



GOOD NEWS

for the unsaved WORLD!

(#30)

Various prayer examples and lessons we can learn from them.

PRAYER examples

... one of [Jesus'] disciples said to Him,
"Lord, teach us to pray ..."
 Luke 11:1b (NASB)

- A person's *natural* tendency is to pray *self-centered prayers*.
- A person controlled by the *Spirit* has *a totally different focus*.

GOD WILL PRAY WITH US, EVEN WHILE WE ARE LEARNING!

- **God shows us what Spirit-controlled prayer is like.**
 - He gives us many examples in the Bible.
 - We will look at a few of them – from the book of Acts; Jesus' model prayer; Paul; and a few others.
- **When we are not sure how to pray:**
 - The Spirit "secretly" changes our weak prayers into something that agrees with God's will.

For we don't even know what we should pray for, nor how we should pray. But the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that cannot be expressed in words.
 ... the Spirit pleads for us believers in harmony with God's own will.
 Romans 8:26b-27 (NLT)

THIS IS ONE OF THE REASONS PRAYERS AREN'T ALWAYS ANSWERED THE WAY WE ASK.

Prayer examples from the book of Acts.

- **There are many references to prayer.**
 - Some passages just say that the people prayed.
 - Other passages describe the prayer – either a summary or the prayer itself.
- **Here, we will look at 3 examples.**

- ✓ Acts 1:24-25
- ✓ Acts 4:24-30
- ✓ Acts 7:59-60

✓ **Acts 1:24-25 – Choosing a replacement for Judas.**

➤ **Lesson:** Aware that God fully understands all things; desiring what best conforms to his will.

Then they prayed,
 "Lord, you know everyone's heart.
 Show us which of these two you have chosen to take over this apostolic ministry, which Judas left to go where he belongs."
 Acts 1:24b-25 (NIV)

- ← **RECOGNIZING THAT GOD'S OMNISCIENCE* INCLUDES EVERYTHING ABOUT US**
- ← **WILLING SUBMISSION TO GOD'S WILL**
- ← **NOT "SUGAR-COATING" THEIR PRAYER, BUT WILLING TO ADMIT UNPLEASANT REALITIES**

* ("Omniscience" = "all-knowing.")

✓ **Acts 4:24-30 – The disciple's response to persecution.**

➤ **Background:** The religious leaders told them to stop telling people about Jesus. The apostles reported this to the other Christians.

➤ **Lesson 1:** Their first desire – not the removal of trials, but a proper response to them!

When they were released, they went to their friends and reported what the chief priests and the elders had said to them.
 And when they heard it, they lifted their voices together to God and said, "Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them, ...

- ← **THEY TOLD THE OTHER CHRISTIANS ABOUT WHAT HAD HAPPENED**
- ← **AS A GROUP, THEY PRAYED**
- ← **FIRST FOCUS: ON GOD – AS SOVEREIGN OVER ALL THINGS; CREATOR OF ALL**

... who through the mouth of our father David, your servant, said by the Holy Spirit,

" 'Why did the Gentiles rage, and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers were gathered together, against the Lord and against his Anointed'—

for truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place. ...

QUOTE SCRIPTURE (PROPHECY) ABOUT THE REBELLION OF PEOPLE AGAINST GOD

ACKNOWLEDGED A FULFILLMENT OF THIS PROPHECY IN WHAT THE LEADERS DID

ACKNOWLEDGED GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY IN ALL OF THIS

Prophecy is one aspect of God's sovereignty. They considered it fully compatible with human responsibility.

... And now, Lord, look upon their threats

and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness,

while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus."

Acts 4:23-30 (ESV)

(THE LEADERS' ONGOING FULFILLMENT OF PSALM 2)

PRAYER FOR STRENGTH TO CONTINUE OBEYING GOD

Instead of panic, they prayed for boldness ... with no regard for the consequences!

➤ **Lesson 2:** People who *claim* to be "Bible believers" aren't always doing so. They may actually be *opposing* God!

➤ **Lesson 3:** Their awareness that God was in control influenced their response. (No hatred toward the religious leaders.)

Their prayer request wasn't "stop the leaders," but "help us to obey you"!

✓ **Acts 7:59-60 – Stephen, when dying for Jesus' sake.**

➤ **Lesson 1:** Love for (and trust in) God, and love for enemies.

➤ **Lesson 2:** An example of someone who had the boldness prayed for in Acts 4.

And as they stoned him, Stephen prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

And he fell to his knees, shouting, "Lord, don't charge them with this sin!" And with that, he died.

Acts 7:59-60 (NLT)

TRUSTING GOD TO TAKE CARE OF HIM – EVEN THROUGH DEATH

A SPIRIT OF FORGIVENESS; CONCERNED ABOUT THEIR GUILT BEFORE GOD

NOTE WHAT'S ABSENT: Love for "self-preservation"!
This whole "persecution event" occurred because he confronted them with their sin (instead of "toning down" the truth).

Some other prayer examples.

➤ **The Bible contains many examples of prayer.**

- Most show us how people pray, when they love God.
- In addition to examples, there are specific instructions. (Example: Be careful about your motives – James 4:1-3.)

➤ **Here, we will look at only a few examples.**

✓ Matthew 6:9-13 – "The Lord's prayer."
✓ Some of Paul's prayers.
✓ A few other New Testament examples.
✓ A few Old Testament examples.

SHORT SUMMARIES

✓ **Matthew 6:9-13 – "The Lord's prayer."**

➤ **Background:** This isn't what *Jesus* would pray, but a model for *us* to follow. (A shortened version is in Luke 11:2-4.)

➤ **Lesson #1:** Praying for *our* needs is to occur within the context of desiring *God's* glory.

"This, then, is how you should pray:
" 'Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done
on earth as it is in heaven. ...

**OUR #1 FOCUS = ON GOD:
1) HIS SPECIAL PLACE IN OUR LIVES;
2) HIS RULE ON EARTH;
3) HIS SOVEREIGN WILL**

WE DESIRE GOD TO BE #1 ON EARTH, AS HE IS IN HEAVEN

... Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one.'

Matthew 6:9-13 (NIV)

**WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF DESIRING GOD'S GLORY,
PRAYER FOR:
1) OUR NEEDS;
2) FORGIVENESS;
3) PROTECTION FROM EVIL**

➤ **Lesson #2 (about forgiveness):** Jesus warns us that our attitude toward *others* who sin against us must be the same as the attitude we want God to have toward *us*. THIS FACT INFLUENCED THE ATTITUDE OF THE CHRISTIANS TOWARD THEIR PERSECUTORS! (Example: Stephen, in Acts 7:60.)

➤ **Lesson #3:** When we repeat this prayer, we must remember...

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✓ Some of Paul's prayers.

PASSAGE	EXAMPLE OF WHAT IT SHOWS US
Romans 1:8-10	Thanking God because their growing faith was well-known around the world; also prayer that he could visit them for mutual encouragement.
Ephesians 1:15-20	Thankfulness for their faith; prayer for them to have: 1) increased wisdom to know God better, and 2) a greater understanding of their future hope and God's supreme power (at work in them) to make it happen.
Philippians 1:2-7	Thankful for their involvement in sharing the Good News; confident that God will finish the good work he has begun in them.
1 Thessalonians 1:2-3	Thanking God for the visible results of their faith, love and hope.

✓ A few other New Testament examples.

PASSAGE	EXAMPLE OF WHAT IT SHOWS US
Matthew 11:25-26	Praising God for his sovereign wisdom – revealing his truth to the lowly (children), rather than to those who seemed wise.
Matthew 26:39-44	Willing to do the Father's will <i>instead of</i> his own... though it would mean pain and suffering.
John 17	Jesus' prayer for us, that we may share his glory. (There is much more in this large passage.)
3 John 1:2	Prayer that the condition of their physical health would match the wonderful condition of their spiritual health! (Note the priority.)

✓ The Old Testament also contains many prayers that can teach us.

PASSAGE	EXAMPLE OF WHAT IT SHOWS US
Nehemiah 9:5-38	Praise to God that he is the creator; praise for all that he did for Israel. Confession of the nation's ongoing rebellion, and that their punishment was deserved. A commitment to change.
Job 42:1-6	[After several prayers of complaint, followed by God's confrontation.] Confess God's sovereignty and wisdom; admission that he (Job) lacked both; repentance for his attitude and the demands he foolishly made in previous prayers.
Psalms 51	A prayer of repentance ; a desire to have a clean heart and to serve God faithfully; a commitment to proclaim God's goodness to others.

What type of praying do you desire?

- The Bible's type of praying is not natural to us.
 - You can try faking it... but you can't fool God.
- Genuine God-honoring prayer starts with God, who makes it possible for those who have:
 - A renewed *mind* (Romans 12:2).
 - A willingness to take the necessary *time* for changing the way they think.

☀️ **Do you want this type of prayer? If so...**

THEN
WHAT ARE
YOU WAITING FOR?

THIS WEEK

LET'S LEARN TO ...

- **Talk** to our glorious Lord (= "Master") ...

AND PREPARE TO ...

- Move to the "next step" of *living for him!*

Credits

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