

PRAYER

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TEACH US TO PRAY

1. The text for this series of studies is Luke 11:1.
2. From this text we learn:
 - (1) That John the Baptist had taught his disciples to pray.
 - (2) That one of Jesus' disciples asked that they be taught to pray.
 - (3) Jesus complied with their request (Luke 11: 2 - 4).
3. From this we learn that we need to be taught to pray.
 - (1) We need to be taught to pray so that our prayers may be effective and in harmony with God's will (James 5:16; I John 5:14; I John 3:22).

I. THE BELIEF THAT GOD HEARS AND ANSWERS PRAYER DEMANDS THAT THE FOLLOWING CONCEPTS BE ACCEPTED:

1. That God exists (Rom. 1:20; Psa. 19:1).

- (1) There is no use to pray if there is no God!
- (2) Prayer is not man talking to himself!
- (3) If there is no God there is no reason to pray!
- (4) This is the **faith** one must have before he will pray (Heb. 11:6).

2. That God cares:

- (1) To believe that God will answer my prayer, I must believe that **God cares for me**.
- (2) Passages that show God cares:
 1. Luk 12: 6 - 7; Matt. 10: 24 - 30
 2. I Pet. 5:7
 3. Matt. 6: 25 - 33
 4. John 3:16
 5. Luke 19:10
 6. Rom. 8:32
 7. Eph. 1:3

3. That God hears the prayers of His children (Psa. 55:17):

- (1) Man must believe that God can and will hear prayer (I Pet. 3:12).
- (2) David said God hears prayer, "*O thou that hearest prayer*" (Psa. 65:2).
- (3) Psa. 4:3; Prov. 15:8b; Prov. 15: 29; Psa. 145:18; I John 3:22

4. That God is able to supply our needs (Acts 17: 24 - 28).

- (1) Paul said that God is "*able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think*" (Eph. 3:20).
- (2) The God we serve is the "*Almighty God*" (Gen. 17: 1: Rom. 4:21).
- (3) Our prayers are a recognition of God's **providence**.
 1. Providence is the rule and care that God exercises in all things.
 2. Providence differs from a miracle in that its ends are brought about by means of the established law of God through ordinary channels. (A miracle is an act of God

superseding or suspending a natural law.) Providence is the non-miraculous manipulation of natural law and circumstances to accomplish God's purpose.

(1) Christ suspended natural law in turning water to wine (John 2: 1 - 11).

3. Acts 14:17; Matt. 5:45; Psa. 147: 8

4. **Miracles** are the intervention of the power of God in extraordinary work; they were powers transcending the ordinary powers of nature.

(1) Miracles are called "Wonders" (Acts 2:22).

(2) They excited wonder in those who witnessed them (Mark 2: 12) "*They were all amazed*".

(3) Miracles were called "Signs" -- they signified God's approval (John 3:2).

(4) A miracle is the intervention of the power of God that transcends the natural order.

1. A miracle is God's working on a plane that is above that of natural law.

(5) A miracle was a visible sign which indicated to all men that a super-human power was at work in that particular thing.

1. Jesus feeds five thousand with five loaves and two fishes (John 6:14).

(6) Miracles were performed:

1. To produce faith (John 20:30 - 31).

2. They confirm that God is (Rom. 1:20; Psa. 19:1; Heb. 11:3; Gen. 1:1).

3. That Jesus is the Son of God (Acts 2:22; Rom. 1:4; John 20: 30 -31).

4. They confirmed the Word (Mk. 16: 20; Heb. 2:3).

(7) Miracles have served their purpose in God's plan and they have ceased (I Cor. 13: 8 - 10).

(4) God now works through Providence - His utilization of natural law.

1. In a miracle, the Lord works directly.

2. In Providence He operates indirectly, employing means to accomplish the end.

(1) Examples of Miracle and Providence:

1. Before Mary was sexually intimate with Joseph, and while yet a virgin, she "was found with child of the Holy Spirit" and she gave birth to baby Jesus (Matt. 1: 18 - 25; Luke 1: 30- 37).

a. The conception of Mary was a supernatural act of God's direct power.

2. Hannah of the Old Testament:

a. Whose womb had been "shut up" (I Sam. 1:6).

b. She prayed fervently to God requesting a son, whom she promised to give to the Lord all the days of his life.

c. God granted her petition (I Sam. 1:17).

d. When Elkanah "knew" Hannah his wife, "the Lord remembered her and she conceived" (I Sam. 1: 19 - 20).

e. Here, by means of the law of procreation, God intervened and sent a child into the world -- Samuel.

(2) Two children were sent into the world:

1. One, the Son of God, by means of a MIRACLE.

2. One, a great prophet, by means of PROVIDENCE.

(5) God, through His providence, will do things for His children that He otherwise would not do if they had not asked.

1. Matt. 7: 7 - 11 - Ask, Seek, Knock

2. I John 5: 14 - 15
 3. John 15:7
 4. Matt. 21:22
 5. Heb. 4:16
 6. Col. 4: 2 - 4
 7. Matt. 18:19
 8. Mark 11:24
- (6) Our prayers will cause God to alter the course of events which He had previously planned for the world.
1. Abraham pleads for the righteous in Sodom (Gen. 18: 16 - 33).
 2. Moses pleads for Israel (Ex. 32: 9 - 14).
- 5. That we are dependent upon God (James 1:17).**
- (1) Nothing shows greater dependence upon God than our asking Him for blessings.
 - (2) Acts 17:28
- 6. That God has infinite wisdom:**
- (1) I come to God in prayer like Jesus who said, "*nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.*" (Matt. 26:39).
 - (2) I recognize that I do not always know or ask for what I need.
 - (3) God will exercise wisdom in answering my prayers (2 Cor. 12: 7 - 9).
- 7. That God will act:**
- (1) For me to pray, I must believe that my prayer will have an impact on God -- motivating Him to act in my behalf.
 - (2) Matthew 7: 7 - 11
 - (3) 2 Chron. 7:14
 - (4) Elijah's prayer (James 5: 17 - 18; I Kings 18: 41 - ff).
 - (5) Israel prayed for deliverance from oppression of the Egyptians -- God heard their prayer and delivered them by the hand of Moses (Ex. 2: 23 - 25; Ex. 3: 7 - 10).
 - (6) Hannah prayed for a son -- God answered her prayer (I Sam. 1: 10 - 25).
 - (7) Hezekiah prayed when he was sick unto death -- God answered his prayer adding fifteen years to his life (2 Kings 20: 1 - 7).
 - (8) Our prayers are a recognition of God's ownership (Psa. 24:1; I Cor. 10:26).

II. THE KIND OF GIFTS THAT GOD GIVES HIS CHILDREN

1. **Good and perfect gifts (James 1:17).**
2. **He gives only those things that are good for us (Matt. 7: 9 - 11).**

III. GOD WANTS US TO HABITUALLY PRAY TO HIM

1. **We all need to habitually pray:**
 - (1) I Tim. 2:8
 - (2) I Thess. 5:17
 - (3) Luke 18: 1 - 8
 1. At all times.

- 2. Not to grow weary in supplication to God.
- (4) Rom. 12: 12 "*continuing instant in prayer*".
 - 1. Instant -- steadfastly

IV. CONDITIONS OF ACCEPTABLE PRAYER

- 1. The one who prays must do all he can toward reaching the object of his prayer:**
 - (1) We are to pray for daily bread (Matt. 6:11) "*Give us this day our daily bread*".
 1. We must work toward that end (Eph. 4:28; I Thess. 4: 11 - 12).
 - (2) We are to pray that God deliver us from temptation (Matt. 6:13; Matt. 26: 41; I Cor. 10:13).
 1. We are to abstain from all forms of evil (I Thess. 5:22).
 2. We are to use the way of escape that God provides (I Cor. 10:13).
 - (3) We are to pray for the lost to be saved, and then be busy teaching all the lost that we possibly can!
 1. Rom. 10:1; Col. 4:2 - 4; 2 Thess. 3:1
- 2. The one who prays must ask in faith.**
 - (1) James 1: 6 - 7
 - (2) Mark 11: 24
 - (3) We should have a firm faith that God hears and answers our prayers (Heb. 11:6).
- 3. In order to pray, one must be a child of God (Psa. 34:17).**
 - (1) John 15:7; Gal. 3: 26 - 27
 - (2) Prayer is the privilege and right of God's children (Matt. 6:9; John 3: 3 - 5).
- 4. In order for a child of God to have his prayers answered, he must keep the commandments of God.**
 - (1) I John 3:22
 - (2) Psa. 66:18 "*If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me*".
 - (3) Prov. 28:9; John 9:31
- 5. In order for a child of God to have his prayers answered, he must forgive those who sin against him.**
 - (1) Matt. 6:12, 14 - 15
- 6. One must pray with the right motive.**
 - (1) James 4:3
 - (2) Solomon (I Kings 3: 5 - 15).
- 7. We must pray according to God's will.**
 - (1) I John 5:14
 - (2) John 15:7
 - (3) Psa. 145: 18; John 4:24
- 8. We must pray in the name of Christ.**
 - (1) John 15:16
 - (2) Col. 3:17
- 9. We must pray with persistence.**
 - (1) Luke 18:1 - 8
 - (2) Rom. 12:12 -- Steadfast
 - (3) Luke 11: 5 - 13
- 10. We should pray in complete confidence.**

- (1) Hebrews 11:6
- (2) We should pray in fullest confidence that God, as a wise Heavenly Father, will grant us only that which is for our good (Matt. 7: 9 - 11).
- (3) We should pray in fullest confidence that Divine resources are inexhaustible; that we can't ask for more than God can give (Eph. 3:20).
- (4) We should pray in fullest confidence that God will supply all our **real needs** (Matt. 6:33; Psa. 84:11; Psa. 34:10; 37: 25).
- (5) We should pray in fullest confidence that God's promises are sure (II Pet. 3:9; I Pet. 3:12; James 5:16).
- (6) We should pray in fullest confidence that **Jesus understands** (Heb. 4: 14 - 16).

V. HINDRANCES TO ACCEPTABLE PRAYER (Peter tells us in I Pet. 3:7 that our prayers can be hindered): **Matt. 5: 23 - 24; Matt. 6: 14 - 15.**

1. Unbelief hinders our prayers.

- (1) James 1: 5 - 7 -- Trust that God will answer the prayer.
- (2) Matt. 21:22
- (3) Mark 11:24
- (4) Heb. 11:6

2. Selfish motives hinder our prayers.

- (1) James 4: 2 - 3
- (2) Our lusts (Luke 15: 13 - 14).

3. Praying to be seen of others hinders our prayers.

- (1) Matt. 6:5
- (2) We do not pray to the brethren, but to God.

4. Praying to be heard for our "much speaking" hinders our prayers.

- (1) Matt. 6:7
- (2) Use simplicity and not high-sounding phraseology.

5. Sin in our lives that we will not turn from in repentance hinders our prayers.

- (1) Ungodly attitudes
- (2) Forsaking the assembly
- (3) Drinking
- (4) Immodesty
- (5) Adulterous marriages
- (6) 2 Chron. 7: 14
- (7) Psa. 66:18
- (8) I John 3:22
- (9) Isa. 59: 1 - 2; 55: 6 - 7
- (10) God forbade Jeremiah to pray for Judah (Jer. 7:16; 14: 11 - 12).
- (11) He would not hear Saul (I Sam. 28: 6, 15).

6. Our unwillingness to forgive others hinders our prayers.

- (1) Mark. 11: 25
- (2) Matt. 5:23, 24; Rom. 12: 18
- (3) Matt. 6: 14 - 15

7. Wrong home relationships hinder our prayers.

- (1) I Pet. 3:7
 - (2) I Cor. 7: 2 - 5
 - (3) Woman in subjection (I Pet. 3:1; Tit. 2:5)
 - (4) Husbands (Col. 3:19; I Tim. 5:8)
- 8. Our failure to learn how to pray hinders our prayers.**
- (1) Luke 11:1
- 9. Self-righteousness hinders our prayers.**
- (1) Luke 18:9 - 14 -- The Pharisee not justified.
 - (2) The Publican was justified.
 - (3) We must pray in humility (2 Chron. 7:14).
- 10. Worldliness hinders prayer (I Tim. 2:8; James 4:8; 5:16).**
- (1) I Pet. 3:12
 - (2) I John 2: 15 - 16
- 11. An insincere heart hinders prayer.**
- (1) Matt. 6:5
- 12. Vain repetitions hinder prayer.**
- (1) Matt. 6:7; Eccl. 5:2
 - (2) It is not wrong to use the same words (Matt. 26:44).

VI. ELEMENTS OF ACCEPTABLE PRAYER

- 1. PRAISE to God is to be a part of our prayers.**
- (1) Jesus in the model prayer (Matt. 6:9).
 - (2) The disciples' prayer in Acts 4:24.
 - (3) The Hebrew writer (Heb. 13:15).
- 2. SUPPLICATIONS -- Earnest entreaty; requests for particular benefits (I Tim. 2:1).**
- (1) We pray for food (Matt. 6:11).
 - (2) We pray for forgiveness (Matt. 6:12; Acts 8:22; I John 1:9; I John 2:1 - 2).
 - (3) We pray for protection and care (Matt. 24: 20).
 - (4) We pray for time of temptation (Matt. 6:13; Matt. 26:41; 2 Pet. 2:9; I Cor. 10:13).
 - (5) We pray for the sick (James 5: 15 - 16).
 - (6) Phil. 4:6
 - (7) We pray for opportunities to teach the lost (Matt. 9: 27 - 28; Col. 4: 2 - 4; 2 Thess. 3: 1 - 3; Eph. 6: 18 - 19).
- 3. INTERCESSION -- An appeal in behalf of others (I Tim. 2:1).**
- (1) Jesus prayed a prayer of intercession in John 17: 1 - ff; 9: 19, 20
 - (2) The Lord prayed for Peter (Luke 22: 32).
 - (3) Paul prayed for certain brethren (I Cor. 1:4; Eph. 1: 15 - 18; Phil. 1: 3 - 5; 1: 9 - 11).
 - (4) We all need to pray for others.
 - 1. Brethren who sin, who repent, and confess their sins (James 5:16; I John 5: 16; Acts 8: 18 - 24).
 - 2. For enemies (Matt. 5: 44 - 46; Luke 6: 28).
 - 3. For Rulers (I Tim. 2: 2; Rom. 13: 1 - 7; I Pet. 2: 13 - 17).
 - 4. For Sinners (Rom. 10:1).
 - 5. For the sick (James 5: 15 - 16; 3 John 2).

6. For elders and preachers (Heb. 13:18; 2 Thess. 3: 1 - 2).
- 4. THANKSGIVING -- An expression of gratitude for favors received (I Tim. 2:1; Psa. 100:4; I Thess. 5:18; Phil. 4:6).**
- (1) We need to express our thanks for the material and spiritual blessings of life.
1. The Material Blessings:
 - (1) Food, clothing, and shelter.
 - (2) Reasonable health and strength.
 - (3) Our Families.
 - (4) Modern conveniences.
 - (5) Friends.
 - (6) Mates.
 - (2) The Spiritual Blessings:
 1. Christ
 2. The Gospel
 3. The church
 4. The blood of Christ
 5. Remission of sins
 6. Elders, deacons, preachers
- 5. CONFESSION -- We must confess our sins to God, and to one another when we sin against one another (I John 1:9; James 5:16).**

VII. WHAT PRAYER IS NOT:

- 1. It is not an emergency device.**
 - (1) Some people never pray except when some emergency arises.
 - (2) The need for praying always exists, and God's children should always pray (I Thess. 5:17; Phil. 4:6).
- 2. Prayer is not to inform God and scorn men.**
 - (1) The Pharisee of Luke 18 made this mistake and stood unapproved in his prayer (Luke 18: 9 - 14).
 1. He acknowledged no sin.
 2. No petition was offered.
 3. He informed of his goodness.
- 3. Prayer is not designed to serve our selfish desires (James 4:3).**
 - (1) Luke 15: 12 - 13
- 4. Prayer will not nullify the Law of God, no matter how sincere the one doing the praying may be.**
 - (1) Prayer is not a substitute for the gospel plan of salvation (Rom. 8:2).
- 5. It is not an ultimatum to God.**
 - (1) One must not pray with the attitude of "I want this or else".
 - (2) Moses made this mistake (Ex. 32: 32 - 33).

VIII. WHEN, WHERE, AND WITH WHOM SHOULD GOD'S CHILDREN PRAY?

- 1. We can pray anytime and anywhere.**
 - (1) Luke 18:1
 - (2) I Thess. 5:17
 - (3) Eph. 6:18
 - (4) Paul on the ship in a storm (Acts 27: 35).
- 2. All seasons are the seasons of prayer.**
 - (1) All times of the day (Psa. 55:17).
 - (2) Under all conditions and circumstances (Acts 16: 25).
 - (3) All occasions.
 - (4) All states of mind:
 1. Happy
 2. Sad
 3. Hurt
 4. Depressed
- 3. We should pray our private prayers in secret (Matt. 6:6).**
- 4. We should pray with our families:**
 - (1) Pray at the table.
 - (2) Pray before bedtime.
- 5. We should pray with our mates.**
 - (1) Men should pray with their wives.
- 6. We should pray with our friends.**
- 7. We should pray with our brethren (Acts 20:36).**
- 8. We should pray with the congregation (Acts 2: 42; Matt. 18: 19 - 20).**

IX. WHY PRAY?

- 1. God has taught man to pray (I Thess. 5:17; Luke 18:1).**
- 2. Man senses his own human weaknesses, frailty, and the need for God's help (Psa. 31: 1 - 5; 71: 1 - 3).**
 - (1) In weariness we turn to God for rest.
 1. Paul urges us not to become weary (Gal. 6:9).
 2. The Lord will renew our strength (Isa. 40:31) -- wait upon the Lord; rely upon Him.
 - (2) In weakness we turn to God for strength.
 1. There are moments when we feel small and insignificant.
 2. Phil. 4: 5 - 7, 13
 - (3) In sickness we turn to God for health.
 1. Man desires physical, emotional and spiritual health.
 2. 3 John 2 "*I pray*".
 3. James 5: 15 - 16
 - (4) We turn to God for our physical needs -- what we shall eat, drink and put on.
 1. Matt. 6:11, 25 - 26, 33
 - (5) In loneliness we turn to God for companionship.

- 1. It is terrible to be all alone (Heb. 13:5; 4: 15 - 16).
- (6) In temptation we turn to God for deliverance (Matt. 6:13; I Cor. 10:13; Matt. 26: 41).
- (7) In sorrow we turn to God for comfort (James 5:13).

X. MAN HAS DAILY AND HOURLY NEEDS FOR PRAYER.

1. Times when we need to pray:

- (1) In distress:
 - 1. From family problems
 - 2. From Brethren
 - 3. Our job.
- (2) In sickness:
 - 1. Family
 - 2. Personal
 - 3. Friends
 - 4. Brethren
- (3) In sin -- pray for forgiveness.
- (4) In joy.
- (5) In need.
- (6) When blessed.
- (7) For opportunity to teach and do good.
- (8) For others.
- (9) For safety.
- (10) For our daily bread.

2. We need to pray daily for our daily bread (Matt. 6:11).

- (1) We need God's help daily to be successful in our business or work -- to provide for ourselves, our families, the needy and the church.
- (2) I can only do this with God's help, and it comes through prayer.
- (3) He wants us to trust Him for our daily needs.

3. We need to pray daily that God's will be done in earth as it is in heaven (Matt. 6:10).

- (1) We all need to be working to carry out His will on the earth.
- (2) God's will is to save the lost (I Tim. 2:4).
- (3) We must all submit to God's will every day.

4. We need to pray daily for the forgiveness of our sins (Matt. 6:12).

- (1) We all sin (I John 1:8).
- (2) We must repent, confess, and pray for forgiveness (Acts 8:22; I John 1:9).
- (3) We must forgive others (Matt. 6: 14 - 15).

5. We need to pray daily for God to deliver us from temptation (Matt. 6:13).

- (1) I Cor. 10:13
- (2) 2 Pet. 2:9
- (3) Matt. 26:41

6. We need to pray daily for brethren (2 Tim 1:3).

7. We need to pray for preachers -- that the Word might spread rapidly.

- (1) I Thess. 5:25
- (2) Eph. 6: 17 - 20

- (3) 2 Thess. 3:1
- (4) Acts 6:4
- (5) Col. 4:3
- 8. We need to pray daily for the lost (Rom. 10:1).**
- 9. We need to pray daily for our enemies (Matt. 5:44).**
- 10. We need to pray for health (3 John 2).**
- 11. We need to pray daily for the sick.**
 - (1) James 5: 15 - 16
 - (2) 2 Cor. 12:7 - 10
- 12. We need to pray for those in authority (I Tim. 2: 1 - 3).**
- 13. We need to pray daily for contentment (Heb. 13:5; I Tim. 6:8; Phil. 4:11).**
- 14. We need to pray to God to open unto us doors to save the lost.**
 - (1) We need to see the doors (John 4:35).

XI. GOD'S FULL STOREHOUSE OF BLESSINGS IS OPEN TO HIS CHILDREN FOR THE ASKING.

- 1. Matt. 7: 7 - 11**
- 2. James 1: 5 - 6**
- 3. James 4:3**
- 4. I John 3: 21 - 22**
- 5. I John 5:14**
- 6. God's blessings must be asked for.**
- 7. We go without many things because we do not ask.**
- 8. Prayer is an avenue through which God teaches us to do His will.**

XII. REQUIREMENTS OF ACCEPTABLE PRAYER (Psa. 19:14).

- 1. All prayer should be offered:**
 - (1) In Reverence (Matt. 6:9).
 - 1. We are not God's equal (Isa. 55: 8 - 9).
 - 2. He is Infinite, we are finite.
 - 3. He is Judge, we are judged.
 - 4. Isa. 66:2; Psa. 51:17.
 - (2) In Sincerity (Matt. 6: 5, 6).
 - (3) In Humility -- without arrogance and pride (Luke 18: 9 - 14).
 - (1) The Pharisee exalted himself.
 - (4) In Faith (James 1: 5 - 8).
 - (5) In the name of Christ (John 14:13; Col. 3:17; I Tim. 2:5; John 14:6).
 - (6) Persistently (Luke 18:1).
 - (7) Fervently (Col. 4:12; James 5:16).
 - (8) That God's will be done (Matt. 6:10).
 - (9) With a spirit of obedience (Psa. 66:18).
 - (10) With a forgiving spirit (Matt. 6:12, 14 - 15).

XIII. WE CAN AID OUR BRETHREN IN PRAYER.

- 1. Do you wish to help a brother in Christ? Ask the Lord to help him!**
- 2. Paul received help from the brethren in Greece while he was endangered in Asia (2 Cor. 1:8 - 11).**
- 3. Paul asked the saints in Rome to "*strive together with me in your prayers to God for me*" (Rom. 15:30).**
- 4. Epaphrus labored fervently in prayers for the brethren in Colossae (Col. 4: 12).**
- 5. We labor and strive together, even when separated, by means of prayer.**

XIV. JESUS IS OUR EXAMPLE IN PRAYER.

- 1. Jesus began His ministry praying (Luke 3: 21 - 23).**
- 2. He ended His ministry praying (Luke 23:46).**
- 3. In His day-to-day living He prayed:**
 - (1) He blessed His food (Luke 24:30).
 - (2) He opened His day with prayer (Mark 1:35).
 - (3) "*And He Himself often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed*" (Luke 5: 16) [NKJV].
- 4. Jesus requested specific acts:**
 - (1) He prayed for God to send the Holy Spirit to the apostles (John 14:16).
 - (2) He prayed for Simon Peter that his "*faith fail not*" (Luke 22: 31 - 32).
 - (3) In the Lord's prayer in John 17:
 1. He prayed for Himself (John 17: 1 - 5).
 2. He prayed for His apostles (John 17: 6 - 19).
 3. He prayed for all who would believe through their word (John 17: 20 - 21).
- 5. Jesus prayed before important events in His life.**
 - (1) All night, before choosing His apostles (Luke 6: 12 - 13).
 - (2) Before walking on the sea (Matt. 14: 22 -33).
 - (3) He prayed when the transfiguration occurred (Luke 9: 28 - 36).
- 6. Jesus prayed when facing agony.**
 - (1) Heb. 5:7
 - (2) Luke 22: 44

IS IT SCRIPTURAL TO PRAY TO JESUS?

INTRODUCTION

1. There are able preachers of the gospel today who affirm that it is right to pray to Jesus.
2. What you and I should be concerned about is: Does the New Testament teach we are to pray to Jesus?
3. Let us now study the subject.

I. WHAT THE ISSUE IS NOT:

1. It is not a denial that Jesus is God.
 - (1) The scriptures teach He is Deity (God), just as the Father and Holy Spirit are God (John 1:1; Heb. 1:8).
 - (2) Jesus is God in every sense of the word (John 1:18; 14:9).
2. It is not whether Jesus is to be worshipped as the Father is worshipped -- He is to be worshipped (this we will show later).

II. THE ISSUE IS:

1. DOES THE NEW TESTAMENT AUTHORIZE US TO PRAY TO JESUS IN THIS DISPENSATION?

III. TRUTHS WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND ABOUT THE GODHEAD:

1. There are three Persons in the Godhead (Acts 17:29; Rom. 1: 20; Col. 2:9).
 - (1) Matt. 28: 19 -- Father, Son, Holy Spirit.
 - (2) Eph. 4: 4 - 6 -- One Spirit, One Lord, One God and Father.
2. There is perfect unity in the Godhead.
 - (1) At no time has any person of the Godhead ever been out of harmony with the other persons of the Godhead about any matter.
 - (2) They are ONE in nature, purpose, and work.
 1. John 17: 20 - 22
 2. John 1:18, 14; 7 - 10
 3. Heb. 1: 1, 2; John 16:13
3. All Persons in the Godhead are Active:
 - (1) Each Person of the Godhead has a distinct function in the entire scheme of redemption.
 - (2) They have separate work that complements the work of each other in all that is revealed to us from Creation to the last day when the resurrection and Judgment take place.
 - (3) To assign to one Person a work that another is said to do is to misunderstand the revealed functions of the three Persons of Deity.

1. The Scheme of Redemption
 - (1) God planned it (Eph. 3: 9 - 11).
 - (2) The Son executed it (John 4:34; I Pet. 1: 18 - 19).
 - (3) The Holy Spirit revealed it (John 16:13; I Cor. 2: 9 - 13).
2. Christ was made flesh and died for the sins of the world (John 1:14; I Cor. 15:3).
 - (1) The Father did not die for the sins of the world.
 - (2) The Holy Spirit did not die for the sins of the world.
 - (3) The Son, Jesus Christ, died for the sins of the world -- He did what the other two Persons did not do.
 - (4) The work of the Godhead is both **unified** and **diversified**.
4. **They have different rank in relationship (Matt. 28:19).**
 - (1) They have perfect Unity, **but distinct function**, and each Person is active.
 - (2) These Persons **do not hold** the same relationship to the other.
 1. God is the **HEAD** of Christ (I Cor. 11:3).
 2. God is **EXCEPTED** from being under Christ's authority (I Cor. 15:27).
 - (1) God gave Christ His authority (Matt. 28:18).
 - (3) The Father will judge the world in righteousness **by Christ** (Acts 17: 30 - 31; John 5: 22 - 27).
 - (4) Christ will judge the world by the Word He has spoken by the Holy Spirit (John 12: 48; Rev. 20:12).
 - (5) The Holy Spirit's work is:
 1. Revelation (John 16: 13)
 2. Conviction (John 16:8)
 3. Conversion (Rom. 1: 16 - 17)
 4. Sanctification (I Cor. 6: 9 - 11; John 17:17).
5. **Jesus Christ is indispensable to prayer.**
 - (1) Christ is our High Priest (Heb. 5: 1 - 2).
 1. He is our High Priest who offered His blood for our sins (Heb. 9: 12, 14, 24; Heb. 10: 9 - 22).
 2. Christ is our High Priest who ever lives and makes intercession for us (Heb. 7:25).
 3. God appointed Him High Priest (Heb. 5:4 - 6).
 4. He is a High Priest who understands us (Heb. 4: 15 - 16).
 - (2) Christ is our Mediator.
 1. A mediator stands between two parties.
 2. "*One mediator between God and man. . .*" (I Tim. 2:5).
 3. God speaks to man through His son (Heb. 9:15; 1: 1 - 2).
 - (1) God speaks only through His Son to man.
 4. Man can only speak to God through His Son, Jesus Christ.
 - (1) Jesus was both God and man (John 1:14).
 - (2) He is a perfect Mediator.
 - (3) Christ is our Advocate.
 1. I John 2:1
 2. One who pleads another's cause, an intercessor.

III. WE CAN WORSHIP JESUS IN SONG AND IN THE LORD'S SUPPER, BUT NOT IN PRAYER.

1. Songs of praise, exaltation, and adoration are scriptural when sung to Jesus.

- (1) Eph. 5: 18 - 21
- (2) Col. 3:16 - 17
- (3) These verses show we sing to the Lord and give thanks to God, the Father.
- (4) We should not sing songs that teach us to "*Have a Little Talk With Jesus*"; "*Take It To The Lord in Prayer*"; or "*Tell It To Jesus Alone*".

2. In the Lord's Supper we give thanks to the Father in the name of Christ (I Cor. 11: 23 - 24).

- (1) We remember the Lord Jesus Christ -- His broken body and blood that was shed on the cross for us (I Cor. 11: 23 - 25).
- (2) The Supper is a communion of the blood and of the body of Christ (I Cor. 10:16).
- (3) This act of worship is directed to the Son -- we "*shew the Lord's death till He come*" (I Cor. 11:26).
- (4) We discern the Lord's body (I Cor. 11:29).
- (5) We eat with Him at His table.
 1. Luke 22:30; Mark 14:25; Matt. 26:29
- (6) We, His servants, have the great privilege of coming together and eating His supper with Him each first day of the week -- servants at the Lord's table remembering what He did for us when He died on the cross!

CONCLUSION

1. Prayer is offered to God, the Father.

- (1) Matt. 6: 6 - 9; Luke 11: 1 - 2
- (2) Phil. 4:6; Eph. 5: 20; Col. 3:17
- (3) Matt. 7: 7 - 10; John 14: 13 - 14

FOR WHAT, AND WHY, SHOULD A SINNER PRAY?

INTRODUCTION

- 1. It seems to be a very common idea among religious people that the ALIEN SINNER is to PRAY THROUGH TO SALVATION.**
- 2. Many teach that all a sinner must do to be saved is to PRAY.**
 - (1) People who believe this provide the MOURNER'S BENCH or ALTAR in their services, and invite all who want to be saved to come and pray.
 - (2) Many good and honest people believe this.
 - (3) Such teaching should have our careful consideration.
 - (4) If the word of God teaches the sinner to pray in order to be saved, well and good; if not, it is the doctrine of men (Matt. 15:9).
- 3. Now, if a sinner is to pray, there must be some reason why; or something for which he must pray, otherwise it would be mockery.**
- 4. The alien sinner cannot reasonably ask for something that he already possesses.**
- 5. The sinner cannot consistently ask God to give him the blessings which God has promised upon certain conditions, while he refuses or neglects to meet those conditions.**
 - (1) God has established a law to save man from his sins (Rom. 8:2; I Cor. 9:21; Rom. 1:16).
 - (2) The writer of the book of Proverbs tells us about the man who turns his ear from hearing the law (Prov. 28:9) - "*He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination*".
- 6. God does not set aside His law to answer the prayer of any sinner (Luke 6:46; Matt. 7: 21 - 23).**
- 7. Let us press the question: FOR WHAT can a sinner reasonably and consistently pray?**

I. SHOULD THE SINNER PRAY FOR LIGHT?

- 1. We realize that the sinner needs light.**
- 2. Saul, when he was down praying in Damascus, needed light (Acts 9: 10 - 11).**
 - (1) The Lord sent a messenger to give him light (Acts 22: 16; 9:6).
- 3. Sinners need light today, but all the light they need comes through the Word of God (Psa. 119: 105, 130).**

II. SHOULD THE SINNER PRAY FOR GOD TO LOVE HIM?

- 1. God already loves him (John 3:16; Rom. 5:8).**
- 2. The sinner needs to love God (John 14:15).**

III. SHALL THE SINNER PRAY FOR GRACE?

- 1. Everyone who is saved is saved by God's grace.**
- 2. The sinner doesn't need to pray for it, it is already offered (Titus 2; 11 -12).**
- 3. The sinner needs to appropriate this grace to himself by obeying the gospel (Eph. 2: 5 - 9; Rom. 5:2).**

IV. SHALL THE SINNER PRAY FOR A PURE HEART?

1. The heart is purified by faith (Acts 15: 8,9).
2. WHEN? When one obeys the truth (I Pet. 1:22).

V. SHALL A SINNER PRAY FOR FAITH?

1. Faith is an absolute necessity to salvation (Heb. 11:6; John 8:24; Mark 16:16).
2. Faith does not come by prayer, but by hearing the word of God (Rom. 10:17; John 20: 30 - 31).

VI. SHOULD A SINNER PRAY FOR RELIGION?

1. An irreligious man could not be saved; one must be religious.
2. Religion is not something you get, but something you do (James 1: 27; Matt. 7: 21).

VII. SHALL THE SINNER PRAY FOR GOD'S SAVING POWER?

1. All who are saved will be saved by God's saving power.
2. What is that power? The gospel (Rom. 1: 16 - 17).
3. How does it save? (2 Thess. 1: 7 - 9)

VIII. SHOULD A SINNER PRAY FOR GOD TO BE WILING TO SAVE HIM?

1. God is already willing (2 Pet. 3:9; I Tim. 2:4; Acts 10: 34 -35).

IX. SHALL THE SINNER PRAY FOR UNDERSTANDING?

1. The Word "*giveth understanding to the simple*". (Psa. 119: 130).
2. Eph. 5:17

X. SHALL THE SINNER PRAY TO BE MADE CLEAN?

1. The sinner is made clean through the word (John 15:3).
2. When? When he obeys (Eph. 5:26).

XI. SHALL THE SINNER PRAY FOR GOD TO HAVE MERCY UPON HIM?

1. When the sinner turns to God in obedience He will have mercy on him (Isa. 55:7; Tit. 3:5).

XII. SHOULD THE SINNER PRAY TO BE BORN AGAIN?

1. One must be born again, but how is the new birth brought about? (John 3: 3 - 5).
2. Mark 16: 15, 16

XIII. SHALL THE SINNER PRAY FOR GOD TO ACCEPT HIM?

1. Acts 10:34, 35; Psa. 119: 172

XIV. SHALL THE SINNER PRAY FOR REPENTANCE?

- 1. Repentance is produced by:**
 - (1) Being convicted of sin (John 16:8).
 - (2) Godly sorrow (2 Cor. 7:10).
 - (3) The goodness of God (Rom. 2:4).
 - (4) Thinking on the Judgment (Acts 17: 30 - 31).
- 2. It is not produced by prayer.**

XV. SHALL THE SINNER PRAY FOR THE HOLY SPIRIT?

- 1. The Holy Spirit is given when one obeys (I Cor. 6:19).**
- 2. The Spirit dwells in our hearts by faith (Eph. 3:17; Gal. 3:2; Rom. 10:17).**

XVI. SHALL THE SINNER PRAY FOR RECONCILIATION?

- 1. "*Be ye reconciled*" (2 Cor. 5:20; Eph. 2: 16, 13).**

XVII. SHALL THE SINNER PRAY FOR CONVERSION?

- 1. Psa. 19:7**
- 2. Rom. 1: 16**

XVIII. SHALL A SINNER PRAY FOR SANCTIFICATION?

- 1. John 17:17 "*Sanctify them through thy truth; . . .*".**
- 2. I Cor. 6:11**

CONCLUSION

- 1. In view of the foregoing, can anyone suggest a single thing for which the sinner should pray?**
- 2. The thing the alien sinner should do is obey the gospel.**

GOD ANSWERS PRAYER TODAY JAMES 5:16

INTRODUCTION

1. All who read the Bible realize that there is much emphasis on prayer (I Thess. 5:17; Luke 18:1).
2. Prayer is a duty and a great privilege.
3. The God we serve is a prayer-hearing God (Psa. 65:2 -- "*O Thou that hearest prayer, . . .* ")
4. God answers the prayers of His people:
 - (1) 2 Chron. 7:14
 - (2) James 5:16
 - (3) James 1: 5 - 6
 - (4) Mark 11: 24
 - (5) Matt. 7: 7 -11
 - (6) Matt. 18:19
5. Examples of God answering prayer:
 - (1) Israel prayed for deliverance from oppression of the Egyptians; God heard their prayer and delivered them by the hand of Moses (Ex. 2: 23 - 25).
 - (2) Hannah prayed fervently for a son; in answer God gave her a son Samuel (I Sam. 1: 10 - 25).
 - (3) Elijah (I Kings 18: 41 - ff; James 5:17).

I. THE PHILOSOPHIES OF NATURALISM AND DEISM HAVE MADE AN ATTACK ON PRAYER.

1. **Naturalism is the belief that the natural world is the whole of reality.**
 - (1) It denies that God has any control over the universe.
 - (2) It holds that scientific laws can explain all phenomena.
 - (3) It says that all situations are already determined by Natural Laws:
 1. Whether there will be rain is already fixed.
 2. The ravages of a disease are already determined by the introduction of germs -- in short, it is always too late.
2. **Deism says that God created the world, but has nothing to do with it now.**
 - (1) It operates by its natural laws without divine intervention.
3. **If you think naturalism and Deism has not affected you, then ask yourself how long it has been since you prayed for rain or fair weather?**
4. **The Bible explicitly teaches that God personally controls the weather:**
 - (1) Matt. 5:45
 - (2) Acts 14:17
 - (3) Job 37: 5 - 6
 - (4) Amos 4:7
5. **Prayer is based on a certain belief about God which is in conflict with many popular philosophies.**
 - (1) The man who prays believes that God is personally involved in the activities of the world.

II. THE BELIEF IN THE POWER OF PRAYER DEMANDS THE FOLLOWING CONCEPTS TO BE ACCEPTED ABOUT GOD:

1. God is personally involved in the operation of the universe at this present day.

- (1) He is providentially working today.
- (2) Just because He is not working miracles today does not limit His ability to act and answer the prayers of His children.
- (3) You will find people today who believe that God used to be personally involved in this world, but withdrew from it after Calvary, and now watches its operation, but is not personally involved.
- (4) Let us look at passages that teach that God is personally involved in the course of events in the Universe today:
 1. Acts 17: 24 - 28
 2. By Christ "*all things consist*" (Col. 1:17; Heb. 1:3; 2 Pet. 3:7).
 3. Matt. 5:45
 4. Matt. 10:29

2. God is a Personal Being.

- (1) Heb. 11: 6
- (2) Prayer is personal communication with a Personal Being (Matt. 6:9).

3. God is concerned for man.

- (1) The God to whom we pray must be a God who cares for us, otherwise, there would be no reason to pray! (I Pet. 5:7; 3:12; Matt. 10:29 - 31; Matt. 6: 25 - 33).

4. God has the power to answer our prayers.

- (1) Our prayers are a recognition of God's providence.
 1. Providence is the preservation, care, and government which God exercises over all things that He has created in order that they may accomplish the ends for which they were created.
 2. Providence differs from a miracle in that its ends are brought about by means of the established laws of God and through the ordinary channels.
 - (1) A Miracle is an act of God superseding or suspending a natural law.
 - (2) Providence is Divine intervention in the affairs of men within the confines of natural law; non-miraculous manipulation of natural law and circumstances to accomplish God's purpose.
 3. God, by His providence, will do things for His children that He otherwise would not do if they had not asked:
 - (1) Matt. 7: 7 - 11
 - (2) I John 5: 14 - 15
 - (3) John 15:7
 - (4) Matt. 21:22
 - (5) Heb. 4:16
 - (6) Our prayers will cause God to alter the course of events which He had previously planned for the world.
 1. Abraham pleads for the righteous in Sodom (Gen. 18: 16 - 33).
 2. Moses pleads for Israel (Ex. 32: 9 - 14).

- (2) God knows our needs before we ask (Matt. 6: 8, 32).
 1. God wants us to recognize our needs and ask (Phil. 4:6).
 2. When we ask He supplies our needs:
 - (1) Daily Bread (Matt. 6:11, 25 - 33).
 - (2) Forgiveness of sins (I John 1:9; Acts 8:22).
- (3) God can answer our prayers because he is "*Almighty*" (Rev. 4:8; Gen. 17:1; Eph. 3:20).
- (4) Our prayers are a recognition of God's ownership.
 1. Psa. 24:1
 2. We ask God for our material blessings, and thank Him for them (Matt. 6:11; Phil. 4:6).

5. God is able to answer prayer.

- (1) The God we serve is "*Almighty God*" (Gen. 17:1).
- (2) God's ways and thoughts are not like man's (Isa. 55:8).
- (3) He was able to bring heaven and earth into existence by the power of His Word (Heb. 11: 3; Psa. 33:6).
- (4) He formed man out of the dust of the ground (Gen 2:7).
- (5) He was able to keep Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego from being burned in the fiery furnace (Dan. 3:27).
- (6) He is able to raise the dead (Eph. 1: 19 - 20).
- (7) He is able to cast both soul and body in hell (Matt. 10:28).
- (8) God "*is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, . . .*" (Eph. 3:20).

III. THE DANGER OF OVER-REACTION TO PENTECOSTALISM.

- 1. I fear that many have over-reacted to Pentecostalism to such an extent that they have made prayer impotent of its power in their lives.**
- 2. Because God does not work miracles now is no reason to believe that He does not work!**
- 3. God DOES WORK in our lives every day -- He works providentially through His established laws and ordinary channels.**
- 4. Our over-reaction to Pentecostalism has caused us to fail to attribute to prayer the power which God has given to it.**
- 5. Our disbelief causes our prayers to go unanswered (James 1: 6 - 7; Luke 18:8).**

CONCLUSION

- 1. Jesus asked the question: "*Nevertheless, when the Son of Man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?*"**
- 2. Is not this question which Jesus asked a pertinent question for the twentieth century church?**
- 3. Have we become afraid to ask God in His providence to change His plans and:**
 - (1) Send us some rain?
 - (2) Allow a brother or sister in Christ, or a loved one, to live?
 - (3) To open doors into which we can enter to preach the gospel (I Cor. 16:9; 2 Cor. 2:12; Col. 4:3)?

DIVINE PROVIDENCE

Divine Providence

The Bible doctrine of divine providence has been neglected by gospel preachers of our generation. In days gone by this subject was given a more prominent place in the preaching and writing of brethren. I believe we have reaped some tragic consequences because of our ignorance on this subject. Extremes have arisen and found fertile soil in which to grow because of the ignorance that exists. I do not believe false teaching on this subject would have found such ready acceptance by some if they had understood God's providential working. Another consequence of not understanding this subject is the gloom, depression and anxiety that afflicts the hearts of so many children of God. If people could only understand this Bible doctrine and have the conviction that the Lord is at hand (near, Phil. 4:5) and that he really cares for us (1 Pet. 5:7), it would do away with so much insecurity, fear, depression and despair that exists in the hearts of so many today.

In order to define what divine providence is, let us first point out what it is not. Divine providence is not a miracle. A miracle is an act of God superseding or suspending natural law. A miracle was a visible sign which indicated to all men that a super-human power was at work in that particular thing. An example of a miracle is the Lord feeding five thousand people with five loaves and two fishes (Jn. 6:8-14). Miracles were for the purpose of confirming the word (Mk. 16:17-20). The word was given in its completeness and confirmed, then miracles ceased (1 Cor. 13:8-13).

Providence differs from a miracle in that its ends are brought about by means of the established laws of God through ordinary channels. Providence is the preservation, care and government which God exercises over all things that he has created in order that they may accomplish the end for which they were created.

God's providence does not eliminate the necessity of following the word of God in every detail. God, through his word, brings about conversion and edification of his people (Rom. 1:16; Acts 20:32). This does not eliminate our using all the care, sense and skill that we can exercise; neither does it eliminate the free-moral agency of man. God's providence works with two kinds of wills -willing wills and opposing wills.

Good men suffer many times at the hands of evil men - evil men meaning it for evil but God in his providence can overrule it for the good of the innocent. Joseph, in the Old Testament, is a good example of God overruling the evil intent and actions of his brothers for good. Joseph said to his brother: "But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this

day, to save much people alive" (Gen. 50:20). The psalmist said: "He (God) sent a man before them, even Joseph, who was sold for a servant" (Psa. 105:17). This example of Joseph is a good commentary on Romans 8:28, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose. " This verse does not mean that everything that happens to a Christian is good within itself, but that God, through his providence, can ultimately overrule even the bad for our good. He did this for Joseph, why deny he can do it for us today?

It is upon the belief in God's providence that prayer is founded. We pray because we believe that God will hear our prayers and that he has the power to grant our petitions through his providence. He does not answer our prayers with miracles, but through his providence - working through his established laws and ordinary channels. We pray for doors to be opened through which we can enter to preach the gospel (Col. 4:3; 1 Cor. 16:9; 2 Cor. 2:12), and God opens these doors through his providence in answer to our prayers. We pray for our daily food (Matt. 6:11); we labor with our hands (Eph. 4:28), and God will provide our needs through his providence. We pray for the sick (Jas. 5:14-18), and God heals the sick - providentially. We pray that we may not be led into temptation and for God to deliver us from temptation (Matt. 6:13; 1 Cor. 10:13; Matt. 26:41); and God, through his providence, will make a way of escape in answer to our prayer (we must use the way of escape God will not deliver a man from temptation unless that man wills him to do so). We, as God's people, need to have faith that the Lord is at hand, not afar off (Phil. 4:5,6; Jer. 23:23-24) and that we in everything can make our requests known to him and he will providentially answer our prayers (1 Jn. 5:14-15).

Jesus gives proof of divine providence to the Christian in Matthew 6:24-34. In verse 25 of this chapter he tells us to take no thought (or be not anxious) for our lives, about what we will eat, drink, or put on; God, who gave us our lives and our bodies, will give us food and raiment. Jesus is not teaching laziness here. We are to work, doing our best (Eph. 4:28), then leave the rest to God. In verse 26 Jesus tells us to "behold the fowls of the air",- God feeds them, and we are of much more value than fowls, so God will feed and take care of us. In verse 27 Jesus says that worry will not add one cubit to our stature, so to worry about what we are going to eat, drink or wear is needless because God will provide it through his providence. In verses 31 and 32 he tells us that God knows we have need of food, drink and clothing, so we are not to worry about them like the Gentiles do because we know that God will supply them. Jesus then gives the Christian the proper course to pursue in verse 33: "but seek Ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness" and God, through his providence, will supply our temporal needs. He said, "Take therefore no thought for the morrow" (v. 34), because God will providentially care for us.

Christian friend, faith in God's providential care will take the worry out of our lives. All who walk by faith take God at his word and sincerely believe that the things he has promised he is able to perform (Rom. 4:21). Do you believe that

God works through his providence today? Too many Christians have "little faith" (Matt. 6:30) in God's providential care. We all need more faith that "his eyes are over the righteous and his ears are open to their prayers" (1 Pet. 3:12); that he is near us (Phil. 4:5), and that we can cast our cares upon him for he does care for us (1 Pet. 5:7).

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