

The Secret Key to Heaven

Eleven Instructions Concerning
Private Prayer

Part 2

The Secret Key to Heaven

Instructions 1-5

1. Be Frequent in Private Prayer
2. Use the Best Times and Opportunities
3. Do Not Perform Closet Duties Merely to Still Your Conscience
4. Do Not Trust in Closet Duties
5. Put Your Heart into All Closet Duties

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Instructions 6 - 11

I. What Should Our Prayers Be Like?

- 6. Fervent
- 7. Constant
- 8. Thirsting

II. How Should Our Prayers Be Made

- 9. For God's Glory
- 10. In Christ's Name

III. When Will Our Prayers Be Answered?

- 11. Watch and Wait

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What Should Our Prayers Be Like?

Fervent

Certainly, all those usual phrases of crying, wrestling, and striving with God, which are scattered up and down in Scripture, do strongly argue that holy importunity and sacred violence that the saints of old have expressed in their addresses to God. – Brooks

- >>> Psalm 55:1 (ESV) Give ear to my prayer, O God, and hide not yourself from my plea for mercy!
- >>> Psalm 61:1 (ESV) Hear my cry, O God, listen to my prayer;
- >>> Psalm 88:1 (ESV) O Lord, God of my salvation, I cry out day and night before you.
- >>> Psalm 119:145 (ESV) With my whole heart I cry; answer me, O Lord!
- >>> Psalm 119:147 (ESV) I rise before dawn and cry for help; I hope in your words.

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What Should Our Prayers Be Like?

Fervent

>>> Acts 12:5 (ESV) So Peter was kept in prison, but earnest prayer for him was made to God by the church.

Earnest – derivative of a word meaning ‘to stretch out,’ pertaining to an unceasing activity, normally involving a degree of intensity and/or perseverance—‘without ceasing, continuously, constantly.’ – Louw-Nida

Fervent prayer is the soul's contention, the soul struggling with God; it is a sweating work, it is the sweat and blood of the soul, it is a laying out to the uttermost all the strength and powers of the soul – Brooks

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What Should Our Prayers Be Like?

Constant

Look that you hold on and hold out, and that you persevere to the end in private prayer... A man must always pray habitually ... he must have his heart in a praying disposition in all states and conditions. Though closet-prayer may have an intermission—yet it must never have a cessation. – Brooks

>>> 1 Thessalonians 5:17 (ESV) — 17 pray without ceasing,
Luke 18:1 (ESV) — 1 And he told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart.

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What Should Our Prayers Be Like?

Constant

>>> Ephesians 6:18 (ESV) — 18 praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance...

“By praying always, he exhorts us to pray in prosperity as well as in adversity, and not to quit the duty of prayer in a prosperous estate, because we are not driven to it by outward pressing necessities and miseries; and by praying with perseverance, he admonishes us that we be not weary of the work—but continue instant and constant in its performance, though we have not presently what we pray for.” – Calvin quoted by Brooks

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What Should Our Prayers Be Like?

Constant – Always?

Every duty must have its time and place; and as one friend must not shut out another, so one duty must not shut out another – Brooks

We pray always...

1. When our heart is always warm.
2. When we take every opportunity for closet prayer.

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What Should Our Prayers Be Like?

Thirsting

>>> Psalm 42:1–2 (ESV) — 1 As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God. 2 My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?

>>> Psalm 63:1–3 (ESV) — 1 O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.

David's soul did not thirst after a crown, a kingdom, or any worldly greatness or glory—but after a choice and sweet enjoyment of God
David's soul did long to enjoy sensible communion with God in the midst of all his sorrows and sufferings.

Communion with God is the very life, soul, and crown of all your closet duties; and therefore press after it as for life. – Brooks

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How Should Our Prayers Be Made?

For the Glory of God

There may be bad aims in good actions – Brooks

>>> **Isaiah 58:1–3 (ESV)** God: “declare to my people their transgression. Yet they seek me daily and delight to know my ways, as if they were a nation that did righteousness and did not forsake the judgment of their God”

People: “Why have we fasted, and you see it not? Why have we humbled ourselves, and you take no knowledge of it?”

God: “Behold, in the day of your fast you seek your own pleasure.”

A man's most splendid actions will at last be found to be but splendid sins, if he has made himself, and not the glory of God, the end of those actions. – Brooks

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How Should Our Prayers Be Made?

In the Name of Jesus

>>> John 14:13–14 (ESV) — 13 Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it.

O sirs! this is your privilege as well as your comfort, that you never deal with God but by a mediator. When you appear before God, Jesus Christ appears with you, and he appears for you; when you invoke—then he advocates; when you put up your petitions—then he does make intercession for you. Christ gives you a commission to put his name upon all your requests; and whatever prayer comes up with this name upon it, he will procure it an answer. – Brooks

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When Should Our Prayers Be Answered?

Watch and Wait

>>> **Psalm 5:3 (ESV)** — **3** O LORD, in the morning you hear my voice; in the morning I prepare a sacrifice for you and watch.

>>> **Psalm 130:5–6 (ESV)** — **5** I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, and in his word I hope; **6** my soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen for the morning, more than watchmen for the morning.

He who can pray as well as wait, and he who can be contented that God is glorified, though he himself is not gratified; he who dares not demand God's promises immediately, but patiently waits for the accomplishment of them—he may be confident that he shall have seasonable and suitable answers to all those prayers that he has posted away to heaven. Though God seldom comes at our time—yet he never fails to come at his own time. – Brooks

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Instructions

6. Pray Fervently
7. Pray Constantly
8. Pray Thirsting After God
9. Pray For the Glory of God
10. Pray In the Name of Christ
11. Pray Watching and Waiting