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"Elements Of Prayer: Supplication"

by Nicholas Edwards

"I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men" (1 Timothy 2:1).

"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God" (Philippians 4:6).

Paul described this element of prayer when he said "let your requests be made known unto God." Supplication involves intreating God, beseeching Him, making a request, or asking a petition of Him for yourself or for others.

- Abraham made intercession for the men of Sodom (Genesis 18:23-33).
- Abraham's servant prayed for success and guidance in finding a wife for Isaac (Genesis 24:12-14).
- Isaac intreated the Lord for his wife, because she was barren (Genesis 25:21).
- Jacob asked God for deliverance from the hand of his brother Esau (Genesis 32:9-12).
- Moses requested guidance when he prayed, "Shew me now thy way...." (Exodus 33:12-13). He prayed for Miriam to be healed from leprosy (Numbers 12:13). He asked God to set a leader over Israel (Numbers 27:15-17). Moses besought the Lord to let him go over and see the promised land (Deuteronomy 3:23-26).
- Hannah prayed for a child and was granted her petition (1 Samuel 1:10-17).
- David praised God and humbly asked Him to establish and bless his house as promised (2 Samuel 7:18-29). He besought God for his sick child (2 Sam. 12:16). David asked God to give Israel and his son Solomon prepared and perfect hearts (1 Chronicles 29:18-19).
- The book of Psalms is full of requests David made. He asked for God to teach him His way (Psalm 86:11). He often asked for protection and deliverance from his enemies (Psalm 142; 143).
- Solomon requested an understanding heart (1 Kings 3:6-9).
- Elijah prayed for rain to cease and then for rain to come (1 Kings 17; James 5:17-18).
- Hezekiah prayed for deliverance from the Assyrians (2 Kings 19:15-19) and made request when sick unto death (2 Kings 20:2-3).
- Jabez requested physical and spiritual blessing for himself (1 Chronicles 4:10).
- Asa asked God for help (2 Chronicles 14:11). And so did Jehoshaphat (2 Chronicles 20:5-12).
- Nehemiah prayed for strength (Nehemiah 6:9).
- Paul requested a prosperous journey (Romans 1:10) and for his thorn to be removed (2 Corinthians 12:8). He often prayed for brethren in the church, for their growth, for God to bless them, and for their faithfulness.

Jesus taught His disciples to make supplication (Matthew 6:9-13).

These stress who and what to pray for, the proper attitude, the power of prayer, and how to respond when God says no.

Prayer

by Jeff Wolverton

Prayer involves a God-man relationship: man speaking to God. In prayer, the thoughts of man are communicated to the infinite mind of God. God is the Benefactor and man the beneficiary. Prayer is indispensable in leading man from earth to heaven.

Prayer involves a God-man relationship, but more specifically, a God-Christian relationship. Prayer involves not just a God-Christian relationship, but a Father-child relationship. As God is the only true spiritual Father, so the Christian is His only true spiritual child. All people are God's offsprings in the sense that they have been created by Him (Acts 17:28-29), but the New Testament portrays only those who have obeyed the gospel as being in the fullest, specific sense children of God and therefore privileged to call on Him as their heavenly Father (2 Corinthians 6:17-18, Romans 8:14-15).

Why Pray?

The starting point of a life of prayer is the Christian's desire for God borne out of the recognition of his need for divine aid. Every genuine, sincere, reverent utterance any Christian makes to his heavenly Father is expressive of the realization that his strength is limited and that he needs the assistance of divine power. Acceptable prayer presupposes the frailty of the Christian and the unlimited strength of the Father. No matter how extensively a Christian may engage in doing good, no matter how diligently he may study God's word, no matter how energetic and intelligent he may be in the pursuit of the physical necessities of life, he stands continually in the need of his Father's care and protection.

"Pray without ceasing" (I Thessalonians 5:17).

"Now when Daniel knew that the document was signed, he entered his house (now in his roof chamber he had windows open toward Jerusalem); and he continued kneeling on his knees three times a day, praying and giving thanks before his God, as he had been doing previously" (Daniel 6:10).

The child of God who truly loves his heavenly Father does not consider prayer a burdensome duty, but a privilege of rare delight and joy. And the heavenly Father, who infinitely loves His children, greatly delights in their utterances of dependence, desire, and confidence to Him (Revelation 8:3-4).

The faithful Christian prays to God because he needs divine assistance, because of his love for God, and because he believes that God answers prayer. This belief is based upon the assurance given by the Lord to His disciples in such passages as Matthew 7:7-11.

Our Father, who put into operation all the laws of this physical world, does not need to change a single law to aid men; but He simply puts His will into these laws and uses them in answer to the prayers of His children. It is unnecessary for us to know just how the providential care of God operates through His laws of the physical creation in answering our prayers, but it is most necessary that we firmly believe the fact that God does answer all righteous prayers.

No righteous prayer is ever offered to God which does not receive an answer from Him. This does not mean that He answers all prayers immediately or exactly in the way the petitioners expect. Sometimes the answer is yes, sometimes the answer is no, and sometimes the answer is to wait.

Although God answers every acceptable prayer of His children, He does not answer them as a substitute for human endeavor. For example, the farmer who is a faithful Christian does not pray to God for a bountiful crop as a substitute for his obligation to prepare the soil, plant the seed, etc. but as a reinforcement of his efforts. *Sentry Magazine*, June 2002