

Title:           **PRAYER FOUND IN THE HEART**  
Text:            2 Samuel 7:27  
Subject:        *True Prayer a Gift of God*  
Date:            Sunday Morning — February 6, 2005  
Tape #            Y-59b  
Reading:        2 Samuel 7:1-29

### **Introduction**

Here are five things that are always found in the hearts of regenerate men and women. If these five things are not found in your heart and mine, we are not born of God; we are yet children of wrath, even as others.

1. **Every regenerate heart is repentant and exercises repentance toward God in the free confession of sin.**

Where there is no repentance there is no grace, no salvation, and no remission of sins. “*Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish*” (Lk. 13:5; 1 John 1:9).

(Psalms 32:1-5) *A Psalm of David, Maschil. Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. (2) Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile. (3) When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. (4) For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah. (5) I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah.*

(Psalms 51:1-5) *To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet came unto him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba. Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. (2) Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. (3) For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. (4) Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified*

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when thou speakest, *and* be clear when thou judgest. (5) Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.

(1 John 1:7-10) But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. (8) If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. (9) If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (10) If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

2. **Every renewed heart is a believing heart, trusting Christ alone as Savior and Lord** (Rom. 10:9-10).

(Romans 10:9-10) That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. (10) For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Faith is the continual commitment of myself to Christ, trusting his blood and his righteousness alone for acceptance with God.

3. **Every regenerate heart possesses a “Good hope through grace”** (2 Thess. 2:16).

Every child of God has a good, well founded hope of eternal life through the merits of Christ.

- A Biblical Hope – “*Thy Word.*”
- A Well-grounded Hope – Christ.
- A Hope He Can Explain.

4. **Every believing, regenerate heart is a loving heart, a heart of love for Christ, his people, and his Word** (1 Cor. 13:1-8).

(1 Corinthians 13:1-8) Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become *as*

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sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. (2) And though I have *the gift of* prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. (3) And though I bestow all my goods to feed *the poor*, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. (4) Charity suffereth long, *and* is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, (5) Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; (6) Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; (7) Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. (8) Charity never faileth: but whether *there be* prophecies, they shall fail; whether *there be* tongues, they shall cease; whether *there be* knowledge, it shall vanish away.

“*He that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love!*” — “*Faith worketh by love!*” If I do not love you, my brothers and my sisters, I do not know God, I am not born again, I have not yet been saved! And the same is true of you.

5. **And in the heart of every regenerate soul, you will always find something else – Prayer** (2 Sam. 7:27).

Do you ever pray? Have you ever come before the Lord God in true prayer? Most of us say our prayers regularly. But do we ever pray? I know that when danger approaches, when you are afraid, you cry out to God in desperation. But do you pray? We have all gone to God and asked him to do something for us, or give something to us that we greatly desired. But do we pray? It is one thing to say your prayers, but another thing altogether to pray! All religious people say their prayers. Only true believers pray.

**Proposition:** Prayer is found in the heart of every child of God.

That is my subject. You will find my text in 2 Samuel 7:27. The title of my message is — **PRAYER FOUND IN THE HEART.**

(2 Samuel 7:27) For thou, O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, hast revealed to thy servant, saying, I will build thee an

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house: therefore hath thy servant found in his heart to pray  
this prayer unto thee.

Roll these words over in your mind. Think about them – “*Thy servant found in his heart to pray.*” True prayer is a work of the heart. It arises from a heart renewed by the grace of God. Now, I ask you again, “Do you ever pray? Have you ever found it in your heart to pray?”

When I take it upon myself to say or write anything on the subject of prayer, I do so with great reluctance, because I fully and shamefully acknowledge that I know so little about the subject. **My own prayers are so sinful that they are matters of constant repentance before my God.**

- What hypocrisy there is in my petitions, when there should be utter honesty!
- What arrogant seeking of my own will, when there should be complete submission to my God’s will!
- What vain repetitions I make, when there should be nothing but the cries of a broken heart!
- How little I feel the sins I confess!
- How little I sense my deep need for the mercies I seek!
- How I long for the “*Spirit of grace and supplication*” to teach me how to pray as I ought!

### **MY REASON**

You might reasonably ask, “Why, then, are you preaching to us about prayer?” I have been preparing this message for several months. I presume that if I need instruction about prayer, you might need some as well. So, I want to simply show you some of what I believe the Lord has taught me in recent months about this thing called “prayer.”

In addition to my own concerns, I have recently been confronted with several issues, some of which I have been asked to address.

- “Prayer Lists” — I don’t want to be put on anyone’s prayer list. I want you to remember me before the throne of grace as God enables you to pray.
- “Prayer Lines” — Electronic “telephone prayer lines” are as absurd and perverse as anything I can imagine. I would rather have a dial-up wife than have a dial-up god!

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- “Prayer Chains” — There is no more power in a prayer chain than there is in one of those superstitious chain letters you ladies get from ignorant friends.
- “Urgent Prayer Requests” — We are not going to get God Almighty to do what we want him to do by trying to twist his arm!
- “Group Prayers” — Groups can’t twist God’s arm any better than an individual can.<sup>1</sup>

### **BACKGROUND**

Let me give you a little background to our text. David wanted to build a house for God, a temple, a place of worship for the honor of God. The Lord would not allow David to do it. But he was honored by and pleased with David’s desire, so much so that he sent Nathan the prophet to assure David that he would establish his son upon the throne and build him a house. Therefore David found it in his heart to pray this prayer unto the Lord (vv. 25-29).

(2 Samuel 7:25-29) And now, O LORD God, the word that thou hast spoken concerning thy servant, and concerning his house, establish *it* for ever, and do as thou hast said. (26) And let thy name be magnified for ever, saying, The LORD of hosts *is* the God over Israel: and let the house of thy servant David be established before thee. (27) For thou, O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, hast revealed to thy servant, saying, I will build thee an house: therefore hath thy servant found in his heart to pray this prayer unto thee. (28) And now, O Lord GOD, thou *art* that God, and thy words be true, and thou hast promised this goodness unto thy servant: (29) Therefore now let it please thee to bless the house of thy servant, that it may continue for ever before thee: for thou, O Lord GOD, hast spoken *it*: and with thy blessing let the house of thy servant be blessed for ever.

### **Divisions:**

1. David found it in his heart to pray.
2. David found a prayer in his heart because God put it there.
3. Is there a prayer found in your heart?

**PRAYER FOUND IN THE HEART****PRAYER IS**

I despise those “How To” books about spiritual things. I am not about to give you a formula for a successful prayer life. But this much I know — True prayer is...

1. An intensely **private** matter (Matt. 6:5-6).

(Matthew 6:5-6) And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites *are*: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. (6) But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

2. A very **simple** thing (Matt. 6:7-13).

(Matthew 6:7-13) But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen *do*: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. (8) Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him. (9) After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. (10) Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as *it is* in heaven. (11) Give us this day our daily bread. (12) And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. (13) And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

3. **Acknowledges Christ's mediation** (John 16:23).

(John 16:23) And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give *it* you.

4. **An attitude and act of faith** (1 Thess. 5:17).

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(1 Thessalonians 5:17) Pray without ceasing.

5. **Has something to do with the will of God** (1 John 5:14-15).

(1 John 5:14-15) And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: (15) And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.

6. Is something that can be done only **in the name of Christ**, trusting his blood, his righteousness, and his intercession. — *“If ye shall ask anything in my name...”*

7. Is **an act of the heart** (2 Sam. 7:27).

(2 Samuel 7:27) For thou, O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, hast revealed to thy servant, saying, I will build thee an house: therefore hath thy servant found in his heart to pray this prayer unto thee.

### **FOUND IN THE HEART**

I. *First*, our text declares that **David found it in his heart to pray**.

This is what he tells us – *“Therefore hath thy servant found in his heart to pray this prayer unto thee.”*

A. **Here is a good point of examination**.

Wherever God has performed a work of grace, prayer is found in the heart.

- Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9:11).
- Cornelius (Acts 10:1-2).
- Lydia (Acts 16:13-15 – *“The place where prayer was want to be made.”*)

Prayer in a believer’s heart is like breath in the lungs. Where there is life there is breath; and where there is spiritual life there is prayer. As **Matthew**

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**Henry** wrote, “You may as soon find a living man that does not breathe as a living Christian that does not pray.”

**B.** Let me say this once more, emphatically – **True prayer is found in and arises from the heart.**

David did not find a prayer in his books, or his memory, or even in his mouth. He found it in his heart to pray! This is the matter of concern. “*The Lord looketh on the heart.*” In all things God says, “*Give me thine heart.*”

I often say my prayers  
But do I ever pray?  
And do the wishes of my heart  
Go with the words I say?

I may as well kneel down  
And worship gods of stone,  
As offer to the living God  
A prayer of words alone.

For words without the heart  
The Lord will never hear,  
Nor will He to those lips attend  
Whose prayers are not sincere.

Lord teach me what I need,  
And teach me how to pray;  
Nor let me ask Thy grace,  
Not feeling what I say.

**NOTE:** Don’t ever just say a prayer!

1. **Far too often, I fear, our prayers arise from our carnal, selfish, self-centered lusts.** Such prayers are not only not effectual, they are obnoxious to God (James 4:2-4).

(James 4:2-4) Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. (3) Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume *it* upon your lusts. (4) Ye



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adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.

### 2. **Prayer requires serious, thoughtful preparation.**

When David says, “*Thy servant found in his heart to pray,*” it seems to me that he must have looked for it. **McCheyne said**, with regard to prayer, “A great part of my time is spent in getting my heart in tune for prayer.”

I am afraid that most of that which is done in the name of religion shocks the angels of God (Isa. 6:1-6). Most of those prayers, which are offered to God both in public and in private, are an abomination to him (Lk. 16:15).

(Luke 16:15) And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.

Most of our prayers, especially in public, are short on reverence and long on pretense! **I do not want to discourage prayer. Let’s pray more, not less! But we ought to take this matter of prayer, speaking to God, seriously** (Eccles. 5:2).

(Ecclesiastes 5:2) Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter *any* thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few.

I am desperately afraid of being pretentious before God! Too often when I speak to God my words are too many and my thought too few.

- A mere repetition of words is not prayer!
- A mere pious tone does not reflect a pious heart!
- Beware of pretense before God!

### 2. **Yet, we must not be afraid to pray.**

We ought to approach God with the simplicity, sincerity, and confidence of a child talking to his father (Heb. 4:16).

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(Hebrews 4:16) Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

3. **And, as I said before, prayer is a private, closet matter** (Matt. 6:5-6).

(Matthew 6:5-6) And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites *are*: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. (6) But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

Prayer is better practiced than talked about, better done than described. And when it is done, it should still be kept private. Intimate matters always seem a little dirty when they are aired in public! Prayer is an attitude more than an activity (1 Thess. 5:17).

(1 Thessalonians 5:17) Pray without ceasing.

4. **God listens only to hear what the heart speaks in prayer.**

**John Trapp** made this observation, “Remember, God respecteth not the arithmetic of our prayers, how many they are; nor the rhetoric of our prayers, how long they are; nor the music of our prayers, how methodical they are; but the divinity of our prayers, how heart-sprung they are. Not gifts, but graces prevail in prayer.”

David said, “*Thy servant found in his heart to pray this prayer unto thee.*” But what kind of heart did David have?

### C. **In what kind of heart is prayer found?**

1. **A Regenerate Heart** – “*Thou hast quickened me*” (Ps. 119:93). — Prayer is a living thing. You will never find a living prayer in a dead heart.

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2. **A Believing Heart**. — Prayer is coming to God. And you cannot come to God without faith (Heb. 11:6). David believed God. He took God at his Word (2 Sam. 7:8, 9, 12, 13, 16, 25).

(2 Samuel 7:8-9) Now therefore so shalt thou say unto my servant David, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I took thee from the shepcote, from following the sheep, to be ruler over my people, over Israel: (9) And I was with thee whithersoever thou wentest, and have cut off all thine enemies out of thy sight, and have made thee a great name, like unto the name of the great *men* that *are* in the earth.

(2 Samuel 7:12-13) And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. (13) He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever.

(2 Samuel 7:16) And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever.

(2 Samuel 7:25) And now, O LORD God, the word that thou hast spoken concerning thy servant, and concerning his house, establish *it* for ever, and do as thou hast said.

3. **A Broken, Humble Heart** (2 Sam. 7:18).

(2 Samuel 7:18) Then went king David in, and sat before the LORD, and he said, Who *am* I, O Lord GOD? and what *is* my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?

- David acknowledged his sin.
- He bowed to the will of God.
- He sought God's glory above all personal interest.

**GOD'S GIFT**

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### II. Next, I want you to see that **David found this prayer in his heart because God put it there.**

Every true prayer of the heart, every prayer that is accepted before God first came from God. The Lord put it in David's heart to pray this prayer, or he never would have found it there. Prayer is the communion and communication of the believer's spirit with God who is Spirit by the power and grace of God the Holy Spirit.

Prayer, true prayer is the gift of God and the work of God in our hearts. How does God put prayer into the hearts of his people? He has many ways of doing things. But here are three ways he puts prayer into our hearts.

#### A. **God the Holy Spirit teaches us to pray** (Rom. 8:26).

We are so sinful and ignorant that we would never pray aright, were it not for the gracious influences of the Holy Spirit.

(Romans 8:26) Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

*“Who knoweth what is good for man in this life?”* (Ecc. 6:12) — *“We know not what we should pray for as we ought.”* — Do we really believe that? Generally, going by what they say, people think they know exactly what to pray for. Yet the Book says, *“We know not what we should pray for as we ought.”* What a flesh-humbling declaration! — *“We know not what we should pray for as we ought.”* It one thing to give mental agreement to this fact, but another thing altogether to have an experimental realization of it, for the heart to be made to feel that what God requires from us he must himself work in and through us.

The fact is, we can no more pray without the direct enabling of God the Holy Spirit than we can create a world. Real prayer is a felt need awakened within us by the Spirit, so that we ask our God, in the name of Christ, for that which is in accordance with his holy will. — *“If we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us”* (1 John 5:14). But to ask something which is not according to God's will is not praying, but presuming. We

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have reason, then, to cry with the disciples, “*Lord, teach us to pray*” (Luke 11:1).

1. It is God the Holy Spirit who shows us our way of access to God (Heb. 10:19-24) - Christ’s blood and righteousness! His intercession!
  2. He shows us our needs – Spiritual needs. Prayer is primarily about spiritual things, not carnal things.
  3. He shows us what Christ has provided for us and inspires our hearts with the hope of obtaining that which we desire from him.
  4. He teaches us what the will of God is, so that we may pray according to his will with confidence.
- “*In my name*” (John 16:23 – Faith).
  - “*According to His will*” – (1 John 5:14-15).
  - He teaches us the will of God by his Word — By His Providence — Burdening Our Hearts (Ps. 25:14; John 15:15). Burdens that will not go away! — Importunity

(Psalms 25:14) The secret of the LORD *is* with them that fear him; and he will show them his covenant.

(John 15:15) Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.

**Illustration:** *My Experience* (Ps. 118:17).

(Psalms 118:17) I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the LORD.

**B. The Lord graciously inclines the hearts of his people to pray by our providential experiences, too** (Ps. 107:1-31).

God has a way of bending the heart and inclining it to prayer. Frequently, he inclines our hearts to prayer by filling them with sorrow. In the day of distress and trial, we are most inclined to pray.

“Trials make the promise sweet,  
Trials give new life to prayer;

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Trials bring me to His feet,  
Lay me low, and keep me there!"

Cowper

**C. Then, the Lord puts prayer in our hearts by gracious encouragements.**

Notice the word “*therefore*” in our text. What do you suppose it is there for? It refers to those things by which God encouraged him to pray this prayer.

1. **The Remembrance of His Goodness** (v. 8).

(2 Samuel 7:8) Now therefore so shalt thou say unto my servant David, Thus saith the LORD of hosts, I took thee from the sheepcote, from following the sheep, to be ruler over my people, over Israel:

2. **The Deliverances He Had Experienced** (v. 9).

(2 Samuel 7:9) And I was with thee whithersoever thou wentest, and have cut off all thine enemies out of thy sight, and have made thee a great name, like unto the name of the great *men* that *are* in the earth.

3. **The Promises of God** (vv. 12, 13, 16).

(2 Samuel 7:12-13) And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. (13) He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever.

(2 Samuel 7:16) And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever.

4. **God’s Particular Love and Distinguishing Grace** (vv. 22-24).

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(2 Samuel 7:22-24) Wherefore thou art great, O LORD God: for *there is* none like thee, neither *is there any* God beside thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears. (23) And what one nation in the earth *is* like thy people, *even* like Israel, whom God went to redeem for a people to himself, and to make him a name, and to do for you great things and terrible, for thy land, before thy people, which thou redeemedst to thee from Egypt, *from* the nations and their gods? (24) For thou hast confirmed to thyself thy people Israel *to be* a people unto thee for ever: and thou, LORD, art become their God.

### 5. The Revelation of His Purpose (v. 27).

(2 Samuel 7:27) For thou, O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, hast revealed to thy servant, saying, I will build thee an house: therefore hath thy servant found in his heart to pray this prayer unto thee.

### Do we not have much assurance of God's special love and grace to inspire our hearts to prayer? (Rom. 8:1, 28, 32, 39).

(Romans 8:1) *There is* therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

((Romans 8:28-39) And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose. (29) For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. (30) Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. (31) What shall we then say to these things? If God *be* for us, who *can be* against us? (32) He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? (33) Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? *It is* God that justifieth. (34) Who *is* he that condemneth? *It is* Christ that died, yea rather, that is

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risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. (35) Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? *shall* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? (36) As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. (37) Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. (38) For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, (39) Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

### A QUESTION

III. Now, I want you to honestly answer this question – **Is there a prayer found in your heart?**

Only that prayer which is found in and arises from the heart is true prayer. **Here is a point of testing**, “What a man is on his knees, in secret, before God Almighty, that he is, and no more!” (John Owen).

A. **Some of you have never found a prayer in your heart, because you are dead before God.** — Oh, may he give you life and cause you to pray from your heart, like the publican, “*God be merciful to me, the sinner.*”

B. **Some of you, like your pastor, are deeply grieved by the lack of heart in your prayers.**

You pray because you must. You cannot help it. Prayer is the breath of your soul. But your prayers lack intensity, zeal, and fire. The lifelessness of your prayers brings pain to your hearts. I cannot give you a formula for a better prayer life. But I do have some suggestions that I believe will help us all.

1. Seek constant communion with Christ.
2. Spend much time in the Scriptures. If you spend much time in the Word, you will spend much time in prayer.
3. Faithfully attend the worship of God. Private worship always declines when public worship is neglected.



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4. Lay hold of every promise which is suited to your case.
5. In your heart and mind, live near the cross.
6. When you pray, pray as the Lord taught us to pray (Matt. 6:9-14).

(Matthew 6:9-14) After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. (10) Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as *it is* in heaven. (11) Give us this day our daily bread. (12) And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. (13) And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen. (14) For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:

Pray like this, seeking...

- The Glory of God.
- The Welfare of God's Kingdom.
- The Will of God.
- Daily Provision – No More!
- Sins' Forgiveness.
- Protection and Deliverance from Temptation.
- Give Praise to God.
- Seek grace to imitate the God of all grace (Eph. 4:32 – 5:1).

### TEACH ME TO PRAY

(Songs of Grace Book #75 — Tune: *Jesus and Shall It Ever Be?* — LM)

I bend my knees and bow my head,  
And shut my eyes to all without;  
But still my heart, so cold and dead,  
Is full of sin and fear and doubt.

I say the words I ought to say,  
Confess my sin, and long for Thee;  
But still, I fear, I seldom pray:  
Teach me to pray, O Lord, teach me.

Cause me to know Your grace and pow'r,  
Spirit of God, awake my heart,  
Within my soul create a prayer:

**PRAYER FOUND IN THE HEART**

Give me, O Lord, a fervent heart.

Here at Your throne of grace I lie,  
Trusting the merits of Your Son;  
“Father, Abba, Father,” I cry,  
And hope that I am heaven born.

“Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done,”  
These things, with earnest heart, I say:  
My only hope is in Your Son:  
But still, I ask, “Teach me to pray.”

Amen.

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<sup>1</sup> **PUBLIC PRAYER**

Let me address the matter of public prayer, briefly.

(1 Timothy 2:1-4) I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, *and* giving of thanks, be made for all men; (2) For kings, and *for* all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. (3) For this *is* good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; (4) Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

**Our Lord Jesus clearly and pointedly forbids audible, public prayer on street corners, in market places, restaurants, etc.** (Matt. 6:5-6). Where men and women are hustling and bustling about with the everyday business of life, it is not proper for us to call attention to ourselves by displays of religious devotion. Many suggest, “We ought to pray and offer thanks for our food so that others may see our devotion and thanksgiving.” That is exactly what we must not do! Christianity is not a show of godliness, but a life of godliness. In private, in our homes, or at fellowship dinners with God’s saints, it is proper for us to bow and audibly give thanks to our God for his provisions. I encourage you never to neglect such opportunities for prayer. But do not do so in public places. God sees and hears thankful hearts (1 Tim. 4:4-5).

## PRAYER FOUND IN THE HEART

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(1 Timothy 4:4-5) For every creature of God *is* good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: (5) For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.

**However, public prayer in the house of God, among God's saints, is a vital aspect of public worship.** Its importance cannot be overstated. Anytime a man is called upon to lead the congregation to the throne of grace in prayer, he is called upon to do that which is of greatest importance and benefit to the church of God.

- It should never be taken lightly.
- The one praying is leading God's people in the worship of God.
- Public prayer is the worship of the whole church through the voice of one man.
- When a man is called upon to lead the church in prayer, it is not only that he may speak to God for the church, but also that he may stimulate the thoughts and desires of God's people, so that their hearts may be quickened and led heavenwards to Christ.
- Public prayer, like private prayer, is a heart matter.
- Let us, as we seek to lead God's saints in prayer, seek the direction of God the Holy Spirit, confessing our sins, seeking his grace, and seeking his will and his glory.
- In public prayer and in private prayer, we should strive for utter sincerity and simplicity.

**When a man is called upon to lead God's saints in prayer, let him be aware of what he is doing.**

- He is speaking to God; so let his words be few, thoughtfully chosen, and earnest.
- He is calling upon God in prayer; so let him be sincere, believing, and conscious of the needs of the hour.
- He is leading the congregation in prayer; so let him speak distinctly and loudly enough to be heard by all. — You cannot lead the church in prayer if the church cannot hear you!