

TEACH ME TO PRAY, LORD! “Part three

Matthew 6:9-15 NIV

Lesson Three: Teach Me to Pray, Page One

Last time we saw that certain beliefs are present in the heart of a Christian as he or she prays:

1. God is (!)
2. God is “knowable!”
3. People are capable of hearing and responding to God.
4. I can know this awesome Creator-God as My Heavenly Father. Today, let’s look at

Eight Important Facts about Christian prayer:

We are to pray...

1. **To the Father.** (Some verses talk about praying to Jesus, but the model prayer says...) I spoke quite a bit on this in our last Study.
2. **In Jesus’ Name.** John 14:13, 16:23-24 To pray in Jesus’ Name is to pray in His Worthiness, clothed in His righteousness and holiness! As Ephesians 2:18 so clearly puts it: “For through Jesus we have access by one Spirit to the Father!”

3. **In Spirit and in truth!** John 4:24 Called other places “praying in the Spirit.” We have a wonderful promise in the Bible (Romans 8:26-27)

“In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And He Who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God’s will.” (Expound)

4. **In total submission to the will of God!** Remember: “True ‘asking’-prayer” is not so much telling God what you want as it is the process by which we find out what He wants, and bring our will into line with His will! Once our will is in harmony with the will of the Father, what we will be “asking for” will be God’s will!

“If we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we have asked of Him!” 1 John 5:14-15

5. At the same time, in another sense, ***we are told to pray confidently!*** Remember Hebrews 4:16 “Let us, then, approach the throne of Grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace in our time of need!”

and Hebrews 10:22 “Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith!”

Submission and confidence are both a vital part of prayer. I am not to come hesitantly and fearfully to the Throne of God. I am to come confidently, clothed in the righteousness of Christ. But confidence is not arrogance. Although it seems almost contradictory, both of these elements are a vital part of prayer! As I come confidently to God’s throne, I am to do so in an attitude of total submission to His will.

6. **We are to pray “expectantly!”**

Read James 1:6-7... “But when he (or she) asks, there must be belief and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind! That person should not think that anything will be received from the Lord; a double minded person is unstable in all he or she does!” We must pray expectantly! Expect the best answer from God! God’s answer is always the best!

I heard a great illustration of this years ago. There was a church in a Midwestern town where there had been two or three years of drought conditions. So the church came together to pray for rain. *But only one little girl brought an umbrella to the church!*

7. *We are to pray thankfully(!)*

I am not asking you to be a phony with God, especially when you are going through a difficult time! But there is a sense in which a Christian can *always* come to God with a thankful heart. James 1:17 “Every good and perfect gift comes from the Father.” “OK, preacher, I think I have that covered! I can praise Him in the good times!”

But what about the “bad things” that come into my life because I live on a “fallen planet?” Am I supposed to “fake it” and pretend to be thankful for the bad things?

The answer is: “no, you *cannot* ‘fake it’ with an all-knowing God!” And God never said that we are to thank Him that tragedy has struck our life! But 1 Thessalonians 5:18 says “Give thanks in all circumstances!” And only the people of God can do that! Why?

Because God has made an incredible promise to us in Romans 8:28: “In all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose!” (NIV)

“Every detail of our lives of love for God is worked into something good!” (The Message)

It is legitimate to pray: “I have no idea why You allowed this to happen, but, on the basis of Your promise to me in Romans 8:28, I give thanks to You in the midst of what has happened (or is happening) and I will continue to trust You no matter what life brings my way!”

8. **We are to pray persistently**—as in “not giving up!” Then Jesus told His disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up...”

Luke 18:1

Sometimes there is an “on-and-on-ness” to prayer. People that are easily discouraged tend to pray something once or twice and then “give up.” “I prayed for that once and God did not answer my prayer!” Sometimes we have to ask many times before God either answers our prayer the way we want Him to, or He “changes our want to!” We need to pray until we get an answer.

1. We are to pray...To the Father.
2. In Jesus' Name.
3. In Spirit and in truth!
4. In total submission to the will of God!
5. At the same time, in another sense, we are told to pray confidently!
6. We are to pray “expectantly!”
7. We are to pray thankfully (!)
8. We are to pray persistently!