

The Privilege And Power Of Prayer

"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." Phil. 4:6

Condensed from a lesson by Irwin Doran

During the Jewish dispensation only the Jews had the privilege of approaching God in prayer. Today, the privilege of approaching God in prayer belongs to the church class, the members of the body of Christ. Because of imperfect minds, understanding the power, as well as the privilege of prayer, may be limited. However, with the blessing of the holy spirit, understanding and appreciating the power and privilege of prayer to some degree is possible.

Trust And Abide

We are trusting in the promises of God. He will accomplish his divine purpose in us and direct our steps. "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them." (Psa. 34:7).

He will accomplish his divine purpose in us, if we abide in Him and His word abides in us and we are faithful and obedient. As new creatures: "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God and not us (2 Cor. 4:7).

We are instructed to pray without ceasing, or be in a prayerful attitude at all times. We look to God in every perplexity and experience.

A Consideration Of God

The audience of God and communion with him is a great and awesome privilege. This is a wonderful condescension that he regards our low estate. We might more fully understand how great this condescension is by considering the greatness of our heavenly Father.

For example, God's glory covers the heavens and his kingdom rules the universe. He is without beginning and without end. God is immortal and self existing. He dwells in the light that no man can approach. No man has seen nor can see God. The heavens declare God's glory and the firmament showeth his handiwork. Nothing can be hid from him because he never slumbers or sleeps. No one can fathom His wisdom or understand his ways. God's mighty intellect grasps with ease the immensity and the minutiae of all the interests of his great domain.

God Loves Us

We are the creatures of his hand—fearfully and wonderfully made. We are the subjects of God's love and care. He loved us while we were yet sinners and he made provision at great cost for our redemption, restitution and subsequent eternal glory. Because he loves us, he extends to us the favor of coming to him as children as to a father. Our invitation to commune with such a great and powerful god is a wonderful privilege, and certainly an act of condescension of

our loving and Almighty Heavenly Father.

Reverence

While he is a loving God, he is to be feared (reverenced) and awed. We are never to assume an equality to Him in our prayer relationship. We are to come into God's presence with decorum and ceremony commanded by His glorious person and office. "For He is not a man, as I am, that I should answer him, and we should come together in judgement".(Job. 9:32).

Approaching God

In our present society we would not walk into the office of a doctor or dentist without an appointment. Nor would we walk into the office of a city mayor, a senator, or the President of the United States without following proper regulations.

Jesus offered some wise instruction regarding the proper way to approach our Heavenly Father. "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6).

Rules And Regulations

Jesus gave us an illustration of "properness" in what is referred to as the Lord's prayer. Please review Matt. 6:9-13. Jesus is laying down the rules and regulations for the attitude we should have when we approach God who has given us such a great privilege.

Believers are reinstated to the original position as sons of God. We may confidently address God as our Father. When we hallow his name we show our adoration and reverence for his glorious character and attributes. We sympathize with God's revealed plan for a coming kingdom of righteousness as we acknowledge his kingdom to come, His will be done on earth as it is in heaven. In simple language, we show our dependence upon God for our daily needs and we show our childlike confidence in the Father. We trust that he will supply our needs. We express our desire to be protected by God against the wily adversary when we pray to not be led into temptation.

This prayer, provided by Jesus, gives us the principles of mind and heart required to properly address the throne of heavenly grace. An acceptable prayer must show faith, reverence, esteem and sympathy for the divine plan, submission and childlike dependence, acknowledgement of sins, desire for forgiveness, and a forgiving disposition which craves divine guidance and protection.

Instant In Prayer

God knows the necessity of communion for a healthy spiritual life. He knows that in sincerity of consecration, we will experience "tempest tossed trials" and need his comfort and care. According to the scriptures we are assured of an open invitation to prayer to our Heavenly Father.

"Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4:16).

"If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love

him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him" (John 14:23).

"For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers" (1 Peter 3:12).

"That men ought always to pray, and not to faint" (Luke 18:1).

"Pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5:17).

Lack Of Reverence

As we consider these encouragements to pray to our Father in heaven, we are again reminded of the reverential fear required. Possibly, this essential element lacked, causing Adam and Eve to be distracted by Satan. Also, calamities fell upon Lot, Ishmael, and Esau. However, a sincere reverential attitude brought blessings to Noah, Abraham, and Isaac. In view of these examples, let us frequently and with the "fear" of God, approach His merciful throne.

"Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust. But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him" (Psa. 103:13, 17).

Intimate Prayer

With these loving encouragements to approach our heavenly Father, we can pray to him in the midst of our cares and perplexities of the day. He is available instantly for us. We are also instructed to take time for intimate fellowship with him. The scriptures assure us that we can ask for wisdom, strength, fortitude, comfort, etc. not only for ourselves, but for others, also.

"When thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly"(Matt. 6:6).

Answer To Prayer

We have a responsibility to watch for the answers to our prayers. We will begin to see the course of his providences shaping events and circumstances for our good or the good of others. We know that he will direct our paths for the spiritual good of the new creature.

Persistency In Prayer

Jesus gave us the parable of the importune widow (Luke 18:1-5) to assure us of always approaching the throne of grace, even with the smaller matters of life. Importunity conveys the thought of asking for a thing urgently and persistently. Like the widow, in determination we can show our earnest desires in prayer. We should not faint from lack of faith or zeal if the answer is delayed.

"And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily" (Luke 18:7,8).

"And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day. And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me" (Gen. 32:24, 26).

Paul shows an example of importunity when he besought the Lord in prayer three times to take away the thorn in his flesh. He continued until he received assurance that God's grace was sufficient for him (2 Cor. 12:7-10).

Jesus' Example

The scriptures reveal Jesus' prayer habits and give us a marvelous example to follow.

'And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God" (Luke 6:12).

"And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone" (Matt. 14:23).

"And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed" (Mark 1:35).

"And he withdrew himself into the wilderness, and prayed" (Luke 5:16).

Proper Prayers

The times in which we live may sometimes cause complications and circumstances that lead us to the throne of grace. For example, when a mother's counsel and a father's wisdom seem inadequate to guide the wayward course of an impetuous youth, invoking God's wisdom and guidance in prayer is very appropriate.

Maybe the perplexities of the business world are an annoyance or distraction from our spiritual goals. Calling upon the Lord to help us apply the scriptures and not be overcharged with the cares of this life is our prayer privilege.

Both extremes of wealth and poverty can interfere with our peace of mind and communion with God. The scriptures teach us not to be slothful in business and to provide things decent and honest. However, we are encouraged to seek God's wisdom and direction to show us how to manage our temporal affairs.

Sweet Communion

Through all our earthly trials and experiences, let us sweeten our days and comfort our nights through communion with our Father in heaven. He can ease our burdens and lighten our cares. Such is the will of God, that we avail ourselves of the privilege and power of prayer.