

What is Prayer?

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Re-capturing what the Word of God teaches about prayer, from false teachers, and helping all of us to double-check that our understanding of prayer is founded on the Word of God.

Good morning everyone! How is your day and week so far?

I just want to start by saying that I'm personally delighted to see the increase in conversations about prayer :) For me, this is extremely exciting! :) ~ It has been one of my strong desires to see Christians learning what prayer is and how to pray for many years, especially when I noticed a couple of decades ago that there was such a lack of honest Bible teaching on it, and it seems Christians had almost forgotten it completely. Since I was young and in youth groups, through my years in volunteer youth ministry, to my family's journey through many churches, I've been deeply saddened to see so much lack of understanding of God and what prayer is.

Is prayer a spell? Does prayer 'work'? Is God busy - is that why He doesn't always answer prayers the way we hoped? Why does He not answer us and solve this problem for us?... all kinds of confusion on prayer. I hope, over time, to answer a lot of these questions - and any that any of you send to me. I'm always glad for discussion and fellowship on the Word of God! Biblical discussion with verses **is** real fellowship! And it's the closest to Heaven-on-Earth as we can get :)

So, I want to discuss in this short study some key basics of what prayer is and what prayer is not. I also want to note that we all need to go back to the Bible to understand prayer - not 'new' books. It saddens me every time I see people relying on books while their Bibles (or even e-Bibles) collect dust. Bible - always. Books... only to the extent that they completely match God's Word. Most mix truth with error every so well...

Okay - what is prayer? That's the first question, right? It's rather simple one - just 3 words. The answer though... will require a lot more words. :) But, first let's look at verses from which we can pull our definition.

⁵Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand. ⁶Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; ⁷and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. ⁸Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy-- meditate on these things. ⁹The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you." (Philippians 4:5-9)

¹⁶Rejoice always, ¹⁷pray without ceasing, ¹⁸in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. ¹⁹Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰Do not despise prophecies. ²¹Test all things; hold fast what is good. ²²Abstain from every form of evil." (1st Thessalonians 5:16-22)

For the fun of it (*because of its inaccuracy*), I quote Webster's Dictionary 1828 (he was a mason). This is how Mr. Webster defines prayer:

Prayer

PRA'YER, noun *In a general sense, the act of asking for a favor, and particularly with earnestness.*

1. *In worship, a solemn address to the Supreme Being, consisting of adoration, or an expression of our sense of God's glorious perfections, confession of our sins, supplication for mercy and forgiveness, intercession for blessings on others, and thanksgiving, or an expression of gratitude to God for his mercies and benefits. A prayer however may consist of a single petition, and it may be extemporaneous, written or printed.*

2. *A formula of church service, or of worship, public or private.*

3. *Practice of supplication. ex: "As he is famed for mildness, peace and prayer"*

4. *That part of a memorial or petition to a public body, which specifies the request or thing desired to be done or granted, as distinct from the recital of facts or reasons for the grant. We say, the prayer of the petition is that the petitioner may be discharged from arrest.*

Note the words 'Supreme Being' - that's how masons refer to God (but it's a lie). They call Him the 'Grand Architect of the Universe'... the problem is they say that all the 'gods' are the same and that we all worship the same 'god'... which turns out to be 'Lucifer', but you wouldn't find that out unless you climbed the masonry satanic ladder to the top... Also did you notice how he carefully picked his words so as not to associate it only with the Bible and Biblical Christianity? That's a word-trick those who are pushing ecumenical lies (*'all religions are the same'*) use all the time. Mr. Webster's definitions would include all 'prayer' to any 'god' or 'goddess', even the pagan Canaanite, Babylonian, Egyptian, Greek and Roman lies and mythology. But, God answers these lies clearly: **"⁶That they may know from the rising of the sun to its setting, that there is none besides Me. I AM the LORD, and there is no other..."** (Isaiah 45:6) Those who seek another 'god', seek a way to do their sin without the fear of the rightful judgment due for their rebellion against the One and Only Holy Creator

and Judge. God says it this way: "²²**Professing to be wise, they became fools,**
²³**and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man--and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.**" (Romans 1:22-23)

Back to prayer, though. Even though Mr. Webster didn't know quite what prayer was, he did get a few things right. He described some things done in prayer. Prayer is simply talking to God - not in an abstract way as those in false religions do. No, prayer is talking to God with high reverence, and an honesty that fits a conversation with a close friend. God knows everything about us - nothing is hidden from His sight. But, He won't do something if we don't ask. You see, with God, it's a personal covenant relationship with the Holy Living Creator and each of us - if we want it. Biblically speaking, prayer is seeking God and asking Him to explain to us His perspective, and wanting things to go well for people spiritually first, including us all learning hard lessons to leave more sin behind. It's spending time in His Word to hear from Him, and learn how to view the world rightly, so then we can cooperate/partner with Him to teach others to walk in His ways, and to leave behind sin that destroys us, our soul, and our family and those we love.

Sadly, the many who turn the Bible into stories, also turn prayer into a spell or wizardry. 2nd Timothy 3:13 even notes, if you look at the Greek, that there are many deceivers acting as preachers who use wizardry to cast spells, and keep followers after themselves, while they peddle the Word of God for profit. Did you just notice that describes many in the US? The good news is many are growing weary of those who refuse to teach the Word of God, and they are leaving the liars, fakes, and hirelings, and starting home-Bible-studies and home-churches (who need no licensing from men, only God's approval in His Word). One of the easiest ways to spot the errors in the common understanding of 'prayer' is to notice when people turn prayer into an object to use, rather than an-going conversation with God.

Which brings me to another topic on prayer - there are many confusions on prayer. Some think that prayer is an object to be used to get what they want. Some even blurr it a little more to think that God is a 'genie' who they just have to ask the right way to get what they selfishly want. Others think that prayer is clearing your mind and trying to avoid thoughts, while you sit in silence with your mind numbed, listening to hypnotic sounds or music. That mind-clearing practice is apparently common, though it's foreign to me - and it has many names, including: 'Christian yoga', 'transcendental meditation', 'contemplative prayer', and 'spiritual formation'. As you can see, all of these are tricks of the devil to confuse people on what prayer is.

Then there are other ideas that have some truth to them... but only if understood from a Biblical basis. Like the terms that are used to describe spiritual warfare. Is there spiritual warfare? Yes. Is it hand-to-hand battle with the devil? No. Does satan flee when you mention Jesus' name? No. How do we chase off the devil and demons? God's answer is simple: "⁸**Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.**" (1st Peter 5:8) How

do we resist satan? God answers that one too: ¹²**Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.** ¹³**Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone.** ¹⁴**But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed.** ¹⁵**Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death."** (James 1:12-15) So, how do we resist the devil? Simple obedience and growth in saying "no" to temptations to sin. It's very simple, but it requires us to actually understand and embrace the teachings of the gospel: to surrender to Christ completely (Luke 6:46), and to deny ourselves, take up our cross and follow Him (Luke 9:23-26).

Another common confusion is what God requires from us in prayer. That was why I talked about the deceptive wording of the 'definition' by masonic Mr. Webster. Our culture teaches us in every way possible how to pray to and petition false 'gods' and demons. The world does not teach us how to pray to and petition the real God and Creator and Judge. The only Book that does that is the Bible - and yes it is One Book all the way through, not one Book divided in two. God is the same yesterday, today, and forever - He will never change, and people prayed to Him in the Old Testament the same way they do in the New Testament, though how God revealed Himself is different now (largely so) because Christ has come and explained these things more clearly in the written Word, the Bible. Yet the way God answers prayer is the same throughout Scripture.

Another key subject is to know and understand what and why some of our prayers seem to go unanswered. There are a number of factors to consider when we don't see prayer answered. I hope to get to that in a future study...

Another thing to discuss on this subject is the catch-phrases. I was using one today when chatting about the Bible with a friend. I used the common worldly-phrase 'Prayer Works'. But, right after I said it, I thought - wait a minute... prayer doesn't work, God works through prayer. And then I realized my mistake. Prayer isn't a spell to be cast. It truly is a conversation with God to find out how to partner with Him for His will, not to bend His ear to get Him to do ours.

This is part one of starting Biblical discussion on prayer. Lord-willing (and expecting feedback from others), I expect this series will continue.

For now, may the Lord be with you, and let's keep growing in hunger and thirst for God's Word, humbly following Him and His ways, and sharing the Gospel and the Word of God with all who will listen. ~ have a blessed day, your growing bro, SH :)
P.S. If you want to reach me, just message me anytime: Steven.H3(at)gmail.com ~