**Praying**

**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.

**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 other Christians**, and **by asking God to teach us**.

We see these elements 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 examples concerning this aspect to learning to pray**:

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

Abraham in **Genesis 18:22-33** - Moses in **Exodus 32:9-14** - Ezra in **Ezra 9:5-15** - Daniel in **Daniel 9:3-19** - 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 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.

**Jesus 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 speaking to God the Father 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** (**Ephesians 1:3**) – you are seeking – praising – asking your Father for that which I have acquired for you.

**To pray in Jesus name** means that we are asking in the name of **His beloved Son with whom He is well pleased** - and we are asking **as one of the friends of His Son**.

Finally, the Scriptures also teach that our prayers 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.”

**Question: What is it to pray according to God’s will?**

**Answer: There are at least four issues relating to praying according to God’s will.**

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

**I Corinthians 7:20-24** – “(20) **Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called** … (24) Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God.”

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

**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.”

**Question**: How did the saints of old pray?

**Answer**: They prayed with being persuaded that (1) God wanted to hear them and (2) that God had given them certain promises to encourage them to pray.

**First: They were persuaded that God wanted to hear from them.**

**1 - God initiated the first conversation with His creation**:

**Genesis 3:9** – “And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?”

**2 - God said He wanted His creation and His people in particular to ask Him for help**:

**Psalm 50:14-15** – “(14) Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the most High: (15) And **call upon me in the day of trouble**: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.”

**Jeremiah 33:3** – “**Call unto me**, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not.”

**Matthew 7:7-8** – “(7) **Ask,** and it shall be given you; **seek**, and ye shall find; **knock**, and it shall be opened unto you: (8) For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

**3 - When we pray – God expresses His interest in our desires:**

**Luke 18:40-42** – “(40) And Jesus stood, and commanded him to be brought unto him: and when he was come near, he asked him, (41) Saying, **What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee?** And he said, Lord, that I may receive my sight. (42) And Jesus said unto him, Receive thy sight: thy faith hath saved thee.”

**4 - God expresses His desire to hear our voice**:

**Song of Solomon 2:14** – “O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs, let me see thy countenance, **let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice**, and thy countenance is comely.”

**Second: God has given certain promises to encourage us to pray.**

**1 – God gives every sinner the hope that if they desire to be forgiven, He will forgive them.**

**Isaiah 55:6** – “Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near:”

**Joel 2:32** – “And it shall come to pass, that **whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered**:”

Paul quotes Joel in **Romans 10:13** – “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the LORD shall be saved.”

**Sinners respond to what God says**: (Thief) Lord, remember me! (Blind man) Jesus Thou Son of David, have mercy upon me: (Leper) Lord if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me whole! (Publican) Lord, have mercy upon me, I am a sinner!

**Then, God says**: **Isaiah 58:9** – “Then shalt thou call, and the LORD shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, **Here I am** …”

**He says to the**: (Thief) Today, you will be with me in paradise! (Blind man) Thy faith hath made thee whole. (Leper) I will, be thou clean! (Publican) This man went down to his house justified!

**2 – God gives every fallen or wandering Christian the hope that He will forgive them and restore them.**

**II Chronicles 7:14** – “If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, **and pray**, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.”

**3- God encourages His children to pray when He gives them His promises.**

**Jacob:**

**God said: Genesis 28:15** – “And, behold, **I am with thee**, and **will keep thee in all places whither thou goest**, and will bring thee again into this land; for **I will not leave thee**, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.”

**God said: Genesis 31:3** – “And the LORD said unto Jacob, **Return** unto the land of thy fathers, and to thy kindred; and **I will be with thee**.”

**Jacob prayed: Genesis 32:9 and 11-12** – “(9) And Jacob said, O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, **the LORD which saidst unto me**, Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and **I will deal well with thee**: (11) Deliver me, **I pray** thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau: for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children. (12) And **thou saidst, I will surely do thee good**, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.

**David: II Samuel 7:25-28** – “(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** … (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:”

**I Chronicles 17:25** – “(25) For **thou, O my God, hast told thy servant** that thou wilt build him an house: **therefore thy servant hath found in his heart to pray before thee**. (26) And now, LORD, **thou art God, and hast promised this goodness** unto thy servant:”

**The children of God in all generations** have every promise God has given His children as their own: Every promise is yea and amen in Christ Jesus:

**II Corinthians 1:20** – “For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.”

**All the promises of God**: Every promise made by God to every generation of His children which has physical benefits or spiritual benefits.

**Yea:** Shall all be certainly fulfilled. Our Father shall not abandon the gracious intentions of His promises to His children.

**Amen:** The word means true, faithful, and certain - All the promises which are made to His people through His Redeemer Jesus Christ shall be certainly fulfilled. They are promises which are confirmed and established.

**The list is too long to tell them all but here are a few of the promises God has made:**

**Isaiah 44:6** – “Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and **beside me there is no God**.”

**Isaiah 43:11** – “I, even I, am the LORD; and **beside me there is no saviour**.”

**Isaiah 43:25** – “I, even I, am he that **blotteth out thy transgressions** for mine own sake, **and will not remember thy sins**.”

**Isaiah 41:10** – “Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.”

**Isaiah 43:2** – “When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.”

**Isaiah 51:12** – “I, even I, am he that comforteth you: who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die …”

**Isaiah 54:17** – “No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD.”

**Genesis 15:1** – “After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.”

**Psalm 18:2-3** – “(2) The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower. (3) I will call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies.”

**Psalm 41:11** – “By this I know that thou favourest me, because mine enemy doth not triumph over me.”

**Isaiah 46:4** – “And even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you.”

**Psalm 37:25** – “I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.”

**Psalm 92:14** – “They shall still bring forth fruit in old age; they shall be fat and flourishing;”

**Psalm 33:18-19** – “(18) Behold, the eye of the LORD is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy; (19) To deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine.”

**Philippians 4:19** – “But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”

**Isaiah 65:24** – “And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.”