

Systematic Theology

18 Prayer

- I. What is prayer?
A. Adoration

Matthew 6:9⁹ ‘Pray, then, in this way: ‘Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. ¹⁰
‘Your kingdom come. Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven.

How does Jesus teach us to address God? as Father; implied in that is a relationship of adoration for the Father.

What is the first request?

What does this suggest?

- B. Confession

Matthew 6:12¹² ‘And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

What should be a component to our prayers according to this verse?

- C. Thanksgiving/Praise

Psalms 103:1-4 Bless the LORD, O my soul, And all that is within me, *ble*ss His holy name. ²
Bless the LORD, O my soul, And forget none of His benefits; ³ Who pardons all your iniquities,
Who heals all your diseases; ⁴ Who redeems your life from the pit, Who crowns you with
lovingkindness and compassion;

1. Who does the Psalmist bless?
2. What does it mean to bless?

- What does he bless or praise God for?
- Praise and Thanksgiving must be a key part of our prayers.

- A. Supplication/Intercession

¹¹ ‘Give us this day our daily bread. ¹³ ‘And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

What component of prayer does this verse teach us about? ‘supplication or requests’

What is the content of our prayers of request or supplication? physical and spiritual

1 Timothy 2:1 First of all, then, I urge that entreaties *and* prayers, petitions *and* thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men,

What are some of the different words for pray in this verse?

Who are these prayers made on behalf of? “all men”

Who are the all men in v2?

So we pray for others and not just for ourselves.

II. Why Pray?

E. Obedience

Philippians 4:6 ⁶ Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

What are we commanded not to do?

What are we command to do?

F. Demonstrates Dependence

Daniel 4:34 ³⁴ “But at the end of that period, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever; For His dominion is an everlasting dominion, And His kingdom *endures* from generation to generation.

What did God do to Nebu in Dan 4?

Why? v30 “because he was arrogant”

What was the first sign of humility? “prayer”

When Jesus teaches us to pray, how are we to address God? “as Father”

What does the Father/son relationship suggest? humble dependence

Who get the glory when we acknowledge our dependence?

ill—when you ask for help, what does it demonstrate?

III. Who do we pray to?

Matthew 6:9 ⁹ “Pray, then, in this way: ‘Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.

Can we pray to Jesus or the Holy Spirit?

Acts 1:24 ²⁴ And they prayed and said, “You, Lord, who know the hearts of all men, show which one of these two You have chosen

What are they choosing?
Who do they pray to?

Acts 7:59 ⁵⁹ They went on stoning Stephen as he called on *the Lord* and said, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!”

Who does Stephen pray to?

What about the Holy Spirit?

IV. How do we pray?

G. According to God’s Will/Jesus Name

1 John 5:14-15 ¹⁴ This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. ¹⁵ And if we know that He hears us *in* whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.

What is the confidence that we can have?

What is according to His will?

Which will is this in God?

How do you know this will?

John 14:13-14 ¹³ “Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴ “If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do *it*.

What does it mean to ask in Jesus’ Name? Is it a formula?

What is the significance of a person’s Name in that culture? ‘it meant authority, but also it spoke of a person’s character.

This is why God’s name what so important, Yhwh, which mean I AM WHO I AM.

Jacob’s name meant what? Esau’s name?

App—this means when you pray, you should ask yourself is this prayer ask what God has already revealed He desires or wants or “is this prayer consistent with Jesus’ Character”

This is keep you from praying the Janice Joplin song “Oh LORD, won’t you buy me a Mercedes Benz”

H. With Obedience

Psalm 66:18 ¹⁸ If I regard wickedness in my heart, The Lord will not hear;

What in this verse hinders God from responding to prayer? ‘regard of wickedness’

3. If you are regarding or cherishing wickedness in your heart, then what do you think the things that you want might be? Not the things that God wants.

Proverbs 28:9 ⁹ He who turns away his ear from listening to the law, Even his prayer is an abomination.

What happens to the person who turns away from listening to God’s law?

--God’s say’s you won’t listen to me, then I won’t listen to you.

I. With Faith

Matthew 21:22 ²² “And all things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive.”

Mark 11:24 ²⁴ “Therefore I say to you, all things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they will be *granted* you.

How can these verses be misused?

How are they to be used, when coupled with the “praying according to the will of God.”

Who is the object of this faith?

ill—If you are praying Lord, please help this person to grow in Christ and you don’t believe it is going to happen

J. Earnestness

Hebrews 5:7 ⁷ In the days of His flesh, He offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears to the One able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His piety.

How did Jesus pray in this verse? “loud cries and tear”

Is this frowned upon by the Father? nope

Do you think our earnestness and faith could increase if we would make sure that our prayers are according to God’s will?

Don’t fake earnestness! It is not a show, but if the cause for which you are praying is God’s cause, then you should be passionate about it.

K. Persistently

Luke 11:5-8 ⁵ Then He said to them, “Suppose one of you has a friend, and goes to him at midnight and says to him, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves; ⁶ for a friend of mine has come to me from a journey, and I have nothing to set before him’; ⁷ and from inside he answers and says, ‘Do not bother me; the door has already been shut and my children and I are in bed; I cannot get up and give you *anything*.’ ⁸ “I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him *anything* because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will get up and give him as much as he needs.

What time is it when this person goes to the friend?

What is his request?

What the friend’s response?

What does Jesus say is the key to this man getting what he needs? Persistence

Luke 18:1-8 ¹ Now He was telling them a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart, ² saying, “In a certain city there was a judge who did not fear God and did not respect man. ³ “There was a widow in that city, and she kept coming to him, saying, ‘Give me legal protection from my opponent.’ ⁴ “For a while he was unwilling; but afterward he said to himself, ‘Even though I do not fear God nor respect man, ⁵ yet because this widow bothers me, I will give her legal protection, otherwise by continually coming she will wear me out.’” ⁶ And the Lord said, “Hear what the unrighteous judge said; ⁷ now, will not God bring about justice for His elect who cry to Him day and night, and will He delay long over them?

Why does Jesus tell them this parable?

What is the key to this widow’s appeals to the judge? persistence

How does Jesus describe the prayers of the elect in v6? ‘day and night’

V. Prayer and the Sovereignty of God

1 John 1:9 ⁹ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

What happens when we confess our sins? He forgives

Exodus 32:10-14 ¹⁰ “Now then let Me alone, that My anger may burn against them and that I may destroy them; and I will make of you a great nation.” ¹¹ Then Moses entreated the LORD his

God, and said, “O LORD, why does Your anger burn against Your people whom You have brought out from the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? ¹² “Why should the Egyptians speak, saying, ‘With evil *intent* He brought them out to kill them in the mountains and to destroy them from the face of the earth?’ Turn from Your burning anger and change Your mind about *doing* harm to Your people. ¹³ “Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Your servants to whom You swore by Yourself, and said to them, ‘I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heavens, and all this land of which I have spoken I will give to your descendants, and they shall inherit *it* forever.’” ¹⁴ So the LORD changed His mind about the harm which He said He would do to His people.

What is the basis of Moses’ plea in v12? God’s Glory

What is the basis of Moses’ request in v13? God’s Promise

What was the result?

Would God have really incinerated the Hebrews?

God ordains the ends as well as the means.

We will suppose the case of a man who loves violin music. He has the means to buy for himself a very fine violin, and he also purchases the very best radio obtainable. He builds up a library of the great musical scores, so that he is able to take any piece that is announced on the radio, put it on his music stand, and play along with the orchestra. The announcer says that Mr. Ormandy and the Philadelphia Orchestra are going to play Beethoven’s seventh symphony. The man in his home puts that symphony on his stand and tunes his violin with what he hears coming from the orchestra. **The music that comes from the radio we might call foreordained.** Ormandy is going to follow the score just as Beethoven wrote it. The man in his living room starts to scratch away at the first violin part. He misses beats, he loses his place and finds it again, he breaks a string, and stops to fix it. The music goes on and on. He finds his place again and plays on after his fashion to the end of the symphony. The announcer names the next work that is to be played and the fiddler puts that number on his rack. Day after week after month after year, he finds pleasure in scraping his fiddle along with the violins of the great orchestras. Their music is determined in advance. What he must do is to learn to play in their tempo, in their key, and to follow the score as it has been written in advance. If he decides that he wants to play Yankee Doodle when the orchestra is in the midst of a Brahms’ number, there’s going to be dissonance and discord in the man’s house but not in the Academy of Music. After some years of this the man may be a rather creditable violin player and may have learned to submit himself utterly to the scores that are written and follow the program as played. Harmony and joy come from the submission and cooperation.

So it is with the plan of God. It is rolling toward us, unfolding day by day, as He has planned it before the foundation of the world. There are those who fight against it and who must ultimately be cast into outer darkness because He will not have in His heaven those who proudly resist Him. This cannot be tolerated any more than the authorities would permit a man to bring his own violin into the Academy of Music and start to play Shostakovich when the program called for Bach. The score of God’s plan is set forth in the Bible. In the measure that I learn it, submit myself to it, and seek to live in accordance with all that is therein set forth, I shall find myself in joy and in harmony with God and His plans. If I set myself to fight against it, or disagree with that which comes forth, there can be no peace in my heart and life. If in my heart I seek to play a tune that is not the melody the Lord has for me, there can be nothing but dissonance. Prayer is learning to play the tune that the eternal plan of God calls for and to do that which is

in harmony with the will of the Eternal Composer and the Author of all that is true harmony in life and living. (*Man's Ruin: Romans 1:1–32* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1952], pp. 122–23. Used by permission.)¹

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¹MacArthur, John: *Romans*. Chicago : Moody Press, 1996, c1991, c1994, S. 40