**09-28-14 Should I Pray?**

**Luke 18:1** – “And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint;”

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

**Psalm 55:17** – “Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice.”

**Question**: What is prayer?

**Answer**: Prayer is simply speaking to God. It is part of the heart’s desire of a true Christian to speak to the One who has saved them. This speaking – this seeking the face of God - includes many different elements – praise, worship, thanksgiving, and requests.

**Psalm 27:8** – “When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face, LORD, will I seek.”

**We do not naturally know how to pray - the Bible teaches that we need to learn to pray?**

The Scriptures teach that we learn to pray by **doing it**, by **being taught by another Christian**, and **by asking God to teach us**.

We see these things in **Luke 11:1** – “And it came to pass, that, **as he was praying** in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, **Lord, teach us to pray**, as **John also taught his disciples**.”

The disciples had already been involved in praying before this occasion. It was a common practice among the Jews as well as among the disciples of John the Baptist.

But, as they watched and listened as Jesus prayed, they no doubt understood that they did not know all there was to know about prayer.

Thus they asked Jesus to teach them to pray even as John the Baptist had taught his disciples to pray.

**Practical example**:

**Firs**t: When you read the Scriptures, make note of the way the saints of old prayed.

Notice Abraham in **Genesis 18:22-33** as he prays for the righteous in Sodom and Gomorrah.

Notice Moses in **Exodus 32:9-14** as he prays for Israel’s preservation

Notice Ezra in **Ezra 9:5-15** as he prays for the remnant that has returned to Israel after seventy years of captivity.

Notice Daniel in **Daniel 9:3-19** as he prays concerning the people of Israel while they were still in captivity.

Notice the prayers of Paul as he prays in his epistles for the churches, the Lord’s people, and the cause of God – **Ephesians 1:15-23, Ephesians 3:14-21, Ephesians 6:18**, etc.

**Second**: Gather with an older Christian brother or Christian sister (who know how to pray) and pray with them. Listen to them and learn how they seek the face of our God. Learn from them. But, always remember that you should pray from your heart. Do not simply imitate what another Christian is saying. Instead, pray from your heart using your own words.

**How should Christians pray?**

The Bible teaches that we should pray privately.

Jesus taught His disciples to pray in private and in their closets (private places).

**Matthew 6:6** – “But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closets, 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.”

The prayer closet mentioned in this verse is a private place. It is any place where you may feel comfortable to pour out your heart to your Father in heaven.

**Note**: Your closet might be the inner sanctum of your mind and heart as you go about your daily activities.

But, though this may be one way of praying, do not let it be the only way you pray.

The Bible also teaches us that it is important to pray publicly. This is mentioned in the Old Testament and in relation to the first century church. In the Old Testament the saints met to pray in the Temple or in the Synagogues. In the New Testament the saints of God continued steadfastly together in congregational praying.\

**Old Testament - Psalm 62:8** – “Trust in him at all times; **ye people**, pour out your heart before him: God is a refuge for us.”

**New Testament - Acts 2:42** – “And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.”

This manner of praying is public and it includes everyone who is a member of the local church.

**Acts 1:14 –** “These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.”

**Acts 4:23-24 –** “And being let go, they went to their own company, (their own church) and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them. And when they (the church) heard that, they (the church) lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is”

Today this kind of prayer usually takes place in the Lord’s churches in what is called a Prayer Meeting.

**Jesus also instructed His disciples to pray in His name.**

**John 14:13-14** – “And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.”

**Question**: What does it mean to pray in Jesus name?

**Answer**: **To pray in Jesus’ name** is topray with the awareness that you are seeking God with the authority (the right) and the blessing given to you by Jesus Christ. It is equivalent to saying – when you pray to my Father in heaven you are using my account to access heaven’s blessings – you are seeking – praising – asking your Father for my sake.

**To pray in Jesus name** means that we are permitted to seek the face of our Father and to ask our God in the name of his Son Jesus Christ, with whom He is well pleased. And, because we are now friends with His Son through salvation - He answers our requests.

**That will I do –** Not only do we have the promise of our Father answering prayer but we also have the promise of the Son of God – our Saviour – answering our prayers.

**John 14:14** – “If ye shall ask any thing in my name, **I will do it**.”

**John 15:16** – “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall **ask of the Father** in my name, **he may give it you**.”

Finally, the Scriptures teach that the prayers of a true Christian should be offered according to God’s will.

**I 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: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.”

We are to learn to seek the face of our God - to pray and make our requests **according to the will of our God**.

**Our election unto salvation was accomplished by the will of our God - Ephesians 1:4-5** – “(4) According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: (5) Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, **according to the good pleasure of his will**,”

**The work of Jesus Christ on our behalf to save us was according to the will of our God - Galatians 1:4** – “Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father:”

**Even the suffering we go through as Christians is according to the will of our God - I Peter 4:19** – “Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.”

Since every aspect of our Christian life is being worked together for good (**Romans 8:28**) by the will of God, our prayers should be made with regard to what we know to be the will of God.

**Firs**t: The will of God is revealed in God’s word.

**Psalm 119:169** – “Let my cry (prayer) come near before thee, O LORD: give me understanding **according to thy word**.”

**John 15:7** – “If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will (prayer), and it shall be done unto you.”

**Second**: The will of God is revealed in our life’s calling.

**II Thessalonians 1:11-12** – “(11) Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would **count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness**, and the work of faith with power: (12) That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.”

**I Corinthians 7:20-24** – “(20) **Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called**. (21) Art thou called being a servant? care not for it: but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather. (22) For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman: likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant. (23) Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men. (24) Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God.”

**Third**: The will of God is revealed in providence.

**II Samuel 16:5-12** – especially **verse 10** – “And the king said, What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah? so let him curse, because the LORD hath said unto him, Curse David. Who shall then say, Wherefore hast thou done so?”

**II Corinthians 12:7-10** – “(7) And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. (8) For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, (prayer) that it might depart from me. (9) And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. (10) Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.”

**Fourth**: If we do not know the will of God then we submit ourselves to the will of God by not seeking our own.

i.e. Jesus Christ - **Matthew 26:39** – “And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.”