

Newton Church of Christ
THEME - "LORD
TEACH US TO PRAY"

Luke 11:1 Now it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, [that] one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples."
(NKJV)



Adult Bible Class

Teacher - John Cripps

Meeting At:

St James Church Street and Glendale Rd
Newton, North Carolina

INDEX OF LESSONS

Lesson One -	Prayer a Biblical Definition
I. Lesson Two -	Will The Son of Man Find Faith
II. Lesson Three -	The Christians Prayer Life
III. Lesson Four -	Importunate Prayer
IV. Lesson Five -	Why Should I Pray In An Age When Miracles Have Ceased?
V. Lesson Six -	Bible Prayer Warriors
<u>Appendix Lessons</u>	
VI. Lesson Seven -	Prayer In Time Of Need and Suffering
VII. Lesson Eight -	Prayer
VIII. Lesson Nine -	Congregational Prayer Leaders
IX. Lesson Ten -	Principles of Prayer
X. Lesson Eleven -	The Model Prayer - Matthew 6 - Medley of Lessons On Prayer

A Prayer For A Holy Life By John Hendrix

Dear Lord, again I come to You, Great Maker of the skies of blue, And Giver of the joys of Life, Rewarder, after all our strife, To ask You for a better heart. So often in my daily walk I cease to praise You by my talk. And with my tongue I imitate The world whose works I ought to hate, And thus, I know, I hurt Your Name. When pain of friends I do not feel Or love them with the stronger zeal And pierce them through the heart with spite Nor comfort them in times of night I show myself a lesser man. And oft I fail to think the Right And try to justify my slights Of Your commands, then I begin To think that mine are lesser sins. By pride I tread upon Your Word. Each time I fail to do Your will. I need Your Grace my soul to heal. Help me now to comprehend The dangers of this life of sin. Please turn me from the fire of Hell. A higher call to us You gave The more of fallen man to save. So let me live that I might bring You glory and so all will sing Your praise, my Holy, Heavenly King.

Lord Teach Us To Pray # 1

"A Biblical Definition"

Introduction:

- A. "Lord Teach us to Pray" --- Luke 11:1 Now it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, [that] one of His disciples said to Him, "**Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.**" (NKJV)
1. Listening to another Gospel preacher on the subject of prayer became for me a year long pilgrimage to learn what it means to pray.
 2. It is interesting to me that the disciples of the greatest preacher and teacher, that the world has ever seen or heard, never asked their master, "Lord teach us how to preach, teach us how to teach."
 - a. But, they did ask, "Lord Teach us How to pray."
- B. Prayer is something that must be learned. I think it is something we all assume that Christians can do.
1. We exhort young Christians to "Pray to God"; "Talk to God often"; "God will hear your prayers", etc.
 - a. Now, don't get me wrong, all of these are true, especially to note is the fact that God will hear the most feeble and weakest attempt to speak to Him.
 2. BUT, the disciples of the Lord recognized that there is a level of prayer that must be learned.
 - a. This level of prayer is not assimilated into ones life when we become a Christian.
 - b. As Homer Hailey notes on the subject of prayer, "It is one of the most essential things we can teach a new convert."
 3. As a great Biblical scholar, and let me add right now, that I do not believe what He has taught and written on Marriage/Divorce and Re-Marriage to be Scriptural, does not say the most essential thing to teach a new convert is how to study, or how to act in worship, he notes that it is prayer.
- C. I have been a Christian since the age of 13 years, 17 years ago I recognized the need to conform my life to Christ's.
1. I have spent all my life in the church, growing up in a Christian home, where prayers were offered before each meal and many prayers offered during the worship assembly of the saints.
 2. I spent two years at Florida College, but I recognize now the fact that in all this time I did not know how to prayer!
 - a. I say that from the bottom of my heart. I had delivered many prayers during my Christian walk with God.
 - b. But, I still remember 1990, a year that is a landmark year for me as a Christian, when

John Cripps - learned how to pray.

- D. I am here with you all today, and Lord Willing through out the first of the week, if the Lord permits us to be together these next times, to share with you some of the things that helped me to learn how to pray --- "I'm speaking of really praying."
1. What we are going to be engaging in is not a personal testimony, although I will be sharing with you some things in my life as well as the lives of many other Christians lives, who have learned what it means to prayer.
 2. Tho, this is not what we are primarily going to do in this study.
 - a. I am not going to be polling you, trying to reach some general consensus as to what you think prayer is and what you think constitutes prayer.
 - (1) I am not interested in what your experiences have been in prayer - nor what your pre-conceived notions are, and God forbid that we should deal in this study what the "church of Christ" believes about prayer.
 - b. But, what we will be dealing with is what the Bible says about prayer.
 3. You might be saying, "Well that's a foregone conclusion" - that's what we are here for, "That's what we brought these books along for" --- to study the Bible on the subject of prayer.
 - a. If you are thinking this, "I will remind you of the fact that you thought/said that before the series is over."
- E. We are here today and through out the next few days to study prayer from the greatest teacher this world has ever produced.
1. We are here today to see and find out what God has said about prayer.
 2. And while your experiences and my experiences may be valuable they are not vital/essential in this study.
 3. What is, is what God says --- what is supremely important is what God's Word tells us about this subject.
 - a. And every night this week we will be gleaning the Scriptures to find out what God has said on this subject.
- F. I am so glad to be here, it is a wonderful privilege for me to be able to share with you and break unto you the precious bread of life.
1. I am thankful to God for bringing us here together today and am thankful to God that you are here with your ears and hearts opened to receive the implanted word of Truth.
 2. I am thankful, so thankful for you, who have shown already that at least some of you all believed this subject is so important that you have asked me to come and speak to you this week about this subject of prayer.
 3. It is my job today, to convince you that what we are going to be speaking of through out the next few days is of vital importance to your souls well being, that you will continue

- to come back through out the week.
- G. We are going to be studying what I believe to be one of the greatest aspects of a Christians life, yet also what I have seen to be one of the greatest deficiencies in the lives of many Christians today.
1. I believe this, not because I am perfect or because I am standing here as a judge, but because it was true of my very own life.
 2. It was important to me to find the real meaning of prayer, if it were not so, I would not be here today and this week speaking about this subject.
 3. I am sure that some of you might be thinking to yourselves, "What could you possibly say about prayer for 5 to 6 hours?"
 - a. "All the prayers I have uttered this year added together would not amount to such."
 - b. "Once you've said --- we talk to God" well what more can be said?"
 4. I hope that you will give me a chance to show you what we all can say about prayer.
 - a. I am confident that we could spend more time than this on the subject - because God's Word from beginning to End is just filled with it.
 - (1) And that's the reason we are going to be spending so much time studying about prayer.
- H. But, I feel, I want to say this first of all, when we talk about prayer, as we begin developing and understanding what Biblical prayer is all about, what deep spiritual prayer is like, you may begin to feel very depressed, "I know because I did."
1. When I started reading and studying prayer and was sojourning through the mountains of material on prayer, I started saying, "These guys are speaking of a type of praying that I have never touched the hem of the garment of."
 - a. I became sorely depressed because I did not pray like that.
 - b. It will not come overnight!
 2. The kind of praying we are going to be speaking of may take you weeks, months or even a year to develop.
 3. Now this is the first thing that I want you to remember --- "Don't be depressed or Discouraged by this!"
- I. The second thing I want to emphasize here today is:
1. It is tough to lead a public prayer, in a series of lessons on prayer.
 - a. I don't want you all to be evaluating each prayer offered unto God here this week.
 - b. I don't want you to be constantly evaluating your prayers publicly, saying "Oh boy - there I blew it using one of the phrases again." or "that was not long enough or it was too long a prayer" etc. Please don't be doing that!
 - (1) The one who has the toughest job in this series is the one who closes our minds

in a word of prayer on the final evening.

- c. Please don't worry about that.
 2. But what I do want to challenge you with today and every day this week:
 - a. If you find out that your praying is not what it ought to be, would you please have the courage to start praying like you ought too!
 - b. That's tough too, it is tough when one starts to pray like He ought to, to actually admit that the old prayer was not as effective as it ought to have been.
 3. Have the courage and conviction to change your prayer life if you need to. If I have convinced you that it is actually important to your Spiritual well being.
- J. There is nothing better now for us to do in this series than to start with a word of Prayer. I want to start with a biblical prayer, so I want you to turn to 1 Chron. 29.
1. 1 Chron. 29 --- this is a prayer of David.
 - a. I believe that you might want to make a habit of finding a biblical prayer, "One found in the Scriptures" and either pray it in part or in whole or adapt it in some way so as to make it your very own.
 - b. Or simply use it as a springboard to begin a type of prayer that you want to engage in. This is what we are going to do here today to begin this series.
 2. We are going to begin by praying the beginning of the prayer of David,
 - a. You should have it now in front of you, but I want you to pray with me. I don't want you necessarily to be reading the text as we pray together.
 - b. Let this prayer be our prayer, as we join our minds and hearts up together and lift those thoughts up to God.
 3. I will be praying only part of David's prayer at which point I will begin to pray myself.
 - a. I'm not telling you this so you will try and work out at what point this was in the text, I'm simply telling you this so that you will recognize that there are some things that I will be praying for that is not found in this prayer.
 - b. You may want to examine it later.
- K. Now we are going into the very presence of God. Will you just stop a moment and think about that!
1. We are about to enter for the second time tonight into the very presence of "Lord Jehovah".
 - a. Does that make the hair stand up on the back of your neck?
 2. We are about to come into the presence of the Master of the Universe.
 - a. We need humble hearts, hearts filled with Awe for the Great God Jehovah.
 3. Let us now bow our heads in prayer together please!
 4. 1 Chronicles 29:10-18

Body:

II. **ANALYZING PRAYER:**

A. As we look at David's prayer, I have to ask you this question, "Do We Pray Like That?"

1. Do we hear that magnitude of prayer when we pray together publicly?
2. And if you say "Yes I have heard prayers like that!"
 - a. Was it not a rarity rather than a regularity?

B. In Luke 6:2 -- we read of Jesus praying "all night".

1. Have you ever prayed all night?

C. in Luke 22:44 --- we read that Jesus AGONIZED in prayer.

1. Can you honestly say that there have been times when you have agonized in prayer?
 - a. Do you hear the height of the word "AGONY".

2. Have you done that?

3. And the real question is, not have you done that, but rather can you do that?

4. Can you do that IF you need to?

- a. Are you sure that you can pray like that?
- b. If not then brethren what we need to do, is to upgrade our prayer life.

5. If we would be more like Jesus, this is one of the areas that He excelled in. And He beacons to us from the epitome of praying - "Come Disciple Follow Me!"

D. The 20th. Century church does not know nor believe in the power nor the importance of prayer. Of this I am convinced. Let me state that again --- The 20th. Century church does not know nor believe in the power nor the importance of prayer. Of this I am convinced.

1. We don't know how important it is , and we do not believe it is that important.

2. How important is it? Let me ask you a question!

- a. If you know that tomorrow morning a squad of soldiers was going to come to your house, take you out and execute you. What would you be doing tonight?
- b. "ALL NIGHT"

3. When Jesus was preparing to leave this earth, the night before His death, He spent that time in Prayer.

a. There are many things, He could have been doing.

b. Someone has noted that if we all knew we only had 5 minutes to live, the telephone systems around the world would be so jammed packed with people calling just to say "I love You".

(1) That's what a lot of us will be doing --- RIGHT!

- (2) Would we not be trying to call our friends and our family one last time?
- c. If this was the last night that you had on this earth would you be trying to evangelize the lost?
 - (1) Would you be at home with your family?
 - (2) Would you be trying to watch all the VCR tapes that's you have taped on but not had a chance to see yet?
 - (3) Finishing that Novel that you have just been dying to know the ending of?
 - (4) Would you be walking up and down, wringing your hands in agony?
 - (5) Or would you take some pills, and get one last good nights rest?
- 4. Prayer was so important in the life of Jesus, that on the night before His death, we find Him praying!
 - a. Praying, no more teaching, no more reminiscing, no agonizing with the people to do right, or agonizing alone, but Agonizing in Prayer to God.
 - b. WHY?
- 5. I suggest to you that it was the praying in Gethsemane, that enabled Christ to undergo the slaying at Golgotha.
 - a. It was prayer that made Jesus Strong enough to bear the cross.
 - b. No Gethsemane, NO CALVARY!
 - (1) Jesus knew what He needed the night before He died.
 - (2) He needed prayer to go through tomorrow.
- E. How important is prayer?
 - 1. In Acts 6 we see that there is a problem in the church at Jerusalem.
 - a. Expound on the Text vrs. 1-3 --- What we have here is a Crisis.
 - b. How would you feel if we had this crisis and we called for help and they replied --- "I'm busy praying"?
 - c. You know your heart! How many would say is it not wonderful brother _____ is praying while sister _____ is starving to death.
 - (1) How many would be saying --- "I mean as if this is the only time of the day that he can pray"
 - (2) Or, "We have a crisis going on, and here he is praying. Praying is not going to save this woman's life. What's wrong with brother _____"
 - d. I tell you what is wrong with it! It is a brother or sister who has caught the spirit of the First Century Church.
 - (1) NOTE FULL WELL vrs. 4.
 - 2. The Apostles said they were devoting their lives to "Prayer". That is how important it

was to them.

- a. Prayer was so important to them that it took precedence over hungry bellies.
3. Do we think prayer is that important today? Do you think Prayer is that important today? The Apostles did!
 - a. Prayer is powerful enough to achieve anything the mind can believe.
 - (1) I am not speaking of the positive mental attitude that is offered by secular writers and lectures.
 - (2) What the mind can conceive can be achieved etc.
 - b. What I am saying is that the Bible teaches that everything that the mind can conceive of being possible through prayer, it can be accomplished.
4. Let us put this to the test with God's Word!

III. PUTTING PRAYER TO THE TEST

- A. Let us take up our Bibles again --- and see if that not so.
 1. Matthew 21: 21-22 --- So Jesus answered and said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but also if you say to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' it will be done. 22 "And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive." (NKJV)
 2. Mark 11:22-24 --- So Jesus answered and said to them, "Have faith in God. 23 "For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says. 24 "Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive [them,] and you will have [them.] (NKJV)
 - a. You might be saying --- "Wait that was said to the Apostles!"
 - b. That is a special statement made to the Apostles and does not apply to us today.
 3. I want you to note the "PRO-NOUN" in vrs 23 of Marks account.
 - a. "Whoever" --- the same as Mark 8:34-35 --- When He had called the people to [Himself,] with His disciples also, He said to them, "Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. 35 "For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it. (NKJV)
 - b. It is the same broad term that is used for each one of us.
 - (1) That is not a limited statement to the Apostles alone!
- B. Alright we have looked at two passages --- ONLY TWO that say whatever you pray believing it is possible - or will be granted.
 1. Are you saying in your mind ---- "YES, BUT !!!"

2. Are YOU?
 3. "I Saw it forming all over your lips --- "YES BUT !!!"
 - a. Aren't you doing that?
- C. Sure, I did that the very first time I was confronted with it.
1. We want to qualify it so much that it does not pertain unto us or so that it will not have to apply to us.
 2. Because we have never cast mountains into the sea before have we?
 - a. We do not want to think there is a deficiency in us. So let us limit the passage!
 - b. Then we will not have to worry whether our prayers are strong or not.
- D. Let us look at two more passages --- John 14:13-14
1. "Whatever you ask in My Name That will I do"
 - a. Just imagine someone saying, "buddy anything you need, you just ask me. Anything you want."
 - b. Now Jesus is not playing games with us.
 2. Two fellows walking down the road together, and neither of them had a dime in their pockets and one of them said, "You know me and you have been best friends with each other for a long time" and the other fellow says, "You know we have". Then he said, "Joe, if you had a million dollars, would you give me half." He said, "man as long as we have been best friends, if I had a million dollars you know I would give you half!" Once again he asked, "Jo, if someone died and left you a 1000 acres of land would you give me 500?" And Jo, said, Sam you know that we are best friends as long as I've got a biscuit you've got half, Sure I would give you five hundred acres!" And Sam said, "Jo, if you had two hogs would you give me one?" And Jo says, "Ah, Sam you know I've got two hogs!"
 - a. Is Jesus saying, anything you want I will give to you, and then when we ask He replies "Ah, I can't give you that!"
 - b. Is Jesus saying that! Does Jesus do like that to us?
 - (1) I don't believe he does? Do you?
 3. I believe that when Jesus says, "anything you want", Jesus means "anything".
 - a. Because Jesus is honest and chooses His words carefully.
- E. Now look again at John 15:7 --- "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. (NKJV)
1. Now if you say that does not apply to us today, I am going to have to ask you to do something.
 - a. If you don't believe that this applies to us today, you quit singing that beautiful song, "I am the Vine and ye are the Branches."

- b. You just can't sing that song.
2. Because that whole section, in the midst of which we find this verse, is written to disciples. But if you want to say that it is only written to the Apostles then you have got to qualify all of that chapter, all of chapter fifteen.
 - a. And you know what, we sing that song all the time.
 - b. "I am the Vine and ye are the branches, I AM the Vine be faithful and true...."
 - c. WHAT is the next line ---- "ASK WHAT YOU WILL..." and what will happen? "YOUR PRAYER SHALL BE GRANTED."
3. Where did that come from? --- John 15:7! Right there.
 - a. And brethren if we do not believe it applies to us today, then we had better stop singing it. Let us at least be honest if we don't believe it.
 - b. I believe it is true , I believe that this is for us.
4. And I want to show you a testimony after the fact.
 - a. You say, you know that's a lot of statements of what Jesus would do, give us proof that this did happen! Show us someone that really did say this really did happen.
 - b. Alright, let me show you someone.
 - c. How about John, do you like him! He has made two of the statements that we have looked at thus far.
 - (1) Let us go to 1 John 5:14-15 --- remember that this is after Jesus has ascended into heaven and John is in his old age.
 - (2) He is at the end of his life, now listen to the witness of the Apostle.
 - (3) 1 John 5:14-15 --- "Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. 15 And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him." (NKJV)
 - (4) There is the testimony! Here is a man that says he knows this happens. We know that when we have made the requests, we get the results.
 - (5) Bonafide testimony from the Apostle John, that it happens. He is a witness to that!
5. There are some things that God will only give you, there are some things God will only do in response to prayer.
 - a. We will talk more about this one later.
- F. In Exodus 32: God is on the verge of wiping out the children of Israel. And only by Moses' prayer were those people saved.
 1. God would not have spared the children of Israel, except it had been for the prayer of Moses. It is only in response of Moses prayer that God spared the people's lives.

2. Question: WHY IS IT GOOD TO PRAY?
 - a. Some might be saying --- well God is going to do what ever God is going to do so what's'S the use!
 - b. That's not true!
3. Exodus 32 is testimony of the fact that there are some things that God does ONLY in response to when we have prayed.
 - a. Yes, "BUT --- God always knows whats best for us, He's going to do whats best for us whether we ask Him or not."
 - b. Because he loves us and cares about us.
4. Now if you believe that, you have got to get me before this weeks lectures are over and explain to me what went on in Exodus 32.
 - a. If Moses did not change God's mind by his praying! He did!
 - b. God has blessings for you, Oh and how He has blessings for you my brother and my Sister, that you can't reach without the arm of prayer.
 - c. A favorite writer of mine, states that when he gets to heaven he imagines that there will be a large room that he would be taken into in which are all types of large and beautiful packages scattered around the room. With beautiful bows on them and beautiful silver and gold foiled paper. And he would say --- "God what is all this?" And God would reply --- "That is a room full of blessings that I wanted to give to my children." and then I will say to Him,, "But God! why did you not give them to them?" And He said, "Because they never asked!"
 - d. Just think about some of the things that God has been wanting to do for us, and we have not have the courage to pray to Him and secure those blessings. We need to pray!
5. Prayer will not suffice as a substitute for work. I am not here today to tell you what many denominations are saying, "You want anything in life, you just pray!" You want a brown camper, you pray long and hard and God will put one in your driveway. etc.
 - a. I am not telling you this today, **PRAYER WILL NOT SUBSTITUTE FOR WORK!**
 - b. But let me tell you this. Ah, this is what our brethren need to hear!
 - c. "That sounded good did it not, that really let our denominational friends have it" but let me gouge you a little today ---- "**WORK Will NOT SUBSTITUTE FOR PRAYER EITHER.**
 - d. We can work our heads off, but if we don't pray we have not done all that we can do.
 - e. We are a working people, we have that puritan mentality, **GET OUT THERE AND WORK, WORK WORK.**
 - f. But we also need to **PRAY, PRAY, PRAY.** While we **Work Work Work.**
 - g. Good deeds will not replace prayer. Sacrificial living cannot replace prayer in our

lives.

6. Prayer is the most difficult spiritual work that I have ever engaged in. That's a personal testimony.
 - a. It is the most difficult spiritual work that I have ever engaged myself in.
 - b. At first --- "Andrew Murray says this in his book WITH CHRIST IN THE SCHOOL OF PRAYER" --- "At first there is no work that appears so simple later on none that is more difficult." AMEN
 - c. Yes, at first it appears so simple. All one needs to do is to close his eyes and start to talking to God." and it sounds so easy and nothing more difficult.
- G. I want to try and convince you of how important prayer is by showing you how dangerous Satan considers it.
 1. I believe this! Satan will let you do anything you want to do spiritually if he can keep you from praying.
 - a. There is a reason for that! You see when I am doing what John Cripps ought to be doing as a Christian --- THAT'S ME fighting off Satan!
 - b. But when I am praying that's Satan fighting God through me.
 - c. Satan can beat me --- He has done that many times in my short life thus far, But Satan cannot beat MY GOD --- AMEN! AMEN!
 2. And when I am praying it is not just John Cripps against Satan anymore, it is Satan against my God and He can't win.
 3. Now you know that we can sit and read and sing songs all day long and nobody gets distracted, we all sing and get involved in that, and we take the Lord's Supper and tho. there may be some distraction in that we all can do that. And we can listen to sermons and we are not bothered by that, but you try praying for twenty or thirty minutes on your own and see what happens in your life.
 - a. Man that Devil grabs every thought he can think of and shoves it into your brain.
 - b. Think about this awhile -- and he will distract you with the clock on the wall and the fly in the hall and he will distract you with the kids running thru the house and he will distract you with the fact that your knees are aching because you have been there for so long. And he will distract you with some other thoughts of "I need to be doing this and doing that etc."
 - c. That's true and you know it's true because we have all had that happen to us RIGHT!
 - d. Satan never works as hard as when he is trying to keep us from praying. He does not want you to pray, because that is powerful work. And he can't win. Now let me tell you something else --- Satan will let you study prayer all you want to. Now I believe that is one of the devilish ploys he uses. He will let you sit here all week long and just imbibe in the Word and let you find out all there is to know about Prayer, he will let you do that as long as you do not apply it.

- e. But He does not want you on your knees putting it into practice. "Satan trembles when he sees the weakest saint upon his knees."
 - f. "The best thing to do with the Bible is to, Know it in your head, Stow it in the heart, Sow it in the world, And show it in the life.
4. This is difficult spiritual work, not only because Satan works so hard at it, but because the flesh is so weak.
- a. I tell you brethren, My spirit is so willing to pray as I ought to, but my flesh is so weak.
 - b. And I find myself climbing up a spiritual ladder and reaching a plateau when I almost believe that I can see my God, but I can't stay there. I just can't seem to stay up there very long and I fall back down. And I have to climb up again and try to reach that level again and it is work and it is grinding, but it is worth it all when we get to the top and see the view.
- H. I find that sin distracts me from my praying as I ought to. But we will talk more about that in another lesson.
- 1. But I can't pray and live in sin. And if Satan can get me to commit some sin he knows that He has got me away from my praying to God.
 - 2. It is tough to pray as we ought.

IV. DEFINING BIBLICAL PRAYER.

- A. Now you have at the top of your lessons the title of this sermon "Biblical Prayer a definition" so as we bring to a close this lesson I want to define what Biblical Prayer Is.
- B. "Prayer is the means by which we achieve oneness with God". Listen, I am defining this I know that this is not the normal way in which we define it.
 - 1. I know that we could define this more simply than this, we could say that "Prayer is talking to God."
 - 2. I think that there is more to this in the type of prayer that we are talking about.
 - a. Prayer is the means by which we achieve ONENESS WITH GOD.
 - b. We become attuned to Him. We achieve ONENESS WITH GOD.
 - c. Where His Will becomes our will. And we allow him to work thru us.
- C. Now notice I did not say that "our will becomes His" --- but in actuality biblical praying will lead us to mould our will to His will and He is allowed to work thru us.
 - 1. Now the variables in prayer --- as to what we can achieve in prayer, now the variables are not God's powers but God's people. We are God's variables.
 - 2. And if you begin to wonder why this person can achieve something in prayer that I can't, It is not God but it is the person that makes the difference.

- a. If I can use some very crude illustrations. Some of you have pots that have copper bottoms, Copper is a better conductor of heat. It transfers heat better than some other kinds of pots would and do. Some metals are better to be used in electrical wire than are others because they conduct the electricity better. There are some lines that are thicker than others because they carry more electrical juice. And a smaller line would be burned out by that.
- b. Illustration of the extension cord and the heater.
3. We are the variables. There are some prayers that if God would answer them thru us, we would burn up --- now I do not mean literally. But we can't be the answer to that prayer. We can't be the vehicle to carry that prayer. There is not enough power and maturity and strength in us to carry it.
 - a. It is like giving a baby a nuclear bomb, what is he going to do with it? I want you to think about that.
 - b. Aren't there prayers that you have prayed that you have later thanked God for not answering them.
 - (1) Illustration --- Praying about the girl you were dating at the time and asking God to make this one your wife.
 - (2) Have you not prayed for certain things and God has not answered them, when you have found out later and sighed a sigh of relief.
 - c. There are some things that God cannot answer thru us. He refuses to do that!
 - d. We would either burn up in the answer or else we would cause great destruction if he answered it the way in which we wanted him to.
 - (1) We are the variables.
 - (2) In Prayer we are like that.
 - e. We are the conductors of God's power, and some of us possess qualities that enables us to carry more juice than do others.
 - f. And God may not answer some of my requests --- God hears us as we deserve to be heard.
4. And he answers us as we are capable of receiving our requests.
 - a. Have you ever heard the phrase --- "Lord bring us back together at the next anointed time."
 - b. I have a picture in my mind, I wish that just one time when this prayer is offered the Lord would literally answer it.
 - (1) Notice that the prayer is not --- "Lord help us to come back" --- it just says "bring us back"
 - (2) I tell you what --- God will have to send down a whole myriad of angels to hog tie some of us to get us back.

- c. I wished that God would just let loose the angels one day and answer that prayer.
 - d. I tell you what the congregation will never allow brother _____ ever again to pray that prayer again. I guarantee that!
- D. Prayer is a power that we have not even touched in converting the world.
1. You know we talk a bit about converting the world and we need to do that and yes we need to be out there doing that, but we are missing the power of prayer in that.
 2. You know that we have more opportunities today to convert the world than any other generation has ever had in the entirety of history.
 - a. TV's, VCR's Radios that can go any where around the world, Telephones, Mobile phones etc.
 - b. But we are not doing what the first century church did.
 3. The first century church took the Gospel message of Christ into all the world. We can't say that --- NOW I ASK WHY?
 - a. I am sure that there are a lot of answers.
 - b. But let me suggest one that I feel you might not have considered.
 - c. Do you know what one word is found in the book of Acts second only to teaching and preaching, do you know what word is found some 26 times among the disciples in the book of Acts --- PRAYER, PRAYER.
 - d. Are we forgetting that?
 4. Are we so busy taking the Gospel to the world that we are forgetting to do that? Brethren God has not gone out of the prayer answering business the problem is that we are not tapping into the source. God's there, and He has got the power. And He has got the willingness but we are not tapping in and touching Him. That's the problem!
 5. And we complain and look to take our frustrations out on others.
 - a. "We have no right to complain about mistakes made by people who are doing the work we should be doing."
 - b. "Nothing lies beyond the reach of prayer except that which lies outside the will of God."
- E. This study is exciting to me, but I want to close by saying that it also holds some awesome responsibilities.
1. You may be thinking man this is great, we are talking about some great things here, I can achieve anything I want, if I just pray to God he can blast my neighbor right off the parking lot next door to me. I can do all kinds of things now this man has told me that I can do anything I want if I just pray.
 2. I want to close with a very sobering quote: it is my favorite quotation!
 - a. It comes from a woman when she wrote in the magazine Christianity today in Nov. of 1976 the following words:

- b. "Christians have always interpreted the splitting of the temple veil during the crucifixion, as symbolic of their liberation from the mediated presence of God. Henceforth they were free to approach Him directly which is almost like telling someone they are now free to stick their heads in the lions mouth. Awful things happen to people who pray, their plans are frequently disrupted, they end up in strange places, Abraham went out not knowing where he was to go and this is hardly a picture of someone who has struck it rich on some new power source. In trying to compete in the religious market place today, we should be very careful as to how we portray the power of prayer. How tempting to up the stakes, making prayer merely another consumer product. How embarrassing! To have to admit, that not only may prayer get you into prison as it did Jeremiah, but also while you are moldering away in a miry pit, you may have a long list of unanswered questions that you may have to present to your Lord. How are you going to tell them, they may end up lame and vagrant, if they grasp hold of this God. Anything else is false advertising."
- 3. We are not playing with a Cosmic Kitty Cat.
- 4. We are talking to an Omniscient, omnipotent God.
- F. We are going to be learning how to do that - Lord Willing.

V. Conclusion:

- A. Thank you for your attention today.
- B. We will be discussing in our next lesson - "Will The Son Of Man Find Faith"

"Lord Teach Us To Pray" - Lesson Number Two

WILL THE SON OF MAN FIND FAITH?

cf. --- **Luke 18:1-8**

Introduction:

- A. One of the greatest privileges available to the child of God is the right to communicate with God through prayer.
 - 1. Often this privilege is taken for granted or abused in some way.
 - 2. Sometimes prayer doesn't mean to the child of God what it should and he doesn't pray enough.
 - 3. Thus in this passage Christ urges his disciples "to always pray and not to faint" (lose heart). --- cf. **1 Thess 5:17**.
- B. Christ, as He closes the parable, raises a pertinent question for our consideration in 20 th. Century.
 - 1. Do we still have faith in prayer?
 - 2. Do we believe in Christ and God enough to know that prayer is still answered?
 - 3. Let us study this great subject with the hope it will help us to appreciate the great blessings we enjoy in Christ.

Body:

II. *ONE OF THE GREATEST HINDRANCES TO PRAYING IS THE PHILOSOPHY OF NATURALISM.*

- A. Naturalism defined --- "the belief that the natural world is the whole of reality and that there is no supernatural or spiritual creation, value, or control." {Webster's Dictionary}.
 - 1. This of course denies the most important aspect of prayer --- "Faith in God" -- cf. **Heb. 11:6**.
 - 2. As man's knowledge of natural laws (which God ordained) increases, there is a greater tendency to regard the law rather than him that made it.
 - a. Everything that happens is explained on the basis of human observation and knowledge. Jesus said, "God sends the rain" --- cf. **Matt. 5:45**; we observe and say, "low pressure area"; some even blame the T.V. weatherman for bad weather --- cf. **Job. 37:5-6; Amos 4:7**.
 - b. Jesus said, "give us our daily bread, God"; we say "I make \$ 5:00 per hour and my boss and my hard work provides for our table."
 - c. When we are sick - do we seek an antibiotic --- cf. **2 Chron. 16:12**.
- B. The 20th Century naturalist has no use for prayer.
 - 1. "Elton Trueblood, in his book Philosophy of religion states,:" the greatest difficulty is felt

in connection with petition and intercession. Men have long prayed for rain, but how can this be done with intellectual honesty when one realizes something of the nature of meteorology? Men have long prayed for the restoration of the health of their loved ones, but how can this be done by honest persons who know something of the action of germs?

When a patient has pneumonia what is needed, it would seem, is not prayer, but antibiotics. Such considerations do not, of course, prevent recourse to prayer, but they hinder it. Most parents, it is probable, pray for a child who is in danger of contracting infantile paralysis, but many wonder, in doing so, if they are acting rationally."

- a. "The difficulty is most clear when the time factor is involved. If a person receives a letter and, before opening it, prays that the letter may not contain bad news, the prayer has no justification. Whatever is in the letter is there already, and nothing under heaven will change it. In other words, such a prayer is self-contradictory. It asks that what is to be something other than that what it is. But the same difficulty remains in less obvious situations. Prayer about the contents of the letter is pointless at any time after it is written."
 - b. "Much of our uneasiness in regard to other areas, such as the physical and biological, arises from the conviction that the situation is already as fully determined by natural laws as the contents of the letter are already fixed by the writer. Whether there will have rain is already in the cards. But if this is true for one day, why not for a million? In the same way, the ravages of a disease seem to be already determined by the introduction of germs. In short, it is always too late. Perhaps then, prayer is merely an irrational survival of a superstitious and anthromorphic age. In that case, it will eventually cease with the growth of critical intelligence or continue as a sentimental gesture, but nothing more." {Comments from pages 208-209}.
2. This is the only alternative if one does not really believe in God.
 - a. And yet, as Christians we can be affected by the naturalistic outlook and begin to wonder whether it really pays to pray about the weather, for the sick or other matters that affect our daily lives.
 3. Has everything been set so there is no reason for prayer?

III. ANOTHER HINDRANCE IS THE PHILOSOPHY THAT GOD HAS WOUND UP THE UNIVERSE LIKE A CLOCK AND LEFT IT ALONE TO RUN DOWN.

- A. At least this person believes in God but unfortunately it is not enough --- cf. **Col. 1:15-17; Heb. 1:1-3.**
 1. The logical question to ask from this idea is: "What does God do to keep it going?"
- B. If a Christian begins to wonder if God is personally involved in the daily activities of his people, prayer becomes absolutely meaningless.

IV. ANOTHER HINDRANCE TO PRAYER IS THE OVER REACTION TO MODERN DAY

CLAIMS OF MIRACLE WORKERS.

- A. The Bible plainly teaches that the age of miracles performed by men in answer to prayer is past --- cf. **1 Cor. 13:8-10.**
- B. But just because God no longer works miracles is no reason to believe he no longer works.
- C. Even during the miracle working age, God still controlled the outcome.
 - 1. Men could not perform miracles at their own will --- cf. **2 Cor. 12:7-10.**
 - 2. Paul's prayed about his "thorn in the flesh". he did not heal himself.

V. TRUSTING FAITH WILL OVERCOME ALL OBSTACLES TO PRAYER --- cf. James 1:6-7.

- A. We must first believe that God is personally involved in the operation of the universe --- cf. **Acts 17:24-28.**
 - 1. God sends the rain or withholds it --- cf. **Job 37:5-6; Amos 4:7 ; Matt. 5:45.**
 - a. God even gives such blessings to the heathen --- cf. **Acts 14:17.**
 - b. How much more so to His children that ask Him --- cf. **Matt. 6:11.**
 - 2. If God has the power to control the weather, then I have the right to ask his assistance in:
 - a. Rain for drought.
 - b. Cease from floods.
 - c. Protection from storms.
- B. We must believe that God really cares about what happens to us --- cf. **Matt. 10:29-30.**
- C. We must truly believe that God's will can be altered by the prayers of man.
 - 1. Moses's intercession on behalf of Israel saved them more than once from God's wrath --- cf. **Ex. 32:11-14.**
 - 2. The example of Hezekiah --- cf. **2 Kings 20:1-7.**
- D. True faith in prayer includes the very important attitude of "thy will be done."
 - 1. We have not the ability to understand all the happenings of life or to predict with any certainty what is going to be --- cf. **James 4;13-15.**
 - 2. Thus all prayers should be with the understanding that God knows best and if it is His Will that our requests be granted, it will --- cf. **1 John 5:14-15.**
 - 3. Therefore, true faith in God causes one to accept God's "other than positive answer."
 - a. Jesus suggests in **Luke 18:7-8** that God does not always grant the "yes" answer to prayer immediately. I'm sure some Israelites with little faith concluded that God was never going to answer their prayers for deliverance --- cf. **Ex. 2:23-24.** WAIT PATIENTLY!

(1) When you are absolutely convinced that God has answered NO thank God for this.

b. David is an example of accepting "NO" from God. --- cf. **2 Sam. 12:15-23**.

(1) God told Hezekiah "YES" and David "NO" because he knew what was best in each situation.

c. Paul, by faith, accepted "NO" graciously.

d. Christ, accepted "NO" in the Garden of Gethsemane.

e. It takes great faith in God to accept a "wait awhile" or "no".

VI. WITH ALL BOLDNESS, THEN, LET US PRAY FERVENTLY TO GOD

A. In time of sickness --- cf. **James 5;13-17**.

1. We may need antibiotics or an operation but God still knows more than doctors.

2. If God should say "no" let us learn to live with affliction without murmuring and death without despair.

3. The truth is that eventually God says "no" to everybody sooner or later because we all have to die.

B. In times of storm.

1. Christ calmed the storms because he created their power and He still holds that power.

2. We need to use good judgment that God gave us to protect ourselves but we need His protection too.

VII. ANSWER TO PRAYER IS DEPENDENT ON OUR COOPERATION --- GOOD COMMON SENSE IS ESSENTIAL.

A. Give us our daily bread and hard work equals blessings of food.

B. To flagrantly disregard natural law is to tempt God --- cf. **Matt. 4:5-7**.

1. It is right to pray for protection in travel but wrong to go 160 km. and be reckless.

C. Nor can we disregard spiritual laws and expect God to answer.

1. Peter told the sorcerer to "repent and pray" --- cf. **Acts 8:22**.

Conclusion: A. We cannot understand all the whys and wherefore of this life.

1. Why the ungodly prosper, why the godly suffer.

B. But, abiding faith in God and prayer will see us through knowing God controls life.

C. If I truly believe and love Him I know that one day prayer will be obsolete for faith will give way to sight and all will be well forever.

D. When Christ comes, "Will He find Faith on earth."

1. Will He find it here today?

2. Thank you.

"Lord Teach Us To Pray" - Lesson Number Three

THE CHRISTIAN'S PRAYER LIFE

Introduction:

- A. To James prayer is vital to the Christian's Life.
 - 1. It is food for his soul.
 - 2. Without Prayer he will surely die spiritually.
- B. The Theme of Prayer runs through out James' message:
 - 1. "Daily prayers are the daily visits which change belief that God exists into belief in God as a loved and trusted friend." --- D.J. Campbell.

Body:

II. ***"IF ANY OF YOU LACKETH ... LET HIM ASK OF GOD."*** --- Cf. James 1:5

- A. **Vrs. 5.** connects in thought with **vrs. 1:2-4.**
 - 1. James had pointed out that temptations were intended to prove faith and develop patience.
 - 2. Perhaps a man might wonder, "how can I have wisdom to understand and deal with temptations?"
 - 3. To which he hurriedly adds, Gods gives generously.
- B. God gives "generously to all men without making them feel foolish or guilty." --- Phillips.
- C. In this we see the Character of God.
 - 1. God who giveth is the "giving God". --- **cf. 1 :17.**
- D. **Vrs. 5.** teaches five things:
 - 1. We need to look to God and ask Him for our needs.
 - 2. Giving is a trait of God's personality.
 - 3. He gives to all His children regardless of their station.
 - 4. He gives generously.
 - 5. He gives without reproaching or making us feel foolishly or guilty.

III. ***"ASK IN FAITH, NOTHING DOUBTING,"*** --- cf. James 1:6

- A. **Vrs. 6** - teaches that God gives rich blessings to:
 - 1. Those who ask in prayer;
 - 2. Those who ask of God;

3. Those who pray in faith and confidence;
4. Those who do not doubt that God can and will answer according to His Will.

IV. **"ASKING AMISS" --- cf. James 4:1-4**

- A. James is setting before his readers a basic question, "What is your aim in life?":
 1. To submit to the Will of God, or to gratify your own desires for pleasures of this world?
- B. If pleasures is the policy of life, then nothing but strife and hatred and division can follow.
- C. To obey God's Will is to be "selfless."

V. **"YE LUST AND HAVE NOT" --- cf. James 4:2**

- A. The craving for pleasure shuts the door of prayer.
- B. If our prayers are for things that will gratify our selfish sinful desires, then it is impossible for God to answer them.
 1. To answer them would be to provide man with ways of sinning?
 2. The true prayer is , "Thy Will be Done", --- cf. **Matt. 26:39**
- C. Some people fail to reach their goals in life:
 1. Because they ignore God and proudly try to succeed alone.
 2. Others because they have sinful goals that God forbids.
 3. Others because they pray wrongfully.

VI. **OTHER IMPEDIMENTS TO EFFECTUAL PRAYER --- cf. James 5:16**

- A. God will not do wrong in answer to prayer.
- B. He will not change His revealed will to please man.
- C. He cannot be expected to violate the laws of nature He Established.
- D. Doubts in the pray-er's heart.
- E. To neglect to work for the fulfillment of your needs"
- F. Lack of Persistence --- cf. **Lk. 18:1-8**
 1. "We ought always to pray and faint not".
- G. Mistreatment of ones own family --- **1 Peter 3:7**
- H. Self Righteousness --- **Lk. 18:9-12.**
- I. Selfishness ---- **James 4:3**

- J. Insincerity --- **Matt. 6:5-7**
- K. Failure to forgive a brother --- **Matt. 6:12-15.**
- L. Factiousness --- **Matt. 5:23-24**
- M. Wrong doing --- cf. **Prov. 28:9**

VII. **"IF THE LORD WILL" --- cf. James 4:13-15**

- A. The section deals with the sin of presumption, ie. acting without taking God into account.
- B. Note James does not say there is anything wrong about making plans for the future, nor does he denounce business or the desire to make money.
 - 1. What he does reprove is the absorption in worldly affairs that leaves God out.
- C. Man proposes, but God disposes.
- D. **I John 5:14.**
 - 1. We know God's Will only from His Revelation, the Bible --- **1 Cor. 14:37.**
- E. We should never make plans and than ask God to bless them.
 - 1. What we should do is to consult God before planning, and thus let Him in on the plans.
If we allow Him to guide us, we may with confidence ask His blessings on our actions.

Conclusion:

- A. In every prayer there are three parts:
 - 1. A wish,
 - 2. The word, the wish expressed in prayer;
 - 3. The work which helps to bring the desired results.
 - a. Prayer is not an occasional impulse when we are in trouble, it is a life attitude.
 - b. cf. **1 Thess. 5:17**

"Lord Teach Us To Pray" - Lesson Number Four

Importunate Praying

Introduction:

- A. If you would be turning in your Bibles to **Luke 18**.
 - 1. I want us to begin by looking at **verses 1-8** today.
 - a. **Luke 18:1-8**.
 - 2. Now this Parable introduces for us the subject of importunity.
 - 3. Importunity as is defined by Webster: "from the root word {importunate} meaning to be persistently demanding, esp. in an annoying or unreasonable way." {pg. 486 The New Lexicon Webster's Dictionary of the English Language}.
 - 4. Thus the subject of impertinent praying.
- B. Here in **Luke 18** - we have a woman who wanted a decision from a judge - and she pestered him until she got the decision she wanted.
 - 1. She stayed on him, she hammered at his door, she peeked in his window, when he went to get his paper in the morning she was there. When he rode to work in his chariot she was standing on the street corner hollowing at him.
 - 2. If you get the picture - this woman pestered this judge until he said --- cf. **4b-5**:
 - a. "I don't fear God"
 - (1) Now this shows us that he was an unrighteous judge.
 - b. "I don't fear God and I don't respect man"
 - (1) In short - "I'm not giving this judgement because it is right - I'm giving this judgement because I want to be left alone by this women.
- C. Now Christ goes on to paint a picture not of a God who is like this judge, but,; He says if the Judge gives a decision because a person stays on top of Him.
 - 1. How much more will your Father ---- "Who is righteous"
 - a. "Who does have a respect for man"
 - 2. How much more will He render decisions for His elect. For those whom He loves and cherishes.
- D. "Importunate praying is being troublesomely urgent in praying".
 - 1. Now note again --- "Troublesomely Urgent in Prayer."
 - 2. It is being overly persistent in prayer.
 - a. This is in respect to a request or a desire.
 - 3. Personally I have defined importunate praying as: "A Child wanting a cookie."
 - a. Illustrate: A child pleading and begging for that cookie before dinner.

- b. Have you ever had a child do that to you? Yes all you have ever minded or had children know exactly what I speaking about.
 - 4. Well, what is mom or dad going to do?
 - a. I tell you eventually if the child is persistent enough and does not get a spanking - she will give him that cookie before she is pestered to death.
 - 5. That is what importunity is in praying. And I believe it is something that we all should be taught about.
- E. There are many examples of this type of praying in the Bible and this evening I want to spend just a little time studying these passages and see what the Lord has to say on this vitally important part of the Christian's prayer life.

Body:

II. *BIBLICAL EXAMPLES OF IMPORTUNATE PRAYER.*

- A. Firstly in **Luke 11:5-9** we see that importunate prayer is praying with great desire.
- 1. Importunity is praying about something with a great desire.
 - 2. Read text --- Elaborate on the text.
 - 3. Got the picture?
 - a. A man is in bed at midnight --- next the neighbor starts pounding on the door.
 - b. Next he starts to make unreasonable requests:
 - c. You tell him to go home you are asleep.
 - d. But he doesn't listen he keeps pounding on that door of yours:
 - 4. I tell you friend what Jesus here is saying is that you don't give him the request because he is your friend --- No at this point and time friendship is long gone.
 - a. You give it to him because sleep is more important to you than friendship at this point.
 - b. You give it to him so that he will go away. You get up and give it to him just so long as he will go away and that you may be rid of him at this hour.
 - 5. Now I believe that this is the point of Christ's lesson.
 - a. What is leading that man to stay there knocking at the door at that hour in the night?
 - b. Well, I tell you he had great desires too!
 - (1) Just think of the situation --- he wants to go to bed to but he can't until he has fed his visitors.
 - c. He had as great a desire and was earnest about that desire or else he would not have continued to knock.
 - 6. The question: WHY are you going to give it to him?

- a. Because both your desire and his desire are both great.
7. Impertinent praying is praying with a great desire.
 - a. Now what I am trying to suggest to you here this evening is that one does not pray importantly for minor things.
 - (1) I would not think that one would spend hours in importunate prayer over a nagging hang-nail.
 - b. great desires lead to importunate praying.
- B. Secondly in **Matthew 15:21-28** --- Importunate praying is prayer with a faith that God will do.
 1. We are going to deal with this in a larger segment in our next lesson, but I want to just touch on this for now.
 2. Note: The persistence of the gentile woman:
 - a. How many of us would have departed after the first statement by Christ - cf. **vrs 24.**
 - b. How many of us would have surely departed after Christ's second statement to her --- cf. **vrs. 26.**
 3. Would we have stayed around for the blessing?
- C. In **Acts 9:9-11** --- Importunate prayer is praying about vital matters.
 1. As one takes note of Saul of Tarsus after the encounter with Christ on the road to Damascus we find him buried in deep importunate prayer.
 2. Note the two elements of Saul's condition here:
 - a. Firstly he is without food and water --- he is busy fasting.
 - b. And secondly he was praying.
 - c. How Long? Three days!
 3. WHY? --- It was a vital matter, this was a great turn about in his life.
 - a. E.M. Bounds notes that, "We pray because we cannot quit praying."
 - b. Our whole hearts and souls are in the desire.
 4. We press our pleas because we must have them or die.
 - a. That's how important they are to us.
 - b. It is a vital matter.
 - c. We must have it or we will die --- God it is that important to me!
 - d. So we pray with importunity.
- D. In **Acts 6:2,4** --- The Apostles said it was that important to them that they would not leave it to go and serve tables.
 1. Importunate prayer is time consuming.

- a. Jesus prayed all night --- cf. **Luke 6:12**.
 2. It is not spot prayers.
 - a. It is not praying along in our cars.
 - b. There is a time and a place for these types of prayers.
 - c. But, this is not importunate prayer!
 3. Importunate prayer is time consuming --- 30 minutes, 60 minutes, All day All night --- all week etc.
 4. WHY? Because it is a vital matter, You have a great desire for this thing.
 - a. Because you have faith that God, can do something about it, will do something about it and is the ONLY ONE who is able to do something about it.
- E. In **1 Thess. 3:10** we find that importunate prayer is laboring in Prayer.
1. Do you get the impact of this passage.
 - a. How long are you praying Paul? --- "NIGHT AND DAY"
 - b. How are you praying about it Paul? --- "EARNESTLY\exceedingly"
 2. It is agonizing, it is laboring in prayer.
 3. **Col. 4:12** says the same thing to us.
 - a. "always striving for you in his prayers," (ASV)
 - (1) "always laboring fervently for you in prayers," (KJV)
 - (2) "always laboring earnestly for you in his prayers," (NASB)
 - b. Epaphras was doing three things mentioned right here:
 - (1) ALWAYS PRAYING
 - (2) ALWAYS LABORING IN PRAYER
 - (3) ALWAYS LABORING EARNESTLY/FERVENTLY.
 - c. Have you done that type of praying?
 4. Well if you know what impertinent praying is then you have!
- F. In the Bible it is also called striving in prayer. It is called wrestling in prayer. It is called fervently in prayer. Agonizing in prayer.
1. These are the terms that are used to describe importunate praying.
 2. In **Acts 12:1-19** here is a case study of importunate prayer.
 - a. James has be arrested and beheaded for the proclamation of the gospel.
 - b. Now Peter has been arrested, Herod's desire is to please the people so I am sure of the fact that he was intending to behead Peter also.
 3. NOW WHAT IS THE CHURCH DOING while Peter is in Jail cf. **vrs 5,12**.

- a. What they were engaging in was persistent prayer.
- b. You see they had been praying from the time of his arrest to the night of his release.
 - (1) They have continued to pray.
 - (2) They have been actively involving themselves in prayer.
- c. There is time my brethren for the church to come together and to devote themselves to nothing but prayer.
 - (1) No song service, no sermons no bible classes --- Just Prayer.
 - (2) This importunate prayer.
- d. I want you to wrestle with yourselves for just a moment --- if this was today and one of our number was arrested and was to be put to death for the cause of Christ what would we be doing?
 - (1) Would we not be searching out the best lawyers, see whether we have someone we know or a brother who is influential in this community to speak on our behalf?
 - (2) Then secondly we might set up some type of schedule to make sure that someone is visiting that brother in jail so that he does not feel lonely and let him know that we are trying everything we can to get him out.
 - (3) AM I RIGHT?
- e. NOW - what did this church do?
 - (1) They said it is time to pray.
 - (2) I really like that type of attitude in a church.
 - (3) It was time to get down and pray. **It was personal prayer** --- they were praying for Peter and Peter alone.
 - (4) There are times when we need to involve ourselves in specific prayer.
 - (a) I like to refer to this as "LASER GUIDED PRAYER".
 - (b) It is sharp, penetrating and accurate.
 - (5) I want you to consider this --- and a throw this out for your observation, I wonder what would have happened to James if the church had been praying for him like they were for Peter.
 - (6) The Next observation from this passage is the fact that it was **prevailing prayer**.
 - (a) The whole church was involved in this. --- **vrs 5, 12.**
 - (b) Sometimes we go to one person and ask him to prayer for us. And this is not wrong. BUT,
 - (c) I don't understand this but there is something about the numbers in prayer that sways God.
 - i) Illustrate: The raising of the Titanic Trough Ping Pong Balls:

- (d) One Ping Pong Balls would not do it --- but many would.
- (e) One prayer may not be enough for the thing for which we are praying importunately.
 - i) I do know that God is swayed by numbers praying.
- (7) There is another thing that is interesting about this case study to me.
 - (a) My God has a certain flare of theatrical poise about Himself. Now I don't say that in a flippant or non respectful way. Consider for just a moment.
 - (b) To me there is a type of "Cavalry Charge" flare of God's deliverance in many instances.
 - i) God's delays are not to be seen as God's denials.
 - ii) Don't give up. In impertinent prayer you keep on praying until you have a definite answer.
 - iii) In our case study - God delivers Peter on the very night before he is about to be brought out. --- cf. **vrs. 6, 18.**
 - (c) It is almost as if God rescues us at the very last to teach us that dependance and trust must be in Him always.
 - i) Note the trust that Peter had in the Lord --- he is found sleeping on the night before he was to be brought out --- cf. **vrs 6.**
- (8) Now we get to the part of this case study that I truly love. We see a devoted church given themselves over to importunate prayer on behalf of Peter.
 - (a) There are so many things which the disciples here teach me about importunate praying, however, there is one thing which I see that I feel they really missed the boat on.
 - (b) Here they are praying for Peter --- What were they praying about?
 - (c) We see Peter knocking --- Rhoda goes to the door for they continue to pray.
 - i) Rhoda does not open the door - she recognizes the voice of Peter and runs back inside and announces that Peter was standing out side.
 - ii) Now if we were Peter --- we would be saying "COME ON OPEN THE DOOR THE SOLDIERS MAY BE COMING."
 - (d) Listen to what they say ---- cf. **vrs 15.**
 - i) What are you praying about --- for whom have you been praying?
 - ii) Why can't they believe that God has answered their prayers?
- f. You know brethren we pray so hard about a matter that many times we do not see the answer when it does come! AMEN!
 - (1) We just keep on praying --- while God has already answered it for us.
 - (2) Realize that God may answer us in ways that we may not expect.

- g. There are so many valuable lessons here in this case study --- but the most important aspect of it I believe is the fact that we should always be looking for the answer of the Lord.
 - h. The answer may not come in ways which we may be expecting but none the less they are always there. ---- LOOK.
4. Importunate prayer secures many blessings that others types of prayer do not.
- a. There are some things that only come with us constantly hammering at the gates of heaven.
 - b. We must have our request or Die --- God it is that important to me.
 - c. Importunate prayer does not stop until we get a firm NO or God answers our Prayer in the affirmative.
- G. I want to give you a few examples of this. What would Elijah have done had he given up after his first attempt to pray for rain?
- 1. Remember the story --- Elijah had been on Mt. Carmel.
 - a. God had killed the prophets of Baal.
 - b. There had been a drought in the land at Elijah's request.
 - 2. **James tells us in 5:28** that he prayed that it would not rain, and then again he prayed that it would rain and it did rain.
 - a. cf. **1 Kings 18:42-44**. --- "Elijah put his head between his legs"
 - b. I am convinced that Elijah is engaged here in prayer. It ties in here with **1 Kings 18 and with James**.
 - c. Elijah prays seven times and on the seventh occasion God answers his prayer.
 - (1) BUT, note the faith of Elijah --- Go tell King Ahab a storm is coming.
 - (2) If we were the servant we would be thinking "OFF WITH MY HEAD" there is only one small cloud the size of a man's hand.
 - (3) But look at the faith and trust that Elijah has in the fact that God has answered his prayer.
 - 3. What I am saying is what would have happened if Elijah had quit on the sixth or fifth time that he had prayed.
 - a. I firmly believe there would have been no rain.
 - b. The point is he persisted in his praying and he got his answer to that prayer from God.
 - c. What makes Elijah such a good example of faithful and righteous prayer can be seen in **1 Kings 17:1**.
 - (1) Elijah was a man who was very intimate with his God.
- H. I want to close with one more case study from the Scriptures. Do your remember the case when Jacob is coming home with his wives and all his goods after having been away. --- cf.

Gen. 32:22-32

1. One might not consider this, but this is a situation of prayer brethren.
2. I am convinced of this that Esau was intent on killing his brother.
 - a. You don't bring 400 men in a welcome wagon party. cf. --- **Gen. 32:6**
 - b. He was bringing an army to destroy his brother --- note this is the impression that his servants give to Jacob and the impression I get from reading this account that Jacob felt the same way.
3. But, what changed the heart of Esau? I firmly believe that it was Jacob wrestling with the Lord all night in prayer and securing a blessing from God that changed the heart of Esau.
4. It is that prayer that changed the situation. Jacob changed the heart of his brother thru prayer. Is that not fantastic!
5. When his past came to haunt him --- Jacob wrestled with God until he secured a blessing from God.

Conclusion:

- A. Important prayer is prayer that is offered in a troublesomely urgent manner.
 1. It is firstly prayer offered with great desire.
 2. Secondly it is prayer offered with the faith that God will do.
 3. Thirdly it is prayer offered over vitally important matters.
 4. Fourthly it is prayer that is laboring in prayer
 5. It is prayer that looks for the answer of God.
 6. And finally it is prayer that brings forth the blessings of God.
- B. Important prayer is essential to securing the blessings that God has in store for us.
- C. Brethren we need to pray more earnestly than we do. We need to pray more fervently than we do and we need to be spending time in laboring prayer.
 1. Important prayer is good in many situations --- for the sick and dying, for the lost souls in the world of darkness etc.
- D. E.M. Bounds states: "God's acquaintance is not made by pop calls. God does not bestow His gifts or blessings on the casual or hasty comer or goes. He bestows His riches gifts upon those who declare their desire for and their appreciation of those gifts by constancy as well as their earnestness of their importunity."
 1. And brethren I believe he is right when he states this.

"Lord Teach us To Pray" --- Lesson Number Five

WHY SHOULD I PRAY IN AN AGE WHEN MIRACLES HAVE CEASED?

Introduction:

- E. The topic we are to discuss tonight is a very important subject --- "Why should I pray in the age when miracles have ceased?"
 - 1. It is my endeavor this evening to convince you once again that Prayer is a vital and essential part of the Christian's Daily walk.
- F. Man is a "praying animal".
 - 1. As one looks around the world and through out the ages one will note that - "Prayer, in the sense of a conscious effort to hold communion with Deity, is Universal."
 - 2. Even for those who deny the very existence of God have been known to breathe a prayer in extreme circumstances.
 - a. The saying --- "there are no atheists in foxholes" rings true.
 - b. Over heard on a commercial airliner that was headed for disaster --- "For those who are in special contact with God - it is requested that you make contact now."
- G. One of the most encouraging statements made in the Bible concerning prayer is found in **1 Peter 3:12**.
 - 1. **1 Peter 3:12a.** --- "For the eyes of the LORD [are] on the righteous, And His ears [are open] to their prayers;" {NKJV}
 - 2. However, one of the most solemn warnings can be found in the very same verse:
 - a. "But the face of the LORD [is] against those who do evil." **1 Peter 3:12b.** (NKJV).
- H. As we study tonight let us observe some vital facts that will help us to understand why we need to pray in this day and age?

Body:

II. WHY PRAY?

- A. God is a personal being:
 - 1. Prayer involves personal communication with a Personal Being.
 - a. This implies that there is such a being with whom we communicate.
 - b. No, we do not need radio telescopes to communicate with other beings.
 - 2. This also involves the fact that this being is one who Hears, Feels, and Wills.
 - a. However, He is Omniscient, holy, and gracious.
 - 3. Those who claim that there is No God and that God is simply a figment of the imagination, slowly developed as man ascended up the evolutionary scale - declare that it is useless to pray.

- a. In **Psa. 14:1** --- David declares such a persons attitude to be foolish.
 - b. There is sufficient evidence to prove that God is through nature alone --- cf. **Psa. 19:1-4.**
 4. Without faith in God we cannot be rewarded by God and we will not be pleasing to God -- cf. **Heb. 11:6.**
- B. God is able to answer prayer:
1. The God who:
 - a. Was able to bring heaven and earth into existence by the power of His utterance --- cf. **Heb. 11:3; Psa. 33:6**
 - b. To make men out of stones --- **Matt. 3:9 cf. Gen. 2:7**
 - c. To deliver His servant from the fire --- cf. **Dan. 3:17**
 - d. To raise the dead --- cf. **Heb. 11:19**
 - e. To destroy both body and soul in Hell --- cf. **Matt. 10:28**
 2. Is certainly "able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think" --- cf. **Eph. 3:20.**
- C. God is Willing To Answer Prayer:
1. In **1 Peter 3:12** --- we have God pictured "literally" with His Ears "eis" into the petitions of the righteous.
 - a. This conjures up the impression of God stooping down or bending to eager listen and answer the prayers of the righteous.
 - b. We do not have a Deity that is in a far off place that is totally inaccessible.
 2. We do not have to plead with God to have Him willing to answer our prayers.
 - a. Kenneth S. Wuest, in his book *First Peter in the Greek New Testament*, pg. 87 makes this note on the subject at hand --- " God is more desirous of answering our prayers than we are to have them answered."
 - b. The fact of the matter is that God will always answer the prayers of the righteous, sometimes with a powerful "Yes"; sometimes with a "No" and sometimes with "wait a little."

III. ***DOES GOD REALLY ANSWER PRAYER?***

- A. As one studies the book of Peter we can see that Peter encourages Christians to be a united, loving, and compassionate people - in short, to be a blessing to others.
1. Knowing this we shall receive/inherit a blessing --- cf. **1 Peter 3:9.**
 - a. Peter then quotes **Psa. 34:12-16.**
 - (1) The person that will enjoy life to the fullest must avoid those things that could

cause God to turn His face against him.

b. He must seek those things which will inherit him the reward of God favor:

(1) Do good, seek peace, and pursue it." cf. **Psa. 34:10-11.**

2. Peter applies the Psalmists words in an appropriate fashion since:

a. One of the richest blessings and assurances we have from God is that God does hear and answer our prayers.

(1) cf. **Prov. 15:29**

(2) cf. **Psa. 145:18**

B. Open your Bible and read **Psa. 34** in its entirety.

1. David declares that god had heard His prayers.

a. In response to God hearing his prayers God had delivered him from his fears --- cf. **vrs. 4.**

b. He had saved him out of his troubles --- cf. **vrs. 6**

c. That God delivers the righteous out of all afflictions --- cf. **vrs 19**

d. And redeems his soul --- cf. **vrs. 22.**

2. Urging all "to taste and see that the Lord is good," David pronounces a blessing upon the man that:

a. "Trusts in Him" --- cf. **vrs 8.**

b. Assures us that there is no want in them that fear Him ---- cf. **vrs 9.**

c. That those that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing" --- cf. **vrs. 10.**

C. Do you really believe that God does that? TODAY?

1. Does He really act in response to our prayers?

2. The Bible says He does!

a. In the book of James, he notes that any who lack wisdom let him ask --- cf. **James 1:5.**

3. Now this does not mean that there are no conditions to be met:

a. The conditions are laid down for us:

(1) Let him ask in faith.

(2) Doubting nothing

(3) Not double-minded cf. **James 1:6-8.**

4. In **James 5:16** --- we see that the supplications of a righteous man avails much good.

5. Jesus said --- "ask" --- cf. **Matt. 7:7-8; Lk. 11:9-10.**

a. In this case we see How that God is willing to answer "persistent prayer". --- cf.

Matt. 7:11.

- b. He also illustrated the answer to persistent prayer by a fellow neighbor --- cf. **Luke 11:5-9.**
- 6. Jesus taught that God will respond to prayer! --- DO WE DOUBT OUR LORD?
 - a. We have covered this subject in great detail last evening.

IV. ***IS GOD ANY DIFFERENT TODAY?***

- A. Is God different today from what He was in David's day?
 - 1. Is God different today from the days that Our Lord and Savior was upon this earth?
 - a. Is God no longer interested in His children?
 - b. Does He no longer work on our behalf?
 - 2. A man argued with me that it is useless to ask God to do anything in response to prayer today.
 - a. His contention was this:
 - (1) God's last will and testament has been revealed.
 - (2) Therefore, God does not have a will to be influenced by our prayers.
 - 3. But, what he has failed to recognize is the fact:
 - a. cf. **Heb. 12:8** --- that "God is the same yesterday, today and forever."
 - b. God has always had an immutable will --- cf. **Heb. 6:17-18.**
 - (1) But, clearly God declares that His actions change in response to the changes made in men --- cf. **Isa. 55:7.**
- B. Is God different to His people today? NO !
 - 1. Peter declares that his eyes and ears are upon the righteous --- cf. **1 Peter 3;12.**
 - 2. God has not changed his attitude, nor His inclination to hear the prayers of the righteous.
 - a. He has not abandoned His children.
 - b. The very fact that we are taught in the scriptures that God will work on our behalf --- cf. **Heb. 13:5-6.**

V. ***SHOULD WE EXPECT MIRACLES TODAY?***

- A. Is it really necessary to believe God will work a miracle today in order to believe He really answers our prayers?
 - 1. Many seem to have the opinion that prayer is either:
 - a. Answered miraculously.

- b. Or not at all.
2. We need not expect to see miracles today.
 - a. God can work through His natural laws, as well as suspending them and overpowering them to perform and work miracles.
 - b. One must note that miracles were never performed merely to accommodate the desires and needs of men.
 - (1) **THEY** were signs to CONFIRM THE TRUTH of GOD.
 - (2) They were performed by Christ to --- approve Him as a man of God --- cf. **John. 20:30-31**
 - (a) cf. **Acts 2:22**
 - (b) cf. **John 3:2**
 - c. Further more Jesus taught that the signs would confirm those who bore witness of Him --- cf. **Heb. 2:3-4.**
- B. Miracles served as a temporary purpose, to bear witness to God Revelation --- cf. **Mk. 16:17-20.**
 1. cf. **Acts 2:33**
 - a. cf. **Acts 10:47**
 - b. cf. **1 Cor. 14:22.**
 2. Paul taught that these were all "in part" and would be done "away with when that which is perfect has come." --- cf. **I Cor. 13;8-10.**
 3. Miracles have served there purpose and have ceased.
- C. God does not have to suspend the laws of nature in order to answer our prayers.
 1. He can answer by working through the natural forces and processes which operate in the natural world, which are still under His control.
 2. James offered us an illustration of how the "effective prayer of a righteous man avails much" --- cf. **James 5:17-18.**
 - a. Elijah is not pictured as a super human being --- as we studied in our lesson on depression --- he is a man like unto us.
 - b. Is so far as God answering His prayer --- Elijah was an ordinary man.
 3. The efficiency of prayer does not require a specially endowed person.
 - a. It is a blessing that is available to ordinary men --- Like you and me!
 4. From **1 Kings 18:41-46**, we learn how God answered Elijah's prayer:
 - a. After praying seven times:
 - (1) A cloud came out over the Mediterranean Sea like unto a man's hand and rain came out of the cloud.

(2) Now is rain came out of a clear blue sky --- we could call it a miracle.

b. But since God brought up a cloud to produce the rain, we must recognize that this was a act of God's Providence.

(1) His control of the natural forces operating in His Created Universe.

Conclusion:

A. God always answers prayers.

1. We know how to ask, and sometimes we ask for harmful things --- But God knows what's best for us always.

B. Sometimes He grants our petitions, and sometimes He denies them.

1. Paul prayed three times for "his thorn in the flesh" to be removed --- cf. **2 Cor. 12:8**.

2. God denied his request, for God had something better for him.

C. May we be content to submit to God when He says "no" as well as when He says "Yes".

1. cf. **Phil. 4:6-7**.

D. In closing I would like to read you a poem by James E. Cooper:

GOD ANSWERS PRAYER

I asked God for strength, That I might achieve -

I was made weak, That I might learn to obey.

I asked for help, That I might do greater things -

I was given infirmity, That I might do better things.

I asked for riches, That I might be happy -

I was given poverty, That I might be wise.

I asked for all things, That I might enjoy life.

I was given life, That I might enjoy all things.

I got nothing that I asked for, But everything I had hoped for.

Despite myself, My prayers were answered.

I am among all men, Most richly blessed.

Guardian of truth - 10/18/1984.

Lesson Ideas from The Graphic Evangelist by Elam B. Kuykendall.

"Lord Teach Us How To Pray" - Lesson Number Six

BIBLE PRAYER WARRIORS

Introduction:

- A. This lesson brings to a close the series of lessons we have had on the subject of Prayer over this past week.
1. This concept of prayer was very new to me when I was first learning how to study prayer. In many of the books on prayer there was this term that kept coming up that I was just not familiar with and that is that certain individuals who were called or referred to as "Prayer Warriors".
 2. After having studied **Eph. 6** it all fell in place for me.
 3. If you would turn there with me, I would like to show you how this came together for me.
 - a. cf. **Eph. 6:10-18**.
 - b. I want you to imagine a soldier been checked by his officer making sure that he has all the necessary equipment to engage in Battle.
 - c. As he is going thru the list - the soldier would reply checked --- but then he comes to **vrs. 18**.
 - d. Prayer --- cf. **Ephesians 6:18** "With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints," (NASB).
 4. Prayer is the heart of the armour of the Christians weaponry. Listed in this very section is the entire arsenal of the Christian Soldier, yet listed at the very end is that of prayer as part of our ability to wage war with Satan and his forces.
 - a. Prayer is part of that and so I began to realize that prayer is part of fighting against Satan.
 - b. We talked about this in the very first lesson on prayer.
- B. The Christian who advances on his knees always advances and never retreats.
1. When we fight Satan on our knees we fight him with the Almighty power of God.
 2. We are simply the instruments that God is using - we do not fight him ourselves and this is what makes us powerful.
- C. I have given my own personal definition of a "Prayer Warrior" as: "One who secures victory with prayer as his weapon."
1. He is made powerful in prayer and is willing to risk everything to gain the victory over the enemy.
 2. Prayer is part of how we defeat Satan.
- D. And so tonight as we bring this whole series of lessons to a close, I believe that it will help us to take a look at some great Biblical Warriors of Prayer.

1. We want to consider some men on the Bible who are great prayer Warriors.
2. Now we could have looked at some women who I believe are great warriors in Prayer - however, their prayers are not as detailed as are some of the men warriors.
 - a. I mention Hannah as a prime illustration of a great Woman Prayer Warrior --- cf. **1 Sam. 1:10-13 ; 2:1-110.**
3. Tonight we want to look at four Prayer warriors and, all of these are mentioned because of their various aspects of their prayer lives.

Body:

II. *FOUR WARRIORS OF PRAYER:*

A. **The first one we want to look at is ABRAHAM.** He is a great man of faith and I refer to him as a great warrior of FAITH.

1. I call him this because he has the faith in God to support his requests.
 - a. When he desired something from the Lord, he had the faith to believe that it would be done for him by the Lord.
 - b. And this makes him a great warrior.
2. We have hammered and hammered home this concept that prayer is not effective at all if one does not have faith.
 - a. The more faith we have the more our prayers will be effective.
 - b. And the greater our prayers the greater the blessings that we can secure.
3. Abraham was such a man.
 - a. In **Romans 4:19-21** --- Abraham was accounted as a righteous man and a man of great faith because:
 - (1) He had the faith in God to accomplish something that was physically impossible for him in his old age.
 - (2) And for a woman the age of his wife.
 - b. But his faith shines through and he continues to exercise his faith and trust in God and it accomplished great things for him.
4. But, I think the one passage that illustrates the great faith of this man more than any other passages --- cf. **Gen. 22:5**
 - a. Truly this diamond laying in the rough had to be pointed out to me.
 - b. I want you to see how the passage can be translated literally.
 - (1) "I and the lad we will go yonder"
 - (2) "I and the Lad we will go and worship"
 - (3) "I and the lad we will come back to you."
 - c. Abraham believed that God would raise that boy up somehow, because he knew that

this was the son of promise and that God had to do it.

- (1) He believed that God would do that, even though he had never seen, nor heard of a person being raised from the dead.
- (2) cf. **Heb. 11:19**.
- (3) As we look at this from hinds-sight we can see this very easily:
 - (a) God raised his own son up from the dead --- cf. **Matt.28:1-8** cf. **Acts 2:32**.
 - (b) Paul raised up Eutycus. --- **Acts 20:9**
 - (c) Peter raised up Dorcas. --- cf. **Acts 9:40**
 - (d) Elijah healed the son --- cf. **1 Kings 17:23**
- (4) We can see God can do that and that He has done this so it is not great wonder to us, but Abraham did not know that but he had faith in His God that he was both willing and able to do it.
- (5) Now it is that kind of faith that makes Abraham a great Prayer Warrior.
- d. He lived by the principle that believing is seeing, not by the principle that seeing is believing --- cf. **John. 20:29**.
- e. We do not live in a "SHOW ME STATE" we live in a state that says I believe it even though I have not seen it. "BELIEVING IS SEEING" not if I see it I will believe it.
- f. And he is a great individual of faith for us to follow.
5. I want to look at one incident when Abraham interceded for the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. --- cf. **Gen. 18:23-33** tell us the story.
 - a. Abraham was such a righteous man that it is possible that God was so intent on destroying these cities that He left Abraham before Abraham could make one last plea --- cf. **vrs. 33**.
 - b. Consider the concept that Abraham was such a righteous man that he may have been able to save the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah with his petitions and requests to God.
 - c. cf. **Genesis 19:29** --- Lots salvation was not due to his righteousness but due to the righteousness that God found in Abraham.
 - d. Because Abraham prayed he gained the lives of his family in the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.

B. Let us look at another great warrior in Prayer --- Consider Moses.

1. The Warrior of Intercession.
 - a. As one studies the books of Exodus thru Deuteronomy one can count TEN TIMES where Moses save the entire nation of Israel from God's wrath.
 - b. If we count the 605,000 men who are of age to go to battle and estimate the total population of Israel at 1 wife and 1 child to each of these them we have 1,815,000 lives that Moses saved by his prayers alone.

2. In **Ex. 17:8-16** we have the battle that Joshua fights with the Amalekites but it is interesting to note that the battle went for Israel when Moses lifted up his arms with the rod of God.
 - a. Now I am persuaded that this is not some insignificant act, nor some type of superstitious act but rather that when Moses lifted up his arms he was praying to God.
 - b. he was calling on God to fight for them.
 - c. I have no doubt if we had been observers to this battle that we would have given the victory to Joshua and the forces that were on the field, but brethren I believe we all would miss it.
 - (1) The one who won the battle was not even on the field, it was an old man up upon a hill.
 - (2) It was Moses who won the battle.
 - d. Mention the prayers of some saintly old woman or younger women whom is praying on our behalf that has made the church great.
3. I want you to turn to another passage that I think shows us Moses in all his glory - and I don't think that there is another passages that shows us the greatness of Moses like this one --- cf. **Deut. 9:18-20** Moses is recounting the days when he found the children involved in idolatry. cf. **Ex. 32:9-11,32** -- {same event but the first time we hear of it}.
 - a. Moses entreated God --- this word here is literally "stroked the face of God".
 - b. cf. **Psa. 106:19-23**
4. I only know of two other people in the pages of the Bible that did what Moses is here doing:
 - a. Paul offered himself this way in the Book of **Romans: 9:3**.
 - b. And Jesus Christ offered himself this way in the Gospels.
5. Moses stood in the gap of the breached wall fortress of the Israelite people.
6. Moses life was that righteous, that God could not would not destroy him.
 - a. I am not that righteous, I wish I was.
 - b. Charles Phiny stated what I believe can be said of this generation today: "Our generation will throng the gates of hell, because no one cried for their souls."
 - c. Do you want that said of your and my generation? I don't!
 - d. Do you want all the people around about us to go to hell because we won't cry out for their souls! Because we won't heal their burden and throw ourselves into the gap!
7. There is work to be done in this avenue of prayer brethren, we need to be throwing ourselves into the gap!

C. Hezekiah is a Prayer Warrior of Power.

1. Here is a man who is able to do great things because of his ability to pray.

2. **2 Kings 20:1** --- Hezekiah was told by the prophet Isaiah that he was about ready to die.
 - a. Now, I know what I would feel like if a doctor walked in and gave me that news.
 - b. You might today have a good reason to fight, because doctors have been wrong before.
 - c. But, when it comes from the Lord God, brethren I know there is no reason to fight --- at least it would seem futile to fight.
3. Hezekiah did not take this as a firm answer to this --- when his back was to the wall he took his plea to God in prayer.
4. **cf. vrs 4-5.** --- God has heard his prayer and seen his tears.
 - a. I suggest to you that it is important from time to time for us to pray out aloud, for in doing this we will inevitably shed tears.
 - b. I was asked why this is --- brothers and sisters this occurs because when we pray out aloud our prayers and our situation becomes more real to us.
 - c. Never be ashamed of tears shed before God -- cf. **Matt. 5:4.**
5. Go back one **chapter 19:8-19** --- at a time when there was no relief for Israel Hezekiah found relief through his prayers.
 - a. His prime objective is not for the well being of the people but for the glory and exaltation of the Lord God Jehovah. --- cf **vrs 16, 19.**
 - b. Hezekiah was answered because he had pleased God --- cf. **vrs. 20.**
 - (1) cf. **vrs 35** ---185,000 they died because of Hezekiah's prayer to God.
 - (2) cf. **vrs. 37**

D. Jesus is our Last Prayer Warrior for this evening.

1. How can one talk about praying and not take time to be taught the importance of prayer from the greatest prayer Warrior ever to have touched the face of this earth.
2. Jesus to be can be classified as the WARRIOR OF DAILY PRAYER.
 - a. He was a man who prayed all night, He was a man who got up early in the morning, He is the man who went out to pray, He is the man who prayed 40 days and 40 nights in the wilderness etc.
 - b. Today we have all types of excuses for not engaging in this type of prayer.
 - (1) Now, I'm not suggesting that you spend 40 days and 40 nights fasting alone without any food or water.
3. Martin Luther entered into his journals for his days plan this notation: "Work, Work, Work, from early morning till late. In fact I have so much to do that I will spend the first three hours praying."
 - a. Have you ever thought this way? I am so busy today I will spend the first three hours praying!

- b. Why, you know and I know that we are all guilty of the fact of saying --- "I'm too busy to spend time in prayer."
4. Jesus' attitude was --- "I am to busy not to pray."
5. The night before His death --- where do we find Him? --- In the presence of His Father --- cf. **Matt.26:36-46**
 - a. **John 11:41-42** --- Christ's faith in God was so strong that He prayed and thanked God for hearing Him before He had said a word about raising Lazarus from the dead.
 - (1) God had not answered His prayer yet, Lazarus is still in the tomb.
 - (2) I suggest to you that you ought to pray with thanks giving for some things that you have not yet received from God.
 - (3) That takes faith --- Great Faith.
 - b. He prayed that God's Will be done. --- cf. **Matt. 26:39,42,44.**
 - c. If I was to ask you if you believed Christ was still working today, or has Christ finished His work --- if you answered in your minds he is finished, you are dead wrong.
 - (1) There is one thing that Jesus does today ,Christ is still working on our behalf --- **Heb. 7:25**
 - (2) Christ stand between the gap and brings our prayers to God on our behalf.
6. Jesus - "TEACH ME HOW TO PRAY".

Conclusion:

- A. This series comes to a close with a final lesson on Sunday Evening, but I leave you here today with a few simple suggestions for you to contemplate this weekend.
 1. I suggest that you pray alone --- as E.M. Bounds said --"Let prayer be the key of the morning and the bolt at night."
 - a. Howard states: "If the labor of prayer does not precede as well as accompany all the work in the Kingdom, it will become nothing, only the work of man."
 - b. Pray faithfully.
 - c. Pray frequently.
 - d. Pray fervently.
 - e. Pray always.

APPENDIX LESSONS

Some points provoked by two books by John Bunyan on "Prayer"

Time of Need ---- Heb. 4:16 ; Reading: John 17:6-19

INTRODUCTION:

- A. Prayer is speaking with God.
 - 1. Prayer is a public thing and an especially private thing.
- B. Read Heb. 4:14-16; and encouragement to come to the throne of Grace.

II. Time of Need - What is the Throne of Grace?

- A. Several Thrones of God:
 - 1. Throne of Judgment
 - 2. Ruling Throne
 - 3. A Throne of Grace; blessing, forgiveness, reward
- B. The Mercy Seat; LXX the propitiation
 - 1. Ex. 25:17
 - 2. 1 John 2:2
- C. Prayer is how we tell God our needs.
 - 1. We must admit we are needy.
 - 2. We must be poor in spirit to see God.
 - 3. Let God answer your prayers.

III. Jesus the High Priest

- A. Our Mediator between God and Man
- B. Great High Priest
 - 1. Compared to Aaron later in book.
 - a. Service in the Tabernacle.
 - b. His descendants served in the Temple.
 - 2. After the order of Melchizedek
 - 3. Passed not through curtains, but the heavens.
 - a. Passed through the veil, by reason of His flesh.
 - b. He is our hope within the veil.
 - c. His is our hope that we too will enter the veil.

C. Sympathetic to our weaknesses.

1. Not a being that has not experienced our fleshly condition.
 - a. Heb. 2:9-11, made lower than angels; not ashamed to call us brethren.
 - b. Share in flesh and blood Himself
 - (1) Heb. 2:14-18
 - (2) partook of life, and death
 - (3) tempted in His sufferings
2. Qualities of Jesus the High Priest:
 - a. Heb. 2:17-18:
 - (1) merciful
 - (2) faithful
 - (3) make propitiation for the sins of the people
 - (4) able to come to our aid, as he too was tempted.
 - b. Heb. 4:15
 - (1) can sympathize with our weaknesses
 - (2) tempted, yet without sin--could not be said of Aaronic priests.
 - (3) Offers mercy and grace

IV. What are Our Times of Need?

A. Days of Youth

1. Our own youthfulness.
 - a. inexperience in life
 - b. inexperience as a Christian; Read from John Bunyan's lesson on prayer:
 - (1) "Now the devil has lost a sinner; there is a captive has broke prison, and one runaway from his master: now hell seems to be awakened from sleep, the devils are come out, they roar, and roaring they seek to recover their runaway. Now tempt him, threaten him, flatter him, stigmatise him, throw dust into his eyes, poison him with error, spoil him while he is upon the potter's wheel; any thing to keep him from coming to Jesus Christ. And is not this a needy time?" ("The Throne of Grace" in Prayer, by Bunyan, p. 152).
 - c. sins of the youth (2 Tim. 2:22)
2. Youth of our children and friends.
 - a. Physical needs must be met.
 - b. Morals of their teachers may be decayed.

- c. Gravity and modesty is neglected in songs, movies, teen "idols."
 - d. Those who would prey upon our youth.
 - e. Their friends that may be evil companions.
 - f. Grow up with nurture and admonition of the Lord.
3. These are times to pray.
- B. Days of our Prosperity
1. Physical: Hard for the rich to enter heaven.
 - a. Matt. 19:24-26, camel through the eye of the needle
 - b. Prov. 30:9, Agur's prayer; keep me from temptations.
 - c. Matt. 6:19ff laying up treasures in heaven
 - d. Continue to thank God for His physical blessings
 - (1) 1 Tim. 6:17ff
 - (2) Matt. 6:11, prayer for daily bread
 2. Spiritual Blessings
 - a. How can Satan attack you when you are rich in faith?
 - b. Pray for...
 - (1) knowledge
 - (2) understanding
 - (3) kindness, love
 - (4) opportunities to share gospel
 - (5) forgiveness of sins
 - (6) keep me from temptations
 - (7) spiritual growth
 3. These are times to pray.
- C. Days of Darkness, Afflictions
1. We've studied...
 - a. James 1:2ff, count them a blessing.
 - b. 1 Peter, sufferings with glories to follow
 2. Some Dark Times
 - a. Days of reproach or slander.
 - b. Days when a man's friends desert or forsake him.
 - (1) Think of Job's friends

- (2) Think of Jesus' friend who betrayed Him.
 - c. The day of one's death
 - (1) often preceded by days of sickness--see below.
 - (2) Could be the day of rejoicing if you've chosen to serve God in life?
 - (3) Ecc. 7:1 the day of a man's death better than his birth.
 - (4) Certainly a time for prayer.
 - 3. But these tenuous times can present us with options we may not otherwise choose:
 - a. Deny the Lord, as Peter did; cursing and swearing.
 - b. Not gather with the saints, as possibly Thomas did.
 - c. Persecute some saints we have disagreements with.
 - d. Pay back evil for evil.
 - 4. Remember the Psalm of David (23): Valley of the Shadow of death; deep darkness; "Thou art with me."
 - 5. These are days we need to come boldly to the throne of grace for help and mercy in the time of need.
 - a. This is what Jesus did several times.
 - (1) Reading from John 17, prayer for himself, His apostles and other saints.
 - (2) esp. note the Garden Prayer.
 - b. Paul prayed in these dark times also.
 - (1) In a darkened jail with Silas.
 - (2) When suffering a "thorn in the flesh..."
 - 6. These are times to pray.
- D. Days of Change
- 1. Change may be good or bad.
 - a. Persecutions may seem bad; look for the good.
 - b. Some change is desired, and necessary for life.
 - 2. Some time of change: don't forget to pray
 - a. New job
 - (1) losing a job, getting a new one; change in the work load.
 - (2) This is a time to pray.
 - b. New spouse:
 - (1) Married and living with another person.
 - (2) Two become one; habits and feeling merge as this happens; keep God in your lives

by prayer.

(3) seeking one? dating can bring some of the same feelings.

(4) This is a time to pray.

c. New Baby:

(1) This will test the couple; change in many ways!

(2) How to adjust schedules?

(3) How to raise the child before God?

(4) This is a time to pray.

d. New place of living

(1) Footprints of Jesus: "We will follow the steps of Jesus, where 're they go."

(2) Take Jesus with you if you move to a new place.

(3) Keep him there.

(4) There will be tests, "grinds", loneliness in a new place.

(5) This is a time to pray.

e. Change of health

(1) Things break down as we get older. Don't believe it? Look around; ask around.

(a) eyes

(b) hearing

(c) limbs

(d) joints, back, neck

(e) feeble-minded

(2) Ecc. 12:1ff, remember the Creator(s) in the days of your youth before the evil days come.

3. Changes in health make it

a. harder to get around

b. need to take things with you (oxygen)

c. easier to neglect some things you know you need to do.

d. These are times to pray.

4. Times of change will upset schedules, habits, practices you used to do for good.

a. Make plans to pray.

b. Make plans to attend worship services, and arrive on time.

c. Make plans to adjust in a Christ-like way.

d. These are times to pray.

E. Times of Guilt

1. Hiding from God

- a. Gen. 3, hiding in the Garden of Eden after sin.
- b. Is. 59:1-2 God hides His face from the sinner, too, but holds it out offering salvation.

2. Guilt, and Shame are neglected in some teaching.

- a. "I'm OK, You're OK" philosophy.
- b. "Do your own thing."
- c. Shame is a proper response to sin; but don't stay in it.
- d. Some sear their conscience: 1 Tim. 4:2

3. We can't always hide it...

- a. From ourselves, we'll always know.
- b. From those close to us, they may know.
- c. cf. You can fool some of the people all of the time, and all of the people some of the time, but you can't fool

4. We need to draw near to God for forgiveness of sins.

- a. Acts 8:20 ff.
- b. Draw near to God, you sinners, He will draw near to you (Jas. 4:8).
- c. 1 John 2:1-2, don't sin, if you do seek forgiveness
 - (1) 1 John 1:7, 9
 - (2) Pray for one another (James 5:16ff).

5. These are times to pray.

V. CONCLUSION:

A. Think of these times of need.

- 1. You may think of more.
- 2. We could be discouraged.

B. This is why we have

- 1. The throne of grace.
- 2. The Savior who mediates at the throne
- 3. God, who hears our petitions "in Jesus' name."

C. Come boldly, with confidence to this throne.

D. Receive mercy, and grace to help in the time of need. These are times to pray.

Sermon Outline By --Steve Willis

"PRAYER"

INTRODUCTION:

- A. This lesson has been prepared in response to a question that was submitted to me.
 - 1. The question is as follows: "Being a member of the body of Christ, WHAT should we pray FOR?"
 - 2. What kind of BLESSINGS or RESULTS should we expect from our prayers?
 - a. Do members of the Church of Christ place enough EMPHASIS on prayer and the POWER of it? "
 - B. There are THREE questions in one as you can see with one that has two parts.
 - 1. I shall answer each but not in the order given. The order of our study shall be:
 - a. "Do members of the Church of Christ put enough emphasis on prayer and the power of it?"
 - b. "What kind of blessings or results should we expect from our prayers?"
 - c. "For what should we pray?"
 - C. Let us study.
- II. "Do members of the Church of Christ place enough emphasis on prayer and the power of it?"
- A. This question has TWO PARTS. ---- PART # 1.
 - B. Do people place enough EMPHASIS on prayer?
 - 1. It has been my observation thru the years that SOME do NOT.
 - a. It has also been my observation that some DO.
 - C. WHY is it that some DO NOT place enough emphasis on prayer?
 - 1. Do not recognize that God EXPECTS His children to pray.
 - a. NOTE the following passages:
 - (1) MAT 9:38 "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest. "
 - (2) 1 TH 5:17 "Pray without ceasing."
 - (3) HEB 13:18 "Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly. "
 - b. THESE verses teach us that God INTENDS (EXPECTS) us to PRAY.
 - 2. Some do not realize that prayer is the ONLY MEANS of COMMUNICATION man has TO God.
 - a. NOTE the following verses.
 - (1) JER 14:11 "Then said the Lord unto me, Pray not for this people for {their} good."

- (2) JER 37:3 "And Zedekiah the king sent Jehucal the son of Shelemiah and Zephaniah the son of Maaseiah the priest to the prophet Jeremiah, saying, Pray now unto the Lord our God for us."
 - (3) JER 42:20 "For ye dissembled in your hearts, when ye sent me unto the Lord your God, saying, Pray for us unto the Lord our God; and according unto all that the Lord our God shall say, so declare unto us, and we will do {it}. "
 - (4) LUK 22:40 "And when he was at the place, he said unto them, Pray that ye enter not into temptation. "
 - (5) ACT 8:24 "Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me."
 - (6) ACT 16:25 "And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them. "
 - (7) PSA 102:1 "Hear my prayer, O Lord, and let my cry come unto thee."
- b. THESE verses teach us HOW we COMMUNICATE with our Father =PRAYER!!!
- (1) JESUS HIMSELF understood this truth for HE PRAYED.
 - (a) NOTE. MAR 1:35 "And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed."

D. PART # 2.

1. Some do not realize the POWER of prayer.

a. NOTE the following verses.

- (1) ISA 1:27 "For this child I prayed; and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of him: "
- (2) Abraham petitioned God for the city of Sodom. Gen.18:23-33.
- (3) 1 PE 3:12 "For the eyes of the Lord {are} over the righteous, and his ears {are open} unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord {is} against them that do evil."
- (4) Philippians 4:5-7 "Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord {is} at hand. Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

b. THESE scriptures teach us the POWER of prayer

III. "What kind of BLESSINGS or RESULTS should we expect from our prayers?"

A. TOTAL results---ACCORDING TO GOD'S WILL !!

1. NOTE: James 1:5-8 "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all {men} liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. A double

- minded man {is} unstable in all his ways."
- a. MAT 21:22 "And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive. "
 - b. ROM 15:13 "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost. "
2. Must ask, "THY WILL BE DONE" and MEAN IT. A VERY DIFFICULT TASK.
- a. MAT 26:39 "And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou {wilt}."
- B. We must recognize that God has SET INTO ORDER certain laws that, when violated, He will NOT set them aside.
1. Not that He CANNOT, but that He DOES NOT DO SO in THIS DAY AND TIME.
 2. The only exceptions He has made have been for the purpose of producing faith.
 3. NOW, in THIS DAY, faith comes by a study of the REVEALED WORD OF GOD. Rom.10:17.
- C. Examples of SOME exceptions:
1. God stayed the Law of ORDER of the universe.
 - a. Joshua 10:12-13 "Then spake Joshua to the Lord in the day when the Lord delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon. And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. {Is} not this written in the book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day."
 2. God stayed the Law of DEATH.
 - a. Luke 7:12-15 "Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her. And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not. And he came and touched the bier: and they that bare {him} stood still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother."
 3. God stayed the Law of GRAVITY.
 - a. Matthew 14:28-29 "And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water. And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus."
 4. God stayed the Law of EDUCATION and HEALTH.
 - a. Mark 16:17-18 "And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and

if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover."

D. TODAY, if man VIOLATES ANY OF GOD'S LAWS THAT HE HAS SET INTO ORDER— He CANNOT expect Him to intercede past the LIMITS SET.

1. (Example: Law of health is violated by tobacco caused cancer or AIDS contacted. If the BODY'S MAXIMUM ABILITY to "throw off" this disease is PASSED, and the MAXIMUM EFFECT of the medication is reached, THAT PERSON WILL DIE because God WILL NOT set aside His Law on health.

IV. "For WHAT should we pray?"

A. Let us look at some passages that tell us HOW and for WHAT the first century Christians prayed.

1. ACT 1:14 "These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren. "
2. ACT 6:4 "But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word."
3. ACT 12:5 "Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him."
4. Acts 16:15-16 "And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought {us}, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide {there}. And she constrained us. And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying:"
5. ROM 12:12 "Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer;"
6. 1 CO 7:5 "Defraud ye not one the other, except {it be} with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency."
7. 2 Corinthians 1:8-11 "For we would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life: But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead: Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver {us}; Ye also helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift {bestowed} upon us by the means of many persons thanks may be given by many on our behalf."

B. Let us notice a chart that will help us to visualize SOME of the things for WHAT we should pray for.

V. CONCLUSION:

A. We are made to see from this lesson:

1. That God EXPECTS us to pray and also to realize the POWER of prayer.

2. The blessings we can expect to receive from God on those things that are WITHIN THE WILL of God.
3. The EXAMPLE of prayer set for us by Jesus and the early Christians.

B. May our attitude be as Daniel.

1. Daniel 9:3-4 "And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes: And I prayed unto the Lord my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments;"

C. And as Jonah.

1. Jonah 2:5-7 "The waters compassed me about, {even} to the soul: the depth closed me round about, the weeds were wrapped about my head. I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars {was} about me for ever: yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption, O Lord my God. When my soul fainted within me I remembered the Lord: and my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy temple. "

TO OUR BROTHERS WHO LEAD PRAYERS

by Roger Campbell

At times we write or speak concerning general matters that pertain to all of us. There are also those occasions when it is appropriate to deal with specific topics. This is not without scriptural precedent. For example, while the Holy Spirit inspired Paul to write to "the saints and faithful brethren which are at Colosse," He also directed him to speak specifically regarding the responsibilities of wives, husbands, children, and others (Colossians 1:2; 3:18-4:1).

In our present article we are directing our statements to those brothers in Christ who lead prayers, and public ones in particular. At the same time, we certainly realize that prayers led in public assemblies affect the overall atmosphere and mind-set of all who are present. Thus, we trust that matters pertaining to the leading of prayers will be of interest to all members of the body of Christ, and not simply to our brothers.

Prayer is not a performance or form of entertainment, so we have no desire to "critique" someone's prayers by using a scale of 1 to 10. Our aim in speaking of these matters is to assist our brothers who will lead prayers by presenting some things for them to consider, hoping that this will in turn have a positive influence on our assemblies. "... we speak before God in Christ: but we do all things, dearly beloved, for your edifying" (2 Corinthians 12:19).

Since "the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers" (1 Peter 3:12), and since it is the effectual fervent prayer of "a righteous man" that avails much (James 5:16), then those who are asked to lead in prayer ought to be men of godly character. This idea is further seen in 1 Timothy 2:8, where it is written, "I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting." To have hands that are "holy" does not refer to the sanitary conditions of one's hands, but rather to his style of life. Simply put, we need praying Christians whose prayers are supported by their living "soberly, righteously, and godly" (Titus 2:12).

The text and context of 1 Timothy 2:8 also plainly show that those who are to lead the prayers are "men." Thus, we are speaking in this article to our brothers who lead prayer. While some congregations now allow the practice of women leading prayers during services in the presence of men, such is without divine authority and out of harmony with what the Holy Spirit so clearly stated in 1 Timothy 2:8. But aren't the elders of the church the ones who are giving these sisters the permission to lead prayers? And if such is the case, and elders have the right to rule in the church (1 Timothy 3:5; 5:17), then why would we consider these sisters' action to be wrong? The truth is, no overseers have authority from the Lord to give sisters the permission to lead in prayer in the presence of men, and no God-fearing sister would take the elders up on such an offer!

Brothers, please consider some principles and suggestions regarding HOW to speak when leading a prayer. When leading a group in prayer, it is surely more appropriate to say "we/us" rather than "I/me." If it is "our" requests, then it is better to say "We ask ..." Second, in your prayers talk with a natural voice. Some have their natural speaking voice in normal conversations, but when they begin leading a prayer before others it is as if they have switched their vocal chords into the "prayer mode," and the voice that is heard sounds like an entirely different person. Please understand that we are not speaking of what takes place when a brother out of nervousness has a slight change in his

voice when he leads a prayer. Rather, we refer to those rare cases where it appears that some brothers slip into a "holy voice" for prayer. Such does not leave a good impression with many others.

Further, in considering how to pray, speak always with a tone of respect. God and His name must be revered at all times, as Jesus taught: "Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name" (Matthew 6:9). Along with this, be sure that you are praying sincerely, from the whole heart. Though one should, as much as possible, give thought in advance to what he might want to include in his prayer before an assembly, there is no need to memorize your prayer in advance. Just speak sincerely from your heart.

There are a couple of principles connected with 1 Corinthians 14:14-17 that are worthy of our attention. "For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful. What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also; I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also. Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest? For thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified."

Yes, the above-quoted verses deal with a setting in which spiritual (miraculous) gifts were being exercised. However, the principles involved deal with the worship and edification of the church. Edification is also pointed out as a key concept in this chapter in verses 3,4,5,12, and particularly the last statement in verse 26, "Let all things be done unto edifying." In this context dealing with prayer, worship and edification, four times in verses 14-17 the apostle Paul speaks of "understanding." We must see the point that a public prayer must be spoken in such a way that those who are present understand what is said by the brother who leads it.

Remember, brothers, if you pray in such a way that folks cannot understand what you are saying, they cannot say "Amen" at the close of your prayer, seeing they did not "get" what you said. It is true that our prayers are addressed to God and not man, but a brother who is leading a group of Christians in prayer needs to be aware that he is bringing the petition of the entire group before the throne of God. When a brother leads a prayer in a public assembly, what can he do to help insure that his prayer is understood by others who are present?

Number one, he can speak slowly enough for all to comprehend what he says. We know that being nervous tends to make the heart, and consequently the tongue, speed up. Brothers, try taking some deep breaths to relax yourself, and then as much as possible, try not to speak too fast. Number two, in order to be understood, e-n-u-n-c-i-a-t-e your words clearly. No doubt in some cases finely-worded prayers have been offered, but sadly no one other than the brothers who worded them could understand what was said because all that was heard was a bunch of mumbling. Third, prayers will be understood by others only when the words are spoken loud enough. Brothers, when you lead a prayer, SPEAK UP! Some auditoriums may be small enough that they are not equipped with a microphone and p.a. system. But, when such equipment is available, it is very helpful when all brothers who lead prayers go to the microphone to address our Heavenly Father (We do want to do what is best for the entire assembly, don't we?). Microphones are not snakes, they do not bite! Our elders at Union Grove think that it would be good for all our brothers to make use of the microphone when leading prayers in the auditorium, if such is physically possible. If it is physically inconvenient

for brethren to do that, then they need to stand where they are and speak with oodles of volume. A fourth area to note is the type of words or language used in prayers. If we want our prayers to be understood by others, then we need to use a vocabulary that they understand. It is nothing short of vanity and fruitless action for one to try to "show off" his "big-word vocabulary" or fancy phrases by using words that he knows will not be understood by his brothers and sisters.

Just how long should a prayer be in order for it to please the Lord? Jesus cautioned His disciples with these words: "But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking" (Matthew 6:7). Thus, the Lord is not impressed with repetition for repetitions sake, nor does "a lot of" speaking carry weight with Him. This does not mean that it is wrong to repeat something in our prayers. For example, Jesus said "the same words" three times when He asked the Father to let His cup of suffering pass from Him (Matthew 26:39,42,44). But, we must realize that merely repeating something over and over, thinking that power lies in the repetition, makes our repetitions "vain."

After telling a parable about a Pharisee and publican who both prayed, Jesus said that the publican was justified, though that man's recorded prayer consisted of only a few words: "God be merciful to me a sinner" (Luke 18:13,14). The prayer of the disciples just prior to the Lord's choosing Matthias as an apostle was also a very brief one (Acts 1:24,25). On the other hand, Jesus' recorded prayer for unity on the night before His death was much more lengthy (John 17:1-26). In the King James Version that prayer consists of more than 600 words. The truth is, a prayer's acceptability before God is not determined by whether it is a "short one" or "long one." But, we would add this suggestion that was related to us many years ago. Brother, if you are leading a prayer and you are finding it difficult to "think of anything else to say," why not think of the word "Amen" and begin to bring it to a close?

TO OUR BROTHERS WHO LEAD PRAYERS (#2)

by Roger Campbell

In our last article on this topic we spoke of the need to have only faithful brothers lead prayers in our assemblies (1 Timothy 2:8; 1 Peter 3:12). We further noted that men who lead prayers need to speak in a natural voice, remember that it is "we" who are praying and not "I," address God with respect, and by all means talk to Him in every public prayer in such a way that all present can hear and understand what is said. That requires the one leading to speak loud enough, slow enough, and clear enough for all to comprehend what he says.

Brothers, please do not forget to whom our prayers should be addressed. We do not pray to the mother of Jesus, dead saints, or the Holy Spirit. We are to pray to our Father in heaven (Matthew 6:9), "Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Ephesians 5:20).

While it is true that an audible public prayer does have a great influence on the minds of all that are assembled and hear it, prayer is the communication from man to God. No doubt many of us have heard prayers that sounded more like a sermon intended for the ears of those who are in the assembly than a pouring out of the heart to our Heavenly Father. A brother who leads a prayer should not consider his prayer as the means of converting the lost or restoring the erring child of God. Yes, we must preach the word (2 Timothy 4:2), but our prayers are to be addressed to God, and He surely

does not need to have the word preached to Him, does He?

Just what should one say in his prayers? Please understand that the Bible does not give us a "checklist" of items that must be included in each petition before our Maker. What we do see in the Scriptures are examples, instructions, and principles that show us what prayers might include. Prayers could include words of praise to God (Acts 4:24), thanksgiving (1 Thessalonians 5:17,18), confession of sin (Acts 8:22; James 5:16), requests (not demands, Philippians 4:6), and intercessions or requests for others (1 Timothy 2:1,2). Again, there is nothing in the Bible that says that all of these must be included in every prayer. Neither is there any indication in God's word that there is a specific order by which these must be brought before the Lord (such as first, thanksgiving, followed by requests, then confession, etc.).

As we think further about just what should be said in a particular prayer, it seems only reasonable to state that the words of any prayer ought to be appropriate to the occasion at hand. If we are asked to lead a prayer in a special or specific situation, then our prayer ought to be directly related to that occasion. For example, we read that in the matter of selecting an apostle to take the place of the traitor, Judas, the disciples prayed specifically about the choosing of a new apostle (Acts 1:24,25). Later, when the disciples were charged by the Sanhedrin to no longer preach in Jesus' name in Jerusalem, they responded by praying in that special situation about the affair at hand: they requested courage to preach with boldness and power to perform miracles in Jesus' name (Acts 4:29,30).

Let us consider a few specific circumstances in our time under which we might be called upon to lead a prayer. When we are asked to give thanks before a meal, we might speak of a number of things in our prayer, but we must not forget to offer thanks for the food! Brothers, if you fear that you might forget to express thanks for the food in your prayer, it might be wise to express thanks for it "right off the bat." See examples of giving thanks before meals in Acts 27:35 (Paul on board ship to Rome) and John 6:11 (Jesus preparing to feed 5000 men), as well as the instruction to receive food with prayer and thanksgiving (1 Timothy 4:3-5).

Now let's come back to the setting of a public assembly. Each Lord's day we break bread in memory of our Lord Jesus (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11:23-29). In each congregation of which we have knowledge there are one or more brothers chosen to be responsible for distributing or serving the bread and fruit of the vine. This certainly helps us to act according to the inspired instruction, "Let all things be done decently and in order" (1 Corinthians 14:40). Involved in this process of what is often termed "serving at the table" will be the giving of thanks, prayers which are led by those brothers selected to serve.

It is regarding those prayers that are connected with "the communion" (1 Corinthians 10:16) that we make the following observations. First, the communion consists of two elements: unleavened bread and fruit of the vine (Matthew 26:26-29). Further, the purpose of partaking of the Lord's supper is to remember Jesus, and His death in particular (1 Corinthians 11:24-26). In view of this, what is said in the prayers prior to the eating of the bread and drinking of the fruit of the vine needs to be connected with the affair at hand, just as we noted above about prayers being offered in other special settings. Brothers, you may mention other things in your prayers, but when leading a prayer for the Lord's supper, by all means be sure to give thanks for the bread or cup, and also for the sacrifice/death of Jesus that gives the bread and cup their special meaning!

Please, try to avoid mentioning things in your prayers "around the table" that will in any way cause your brothers and sisters who are assembled to focus their attention on affairs that are not related to Jesus and His death. If we are to be thankful for God's gifts, then it would be appropriate to thank God that our sister-in-law gave birth yesterday to a healthy baby. However, to express such thanks immediately prior to partaking of/passing the Lord's supper might cause folks to forget about Jesus' death and think about that new baby! Remember, what is said in our prayers affects the mind set of others who are hearing those prayers, so let's keep the prayers that are connected with the breaking of bread focused on Jesus and the elements of the supper.

I personally have been caught off guard on a few occasions by the timing of the prayers. Perhaps you have had the same experience. Sometimes brothers come to the front of the auditorium to help distribute the Lord's supper, then without any word of warning, we hear the words, "Our Father in heaven . . .," and we quickly bow our heads and try to "catch up." Yes, we are anticipating a prayer, but how about letting us know exactly when it is going to begin so we can be ready? It would be very helpful to all involved if those who lead prayers would first plainly declare just what they are going to do. All it takes is a few words, such as, "Let us pray together . . .," then a pause to allow everyone to be prepared to pray. It often happens that after the bread has been passed, a brother goes to the microphone and again, without any forewarning, begins his prayer. Let's try to begin our prayers together, and a couple of words by those leading the services can be really helpful in this regard. The same thing is true about prayers prior to the contribution.

What if a brother is called upon to lead a prayer for a member of the church that has confessed sin and desires the prayers of the church on his/her behalf? But doesn't it have to be the preacher who leads such a prayer? The Bible says, "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16). Does a gospel preacher fit in the category of "a righteous man?" If not, we are in trouble! But, the Bible does not say, "Only the prayer of an evangelist does any good." Instead it says that a "righteous" man's prayer avails. Thus, it would be appropriate for any faithful brother in Christ (righteous man) to word a prayer on behalf of a child of God who confesses sin. Brothers, just remember, when praying for one who comes confessing sin, make sure that what you say in your prayer is connected with that confession and forgiveness. Don't forget to ask God to forgive him/her.

Would it be better for the brother leading a public prayer to ask those assembled to stand? "Better" is a strong word. There are Christians that prefer to stand while praying. Some brothers, not because they personally think it is necessary to be standing during all prayers, always ask those assembled to stand as they lead a prayer. They make such a request because they realize that a number of members of their congregation prefer to pray in a standing position. In the New Testament we do read of some who stood while they prayed (Luke 18:13). However, other passages indicate that prayer was also acceptable when those praying were kneeling (Luke 22:41; Acts 20:36), sitting (Luke 9:14-16), or reclining (Luke 24:30; "katakline" means "to recline."). We should be most careful and not try to bind a "praying position" on others.

To our faithful brothers in Christ who lead public prayers, we say, "Thank you," and "We appreciate your good work." In this and the previous article in THE REMINDER, we have not tried to set ourselves up as "the authority" on leading prayers. We have simply tried to encourage and enlighten all those who have a sincere interest in the prayers that we offer together to the God of

heaven. We have drawn our statements and suggestions from the Bible, from common sense, and from the experience of observing how public prayers are led. If one attends all services of the church, in many congregations he will hear about ten prayers per week, which is 520 per year, or 5200 in ten years! Who can doubt that our prayers are an important part of our worship? Let us all treat them with a serious attitude. May God bless you as you live for Him.

JESUS' FIVE PRINCIPLES OF PRAYER

Intro.

- A. Jesus was both a person of prayer and a teacher of prayer. We should therefore also be people of prayer
 - 1. to follow his teachings;
 - 2. to follow his example.

II. FAITH.

- A. Mark 11:22-24
- B. That God is there. Ps 139:7-10
- C. That God is glad to hear you. Mt 7:7-11
- D. That God answers prayer; that prayer changes things. Mk 11:22-24

III. HONESTY.

- A. Matt. 5:5ff.
- B. Being seen religious, yes (Mt 5:16), but not being religious to be seen.
- C. Praying sincerely, truly to God, truly from the heart.

IV. WORK.

- A. Work must go with prayer, and prayer must go with work.
- B. Jesus' example: A life-rhythm of prayer & work, solitude & activity. Mk 1:35
 - 1. "The best place to pray for a good crop is at the end of a hoe handle."

V. HUMILITY.

- A. Toward God. Illustrated--Mt 8:2; 26:39; Lk 18:10ff. Jas 4:10
- B. Toward others. Mk 11:25-26; Mt 5:23-24; cf. 1 Pet 3:7

VI. PERSISTENCE.

- A. Luke 18:1-8; 11:5-13
- B. At praying for one thing. EX: conversion of a loved on. Rom 10:1
- C. At prayer in general. Mk 13:35--"Watch and pray."
 - 1. Result--friendship with God through repeated contact.

HOW TO MAKE PRAYER PRACTICAL

TEXT: Acts 12.1-16; Rom 15.30-33

INTRO:

- A. For many, the subject of prayer is about as exciting as mowing the yard or changing a flat.
 - 1. This is probably because the regular practice of prayer is just plain hard work.
- B. Some find it as boring as watching grass grow and so difficult that they have become very creative in dodging this honor and responsibility.
 - 1. Yet, for too many disciples prayer has become about as commonly utilized as a fire escape -- for emergencies only; kind of a spiritual 911.
 - 2. This is *not* God's perspective on prayer.
 - a. In fact, He views it as the most profound and significant discipline of the Christian life.
 - b. The apostle Paul reiterates this truth in the latter verses of Rom 15.
 - (1) And in so doing he relates several guidelines that can help us pray more effectively.

II. HOW NOT TO PRAY - Acts 12.1-16

- A. Before we turn to Paul's counsel showing how we should pray, let's zero in on a story in Acts 12 that will reveal how we should not pray.
- B. Prayer for Peter's Situation - vv 1-12:
 - 1. The account opens with Agrippa I on the throne of Judea - v 1.
 - a. His political title was Herod. It was used in the same way that the title "senator" or "president" is used in the U S.
 - 2. The text tells us that Agrippa "laid hands on some who belonged to the church, in order to mistreat them."
 - a. One of the members he picked on was "James the brother of John" - v 2a - a prominent member in the early church - Acts 1.13; Gal 2.9
 - b. Agrippa put him to death "with a sword" - Acts 12.2b
 - c. When the king saw how pleased the unbelieving Jews were over the murder of James, he arrested the apostle Peter.
 - d. Then, "he put him in prison, delivering him to 4 squads of soldiers to guard him, intending after the Passover to bring him out before the people" for public execution - vv 3-4.
 - e. This life-threatening situation prompted other Christians to fervently petition God on Peter's behalf - intercessory prayer - v 5.
 - 3. The result of their prayer was a miracle - vv 6-12

C. Response to God's Provision - vv 13-16

1. We might expect from the amazing acts God had already performed in the early church that the Christians would be surprised to witness still another supernatural act. Acts 2.1-12; 3.1-11; 4.23-31; 5.12-25; 9.32-42
2. The opposite, however, was the case. After being freed from prison, Peter made his way to the house where the prayer was being offered, and "he knocked at the door of the gate." In response, "a servant-girl named Rhoda" came to the gate - Acts 12.13. When she recognized Peter's voice, she was so ecstatic that she left the gate locked and returned to the house announcing that Peter was standing outside - v 14.
 - a. None of those who were praying believed her. In spite of her insistence, "they kept thinking it was his angel" - v 15
 - b. These Christians were apparently convinced that their prayers would not be answered. They did eventually open the gate as the result of Peter's persistent knocking.
 - c. The text says that when they saw it was Peter, they were amazed" - v16
 - d. Rather than believing that God would miraculously answer their fervent request, they doubted Him even when He granted the answer they sought.
 - e. Although God may fulfill the prayers of doubters based on His own purpose and power, He does not want us to make our petitions with an attitude of uncertainty in His supernatural ability to intervene in the affairs of men - Mt 21.21-22; Mk 11.24
3. The following statements are taken from official documents, newspapers and magazines widely read during their day. Listen to what the "authorities" had to say: 1840 - "Anyone traveling at the speed of 30 mph would surely suffocate. 1878 - "Electric lights are unworthy of serious attention." 1901 - "No possible combination can be united into a practical machine by which men shall fly." 1926 - (from a scientist) "This foolish idea of shooting at the moon is basically impossible." 1930 - (another scientist) "To harness the energy locked up in matter is impossible." There have always been those who said, "It can't can't be done." Yes, even the experts can be wrong. But the real tragedy is that 99% of the people believed them.
4. Courage is fear that has prayed without wavering.

III. HOW TO PRAY - Rom 15.30-33

- A. With this negative ex in mind, let's focus on some positive instruction. IN these verse, the apostle Paul calls on the Christians in Rome to pray with him over an important matter. His words provide 4 significant guidelines designed to make prayer practical.
- B. Make people aware of the need - vv 30a, 32
 1. We know from the context that Paul had experienced various hindrances which, thus far, had kept him from traveling to Rome. Instead of facing them alone Paul shared about these barriers with the Roman Christians and urgently asked them to join with him in prayer concerning them - vv 22, 30a, 32

2. He did not assume that they knew about his need. He made them aware of it in order that they might lock arms with him in bringing it before God's throne.
3. We must communicate our requests to others in order to illicit support in prayer.

C. Be willing to get involved - v 30b

1. The basis upon which Paul urged the Roman believers to pray is twofold -- the "Lord Jesus Christ" and the "love of the Spirit."
 - a. He appealed to the divine bond Christians have as members of God's forever family. Since we have the same Lord and are united by the same love, we have all the reason we need to pray and pray fervently for ea other.
 - b. Furthermore, when we do choose to become involved in praying for ea other, we commit ourselves to some extremely hard work.
 - (1) The point was underscored by Paul when he called on these forgiven disciples to "strive together" with him in their prayers.
 - (2) The Greek word for "strive together" was often employed in athletic contexts. It literally means "to contend along with, to share in a contest.
 - (3) The term conveys the idea of mutual, agonizing perseverance for the attainment of an agreed goal.
2. Paul's use of this word in a context of prayer certainly communicates the truth that his spiritual discipline is difficult yet rewarding work.
 - a. Prayer is not merely a solitary activity; it is also a team effort.
 - b. In short, the practice of prayer requires a willing- ness on our part to get involved in the lives of others.

D. Make your requests specific - vv 31-32a

1. Rather than simply asking his readers to intercede for him, Paul also spelled our the content of his prayer request.
2. His petition contained 3 elements:
 - a. Deliverance from those who were "disobedient in Judea"
 - b. approval from the Jerusalem Christians for his service to them in bringing financial relief, and
 - c. joy in fulfilling his personal goal of finally coming to Rome.
3. The example Paul set is a good one for us to follow.
4. Like him, we should not be vague in our prayer re- quests. We should be as precise as humanly possible so that others can pray more effectively and intelligently with us and for us.

E. Enjoy the rest found in God's will - vv 32b-33

1. When we pray in accord with God's will, we can find refreshing rest and comforting

peace.

2. It is in our willing submission to His perfect plan that we can experience freedom from anxiety.
3. Paul intimated as much when he penned these words to the young Timothy: "First of all, I urge that en- treaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men...in order that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life" - 1 Tim 2.1-2

IV. SOME PRINCIPLES ON PRAYER

- A. Paul's word concerning the spiritual discipline of prayer remind us again and again of its importance and practicality.
 1. Let's no allow these facts to fade.
 2. Instead, let's both persistently apply these guide-lines we have discovered and permanently etch into our hearts and heads the timeless principles that follow.
- B. Prayer is a top priority.
 1. Jim Elliot, a missionary slain by the Auca Indians in the 1950's, once said: "God is still on His throne and man is still on his footstool. There's only a knee's distance in between."
 2. We must reach the realization that a lot of kneeling will keep you in good standing with God.
- C. Prayer is an urgent essential in life.
 1. We need to learn to pray hardest when it's hardest to pray.
 2. There is a story told about a faithful deacon whose oft repeated prayer expression was, "O Lord, touch the unsaved with Thy finger." During one service he was leading in prayer when as he intoned this petition, as he so often did, he abruptly stopped prayer. Supposing he had been taken suddenly ill, someone went to him and asked if there was something wrong. "No," he replied, "I'm not ill. But some- thing seemed to say to me, 'Thou art the finger'."
 3. We learn when we pray.
 4. If God would give you as much time this week as you gave Him in prayer last week, how much longer would you be alive?
- D. Prayer is the best tranquillizer on earth.
 1. Do you have a problem making prayer preclinical?
 2. The struggle seems to be a common one among Christians. Spend some time this week looking at Mt 6.1-15 and Jn 17.1-26
 3. Based on Romans 15.30-33, the main thrust of this lesson concerns how we should pray. Endeavor to learn the lesson well.

V. CONCLUSION:

- A. Prayer is power. R A Torrey lamented the average believer's indifference to prayer by writing:

"Teach Us To Pray" - Newton 2011 Page 67

"How little time the average Christian spends in prayer! We are too busy to pray, and so we are too busy to have power. We have a great deal of activity, but we accomplish so little...the power of God is lacking in our lives and in our work. We have not because we ask not."

- B. Make people aware of your needs. Be willing to get involved. Make your requests specific and enjoy the rest found in doing God's will.

Sermon Outline By ---- Richard & Sandra Priddy

LESSON 1

Introduction and Definition

A. WHY STUDY?

1. Give at least 3 scriptures where prayer is commanded.
2. Explain how prayer is shown to be a privilege from 1 Peter 5:7 & Hebrews 4:14-16
3. List a few false theories regarding prayer.

B. NOTICE HOW THE DISCIPLES IN LUKE 11:1 POSSESSED THE FOLLOWING:

1. A desire to know
2. A need to be taught
3. A willingness of learn
4. A realization of it's importance.

C. DEFINITION OF PRAYER

1. In your own words define your idea of prayer.
2. Notice the following definitions
 - a. Wayne Goff - "In its widest and most general sense, prayer is calling upon God in order to talk to Him."
 - b. Donnie Rader - "it is the act of communicating the thoughts of man to the infinite mind of God."
 - c. Phillips Brooks - "A prayer in its simplest definition is merely a wish turned heavenward."
 - d. Walton Weaver - "Prayer is the desires of the heart expressed unto God."
 - e. Apostle Paul - "Let your requests be made know to God." Philippians 4:6

D. PRAYER IMPLIES THAT:

1. God exists
 - a. How does prayer imply this?
2. Man needs God
 - a. How does prayer imply this?
 - b. List a few scriptures that demonstrate man's need of God.
3. God hears prayer
 - a. How does prayer imply this?
 - b. Give a scripture that affirms God does hear prayer.
4. God answers prayer
 - a. How does prayer imply this?

- b. Give a scripture that supports this.
5. God loves us
 - a. How does prayer imply this?
 - b. How does Psalms 8:3-4 & Job 7:17-18 demonstrate God's love for man.
- E. WHY PRAY? or INCENTIVES TO PRAY
 1. Mark 1:35; 6:46; 1 John 2:6
 2. Philippians 4:6-7
 3. Hebrews 4:14-16
 4. 1 Thessalonians 5:17
 5. Acts 8:22 F. James 5:16
 6. 1 Peter 5:7
 7. James 1:5
- F. REQUIRED READING
 1. "Life Without Prayer" David Crawford, "Christianity Magazine" May 1985, pg. 30 - Prayer Keith Sharp -It is too easy for saints, perhaps preachers especially, to become so engrossed with burning issues of the moment as to become unmindful of the essence of being a Christian. When we responded in obedient faith to the Savior's tender invitation, it was to enter fellowship with God (1 Cor. 1:9; 1 Jn. 1:3). Surely there is no deeper recognition of that fellowship than prayer, as we "draw near" to God "with a true heart in full assurance of faith" (Heb. 10:22). In fact, the life of the Christian is a journey of faith (2 Cor. 5:7). In prayer is found the fullest expression of that dependent trust. When the Master taught his disciples the importance of prayer, he employed the term "faith" to describe persistent prayer (Lk. 18:1-8). I remember my maternal grandfather, Daddy Sprott, as a simple, poor, hardworking man of faith. One of the indelible memories of my early childhood is the scene, just after dark each evening, next to the wood stove in the living room of his little four room house on the wooded, forty acre farm in the Ozarks near Huntsville, Arkansas. After Mama Sprott had finished reading a chapter in the Bible by the sparse light of a coal oil lamp, Daddy Sprott, with one khaki clad knee on the floor and his snowy head resting in his hand atop the seat of his rocking chair, would pray. He never said a prayer. He prayed! He knew no eloquence. But his was the fervent communion of a soul of deep faith with the Father of spirits. Is this how our children will remember us?

II. PRAYER Lesson #2

A. PRAYER PROPERLY ADDRESSED

1. To whom do we address our prayers? Matt. 6:6, 9; Lk. 11:2
2. Through whom do we pray to God? John 14:6; Col. 3:17

3. List the titles of Christ that further prove we must approach God through Him.
 - a. Heb. 4:14-16 2. 1 Jn. 2:1 3. 1 Tim. 2:5
4. Must one utter the words, "in the name of Jesus", before his prayer will be answered.
 - a. Explain your answer. John 14:13-14, Col. 3:17
5. What part does the Spirit play in our praying? Romans 8:26-27
 - a. How does one reconcile the Spirit's role with the role of Jesus?

B. HOW OFTEN SHOULD WE PRAY?

1. Luke 18:1
2. 1 Thess. 5:17
3. Romans 12:12
4. Col. 4:2
5. Note the times our Lord prayed
 - a. Mark. 1:35 2. Luke 6:12 3. Matt. 14:23 4. Luke 3:21-22 5. Luke 9:18 6. Luke 9:28-29 7. Luke 22:39-46 8. Luke 23:34, 46

C. WHOSE PRAYER DOES GOD HEAR?

1. 1 Pet. 3:12
2. 1 John 3:22
3. John 9:31
4. Acts 8:22

D. WHOSE PRAYER DOES GOD NOT HEAR?

1. John 9:31

E. HOW DOES ONE RECONCILE JOHN 9:31 WITH ACTS 8:22 AND ACTS 10:4?

III. Lesson #3

A. MAY A PERSON'S PRAYER BE HINDERED?

1. 1 Peter 3:7

B. WHAT WOULD CAUSE ONE'S PRAYER TO BE HINDERED?

1. 1 Pet. 3:12
2. John 9:31; 15:7; 1 John 3:22
3. Matt. 21:22; Mark 11:24; 1 Tim. 2:8; James 1:5-8
4. Matt. 6:15; Mark 11:25-26
5. James 4:3
6. 1 John 5:14

7. 1 Peter 5:5-7
8. James 5:16
9. Luke 11:5-8; 18:7-8
10. Matt. 7:7-11; Luke 11:9-13
11. Matt. 6:7
12. If one repeats the same phrase each time he prays, could he be accused of vain repetitions? Matt. 26:44
 - a. Explain your answer.

C. PRAYER POSTURE

1. Describe the posture of the following as they prayed.
 - a. 1 Kings 8:22-23 2. 2 Kings 20:1-2 3. 1 Chron. 17:16 4. Matt. 26:39 5. Luke 18:13 6. John 11:41 7. Acts 7:60; 20:36 8. 1 Tim. 2:8
2. In light of the preceding scriptures, do you believe there is a required posture for prayer?

D. FOR WHAT SHOULD WE PRAY?

1. Spiritual items
 - a. Matt. 6:10
 - b. Matt. 6:12
 - c. Matt. 6:13
 - d. Matt. 9:38
 - (1) Cf. Eph. 6:17-20; 1 Thess. 5:25; 2 Thess. 3:1-2 5. 2 Thess. 1:11-12
 - (2) Cf. Luke 22:32; 2 Cor. 13:9; Phil. 1:9-11; Col. 1:9-11 6. Luke 18:13 7. James 1:5 8. Romans 10:1 9. Col. 4:3
2. Spiritual items
 - a. Matt. 6:11
 - b. 1 Tim. 2:2
 - c. Matt. 5:44
 - d. 3 Jn. 2
 - e. 2 Cor. 12:8
3. Demonstrate how John 15:6-7; Phil. 4:6-7; and 1 Peter 5:5-7 is the summation of all one can pray for.
 - a. The Prayer of Cyrus Brown "The proper way for man to pray," Said Deacon Lemuel Keyes, "And the only proper attitude, is down upon his knees." "No, I should say the way to pray," Said Reverend Doctor Wise, "Is standing straight

with outstretched arms And rapt and upturned eyes." "Oh, no, no, no," said Elder Slow "Such posture is too proud, A man should pray with eyes fast-closed And head contritely bowed." It seems to me his hand should be Austerely clasped in front With both thumbs pointing toward the ground." Said Reverent Doctor Blunt. "Last year I fell in Hidgeskin's well Headfirst," said Cyrus Brown, "With both my heels a-sticken' up And my head a-pointin' down." "And I made a prayer right then and there, The best prayer I ever prayed, The prayingest prayer I ever prayed, A-standin' on my head." By Sam Walter Foss

IV. PRAYER Lesson #4

A. MATCH THE SCRIPTURE WITH THE WORD(S) THAT BEST DESCRIBE WHAT IS DEPICTED THEREIN.

1. 1 Samuel 1:13 Prayer Meeting
2. 1 Cor. 14:16 Private
3. Matt. 6:6 Public Acts 12:12
4. Silent

B. WHERE TO PRAY.

1. Describe where the following prayed
 - a. Gen. 24:11-12
 - b. 2 Kings 19:14-15
 - c. Acts 10:9
 - d. Acts 16:13
 - e. Acts 16:25
 - f. Acts 21:5
2. There will be times when we are unable to petition our friends, relatives, or neighbors for help.
 - a. Is this also true concerning God? Ps. 139:7-12

C. CONCERNING PUBLIC PRAYER

1. Use a dictionary to define public.
2. What occasion motivated each of the following to offer public prayer?
3. Can we learn anything from these examples.
 - a. Acts 13:1-3
 - b. Acts 14:23
 - c. Acts 21:5
4. Suggestions to those who offer public prayer.

- a. Speak clearly and loud enough for all to hear.
- b. Pray, don't preach.
- c. Pray to God, not man.
- d. Pray for items that concern all.
- e. Use words that all understand.
- f. Can you think of other suggestions?

V. PRAYER Lesson #5

A. CONCERNING PRIVATE PRAYER

1. Consult a dictionary for a definition of private.
2. What suggestion do the following scriptures make regarding private prayer? Matt. 6:6; 14:23; Mark. 1:35
3. What are some other suggestions for more effective private prayer?

B. DOES GOD ANSWER PRAYER TODAY?

1. Do you believe God answers the prayers you pray to Him?
2. Since the age of miracles have ceased, is it still reasonable to believe that God can answer your prayers? Matt. 19:26; Luke 1:37
 - a. Define miracle
 - b. Simply because we may not understand how God could answer prayer without using a miracle, does not give us the authority, due to our lack of understanding, to assume he cannot answer our prayers by using another avenue.
 - (1) Benjamin Franklin - "'But I can not understand how God can answer prayer without a miracle.' True, you can not understand how God can answer prayer without a miracle! Can you understand how He would answer prayer with a miracle? You can no more understand how God could answer prayer with, or by, a miracle than how He would do it without a miracle."
 - c. Prayer, according to Luke 18:1, 8, is the ultimate expression of _____?
 - d. According to 2 Cor. 5:7 we "walk by _____, not by _____."
 - e. If we understood exactly the way God answers prayer would the answers to questions #3 and #4 still be true?
 - (1) If so, why? If not, why?
3. Give a list of scriptures that prove God answers prayer.
4. Since God has promised He will answer our prayers, can we rely upon His promises?
 - a. Give scripture to support your answer.

C. JAMES 5:13-18

1. While there are several difficulties regarding this passage, in your own words, state what you believe is the main lesson we are to learn about prayer.
2. When does James say one ought to pray?
3. What type of prayer "avails much?"
4. What example does James give to prove his point regarding prayer?
5. Where is this account found in the O.T.?
6. Did God answer Elijah's prayer with a miracle? "Pray with us, Daddy." By Robert K. Marcho It had been a long and difficult day. It seems as though I had more to do than I could have possibly listed, much less accomplish. As I sat at home that evening, our family had already finished dinner and it was time for my daughters to go to bed. I had settled back deep into my easy chair and my wife told my daughters to come and say "good night" to daddy. I kissed both of them and mother took them off to bed to hear their prayers and tuck them in for the night. As my wife and I settled in for an evening at home together for a change, there was a cry from down the hall. "Come pray with us, daddy!" It was my daughter, Carrie. She had made the same request many times before. So had her little sister, Amy. For some reason, however, the call she made tonight hit a responsive chord within me. I thought to myself, how lightly we take this power that God has given to us. Jesus said that "whosoever shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven." Even at the ages of three and five years old, my daughters had taught me a lesson in humility. Not only do we need to share our needs and triumphs with God, but they knew there was something else in prayer, a chance for a family to be together. As a Christian family, through prayer we have an opportunity to grow together in faith and love for each other as well as for God. How about you? How long has it been, daddies, since you used this opportunity to set an example before your family as one who believes in the power of prayer. May God help us to become families that learn to pray together.
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