

How should we pray? (Part 2)

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Introduction: How we pray is a direct result of knowing God

A. We come to pray to God *because He asks us to!* (Luke 11:9-13)

1. Can we imagine *the creator of the universe* making an offer like this?
2. Prayer is of great value to the humble man that *is seeking knowledge of God.*
3. Without this knowledge we will *not know* “what we ask!” (Mt 20:21-22)

B. In prayer we must always start with *our personal knowledge* of the character of God!

1. When we start here then we will change *how we view everything!*
2. Do we see our need for God so that when we are hurt, we will first *seek His comfort?* What happens when we forget this? (Isa 51:12-13)

I. God want us to know His thoughts behind His giving

A. God wants us to know that *from His mercy* that He abundantly gives.

1. Consider how powerfully God has *revealed this about Himself.* (Ex 34:6-7)
2. God is *rich* in mercy! (Eph 2:4) God *delights* in mercy! (Micah 7:18)
3. “His mercy endures forever” is used *26 times in one Psalm!* (Psa 136:26)

B. God’s mercy is *tender and personal.* (Lk 1:78)

1. Are you hurting and in need of *understanding and gentleness?* Seek God.
2. What was Jesus like? Pick any day in His life and *what do you see?*
3. Imagine the scene where men *cried to Jesus for mercy.* (Lk 17:12-13)
4. Jesus *knows our great needs and He cares.* (Heb 4:15-16)

II. God wants all prayer to be offered within the will of God

A. His people will seek to constantly *abide in His word* as a branch to a vine! (Jn 15:7)

1. We pray on the basis of *knowledge and trust.* By this *we are* being changed!
2. God wants the process of prayer to draw us closer to Him and give us a joy (purpose) that the world cannot remove! (Jn 16:23-24, 26-27)
3. Have we reached a point where *we really know and trust God?* God is not a “diving vending machine” that gives because we have the “right formula.”

B. God gives to those *who learn how to ask!* (1 Jn 5:14-15)

1. This promise given by the Creator of the universe is beyond comprehension!
2. We must *learn how!* Some things we are not to ask for! (1 Jn 5:16)
3. Does this verse bother us? If so, there is more you need *to learn about God!* (Ezk 14:14, 20)
4. When one does not know God then he *will not want* what His gifts. (Phil 1:29-30; Acts 5:41-42)

C. Consider the elements of God’s will: His *purpose*, His *desire* and His *permission!*

1. There are some things God has willed to do and *man cannot prevent it.* (Isa 14:27; Acts 2:23)
2. Most often “the will of God” refers to *God’s desire and man’s decision.* God’s promises are often given with conditions. (2 Pt 3:9; 1 Tim 2:4)

3. It can also refer to *man's decision and God's permission*. (Acts 18:21)
- D. It is very comforting *to know that God is in control*.
 1. Do we have *enough faith* to really mean "as you will?" ... to "wait on the Lord?"
 2. Do we have *enough faith* to understand that "No" by God is also a blessing?

III. God wants us to pray with the right motive

- A. Our motive is crucial in an acceptable prayer. (James 4:1-3)
 1. Could two people pray for the same thing but *only one* receives what they ask?
 2. Consider two people who ask for a job. What is *the real reason you ask?*
 3. Our prayers can well *reveal our hearts*. Are we carnal or spiritual?
 4. What would a pie chart of the content of our prayers *look like?*
- B. What do our prayers *look like to God?* (Mal 1:9-10)
 1. Imagine being in a relationship where *the only time you hear* from another is to ask for something for themselves. "Give me. Give me!"
 2. The teacher asked the class "Do you pray every day?" One little boy said: "NO. Some days I cannot think of anything I want."
 3. Are you the most fervent and diligent in prayer *only when* petitioning God?
 4. When one says "all we have left is prayer" to show how desperate a situation has become, then he likely does not know God. Make prayer *1st and with certainty*.
 5. When one approaches prayer like the "other thief on the cross" this one will have a pitiful end. Praying *"just in case" will not work!* (Lk 23:39-40; Prov 1:28-31)
 6. How might you and I be praying if the end of our life was at hand?

IV. How God's gifts from prayer should change us

- A. What *should anyone do* who has received a gracious gift beyond description?
 1. It ought to make us humble, thankful debtors. (Lk 17:15-17; Rom 1:14)
 2. It ought to cause us to delight in mercy and giving! (Acts 20:35)
 3. We will give out of true mercy and *not just from self-interest!* (Mt 5:46-47; Lk 14:12-14)
 4. Giving people are *the happiest most contented people*. We are made to serve!
- B. God will always answer prayer *based on His mercy* (what is best for us)!
 1. If God hears our prayers, God will give to us! (1 Jn 5:14-15; 2 Cor 1:19-20)
 2. As we serve God, we will over time see answered prayers. (Ps 22:3-4)
- C. Consider how answered prayers will change us!
 1. It changes how we *treat and think about others*. (Mt 7:7-12)
 2. It changes our sense of *value and achievement*. (Lk 12:32-34)
 3. What if prayer is not changing us?
- D. What should we pray for? (Phil 4:6-7)
 1. There is nothing too small to pray for!
 2. There is much more to pray for than personal petition!

Conclusion: Prayer is the foundation for all future changes and blessing in our lives!