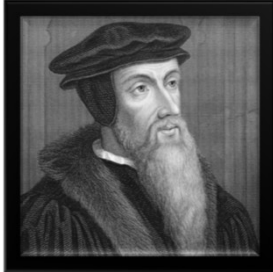


“The things you pray about are the things you trust God to handle. The things you neglect to pray about are the things you trust you can handle on your own.”

—H. B. Charles, Jr.

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## How Do We Define Prayer?



Prayer is “a communication between God and us whereby we expound to him our desires, our joys, our sighs, in a word, all the thoughts of our hearts.”

—John Calvin

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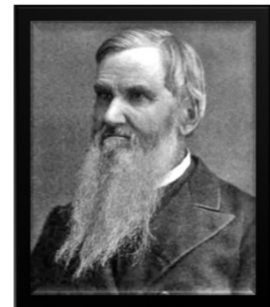


“Prayer is a sincere, sensible, affectionate pouring out of the heart or soul to God, through Christ, in the strength and assistance of the Holy Spirit, for such things as God has promised, or according to His Word, for the good of the church, with submission in faith to the will of God.”

—John Bunyan

Prayer is “an offering up of our desires unto God for things agreeable to His will, in the name of Christ, with confession of our sins, and thankful acknowledgement of His mercies.”

—R. L. Dabney



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“Prayer is beyond any question the highest activity of the human soul. Man is at his greatest and highest when upon his knees he comes face to face with God.”

—Martyn Lloyd-Jones



“The essence of prayer is simply talking to God as you would to a beloved friend—without pretense or flippancy.”

“Prayer is the spontaneous response of the believing heart to God. Those truly transformed by Jesus Christ find themselves lost in wonder and joy of communion with Him. Prayer is as natural for the Christian as breathing.”

—John MacArthur



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Prayer is the personal communication of the creature toward his Creator, offered in light of His gifts of revelation and redemption.

It is the height of worship, dependency, and love, whereby the worshiper pours out his soul before God in response to how God has revealed Himself to be.

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## Key Emphasis: *Dependency*

“Prayer is not so much an act as it is an *attitude*—an attitude of *dependency*, dependency upon God. Prayer is confession of creature weakness, yea, of helplessness. . . . Therefore, prayer is the very opposite of *dictating* to God. Because prayer is an attitude of dependency, the one who really prays is *submissive*, submissive to the Divine will; and submission to the divine will means that we are content for the Lord to supply our need according to the dictates of His own sovereign pleasure. Because prayer is an attitude of dependency, the one who really prays is *submissive*, submissive to the Divine will.”

—A. W. Pink

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## About What Do We Pray?

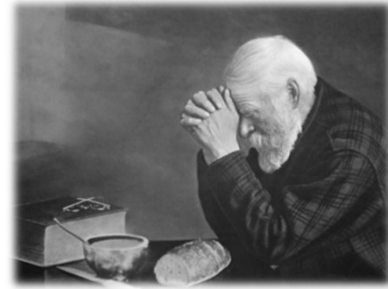
‘Our Father who is in heaven,  
Hallowed be Your name. } God’s Glory (v. 9)  
Your kingdom come. } God’s Will (v. 10)  
Your will be done,  
On earth as it is in heaven. } Our Physical Needs (v. 11)  
Give us this day our daily bread. }  
~~And forgive us our debts,~~ } Our Spiritual Needs  
as we also have forgiven our debtors. } (vv. 12-13)  
And do not lead us into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.”

—Matthew 6:9-13

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## Praying for Daily Sustenance

- First, Jesus taught us to pray for daily bread.
  - **Matthew 6:11** – “Give us this day our daily bread.”
- Second, Jesus gave thanks before meals.
  - **Matthew 14:19** – “Ordering the people to sit down on the grass, He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up toward heaven, He blessed *the food*, and breaking the loaves He gave them to the disciples, and the disciples *gave them* to the crowds.”



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- Third, the apostles gave thanks before meals.
  - **Acts 27:35** – “Having said this, he took bread and gave thanks to God in the presence of all, and he broke it and began to eat.”
  - **1 Corinthians 10:29b-31** – “Why is my freedom judged by another’s conscience. If I partake with thankfulness, why am I denounced because of that for which I give thanks? So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”
- Fourth, the apostles taught us to give thanks for all that God has made for us.
  - **1 Timothy 4:4-5** – “For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with gratitude; for it is sanctified by means of the word of God and prayer.”

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## Dependency in All Things

“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

—Philippians 4:6-7

“Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”

—1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

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“But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind.”

—James 1:5-6

“Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.”

—1 Peter 5:6-7

“Beloved, I pray that in all respects you may prosper and be in good health, just as your soul prospers.”

—3 John 2

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## Concluding Thoughts

- Prayer is the primary means for displaying your dependency.
- Fill your prayers with the needs and concerns of *all* your life—the material and immaterial; the physical and the spiritual.
- Beware of the extremes of materialism or dualism—of praying only for spiritual things, or only for material things.
- Use the Bible as the standard to shape and balance your prayers.
- Remember that God is concerned about *all* your life: *He cares for you.*

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### 164 What a Friend We Have in Jesus

1. What a friend we have in Je - sus, All our sins and griefs to bear!  
 2. Have we tri - als and temp - ta - tions? Is there trou - ble an - y - where?  
 3. Are we weak and heav - y lad - en, Cum - bered with a load of care?

What a priv - i - lege to car - ry Ev - 'ry - thing to God in prayer!  
 We should nev - er be dis - cour - aged; Take it to the Lord in prayer.  
 Pre - cious Sav - ior, still our ref - uge; Take it to the Lord in prayer.

Oh, what peace we of - ten for - feit, Oh, what need - less pain we bear,  
 Can we find a friend so faith - ful Who will all our sor - rows share?  
 Do thy friends de - spise, for - sake thee? Take it to the Lord in prayer.

All be - cause we do not car - ry Ev - 'ry - thing to God in prayer!  
 Je - sus knows our ev - 'ry weak - ness, Take it to the Lord in prayer.  
 In His arms He'll take and shield thee; Thou wilt find a so - lace there.

Words: Joseph Scriven  
 Music: Charles C. Converse

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