

## Praying Until You Pray (Matt 6:9-13, 25-33)

**Introduction:** *What is prayer? And how does it relate to our desires?*

**Q. 98.** *What is prayer?* **A.** Prayer is an offering up of our desires unto God,<sup>(m)</sup> for things agreeable to his will,<sup>(n)</sup> in the name of Christ,<sup>(o)</sup> with confession of our sins,<sup>(p)</sup> and thankful acknowledgment of his mercies.<sup>(q)</sup> (m) Ps. 62:8 (n) 1John 5:14 (o) John 16:23 (p) Ps. 32:5,6; Dan. 9:4 (q) Phil. 4:6

Prayer is an offering up of our desires unto God. Prayer reflects our passions and our priorities. And herein lies the principal difficulty we experience in prayer. Our passions and priorities in our heart, in our life, are not yet what they should be. We're going to learn, not just how to pray, but learn to adopt God's priorities as our own.

### 1. We must reorder our priorities and realign our hearts before God (9-10 vs. 25-33).

When our prayers and our lives do not have this balance and this burden, we need to reorder our priorities and realign our hearts before God. When the Lord gives us *petitions*, he's also giving us *priorities*. Thus, "What a man is alone on his knees before God, that he is, and no more" (R. M. M'Cheyne).

**Application:** *We need not simply new petitions but new passions and priorities*

"So much of our religion is packaged to address our felt needs—and these are almost uniformly anchored in our pursuit of our own happiness and fulfillment. God simply becomes the Great Being who, potentially at least, meets our needs and fulfills our aspirations. We think rather little of what *he* is like, what *he* expects of us, what *he* seeks in us. We are not captured by his holiness and his love; his thoughts and words capture too little of our imagination, too little of our discourse, too few of our priorities" (Carson, *Spiritual Reformation*, p. 15-16).

### 2. We must reorient our lives in dependence upon and fatherly confidence in God (8-9 vs. 26, 30, 32).

We're not to *pray* as though God were taking care of us and *live* as though we were on our own. Prayer is conscious dependence upon God. And therefore, when we come to pray and we find little to pray about, the problem is not in our prayers but that we're not consciously dependent upon God in our whole lives.

**Application:** *We must therefore be willing, of course, for our Father to refuse.*

"Prayer is an interruption of personal ambition" (Rowland Hogben, CIM). James 4:3, "When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives..."

## Conclusion

### 1. Adopt the Lord's pattern and order.

Clearly, not *all prayers* have to have every part and or a balanced emphasis. But a balanced *prayer life* will have every part, in balance, in prioritized order.

### 2. Pray until you pray.

"The prayer preceding all prayers is "May it be the real I who speaks. May it be the real Thou that I speak to" (C. S. Lewis).