

Text: Various

Title: Thoughts on Prayer

Date/Location: 1/8/2022 at Camp Sparta, Sebring FL w/ GMSA and 1/12/2022 at FBC

Introduction

I pondered these thoughts through the week of 1/2-9/2022.

I. I want and need to pray more.

Where does this desire come from?

- A. It arises from the regenerate nature of the believer.
- B. It arises from the knowledge that I have relied too much on myself and too little on God.
- C. It comes from the fact that I have no power and God has all power.
- D. I see less effect of ministry than I know is possible because if God is in it, the possibilities are limitless.

II. I want to pray like the Lord.

Take for example Matthew 14:23. “And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone.”

- A. There is movement – “he went.”
- B. There is a place – “up into a mountain.”
- C. There is solitude – “sent the multitudes away,” “part,” and “alone.” See also John 6:15.
- D. There is a time – “the evening.”

Add to this Luke 6:12 “And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.”

- E. There is a duration – “all night.”

Then, consider Luke 22:32 “But I have prayed for you, that your faith fail not: and when you are converted, strengthen your brethren.”

F. There is a personal subject of prayer – “for you.”

G. There is a content of prayer – “your faith would not fail.”

We could add to this Mark 1:35, Mark 6:46, Luke 5:16.

III. I would like to pray like Paul.

A. Many passages discuss Paul’s prayers and requests concerning himself.

1. That he would be delivered from prison.
2. That God would make opportunities available for the preaching of the Word.
3. That Paul would speak out like he should.
4. That Paul would have the opportunity to see other believers that he desired to see.
5. That the Word of God would make good progress and be glorified.
6. That the believers would pray for Paul and his traveling companions personally (putting aside any requests about external things).
7. That Paul would not be entangled by unbelievers but have freedom in his ministry.
8. That thanks may be given to God by all Paul's ministry touches, including new converts.
9. That Paul's ministry would be accepted by the different saints he comes into contact with, regardless of whatever hang-ups there may be.

IV. Sometimes, I do not feel like praying.

A. This comes from the old nature. Galatians 5:16-17.

B. Feelings are not our guide. Biblical directives, faith, and love are the right guides. Feelings must learn to follow these reliable guides.

V. I do not know what to say.

- A. Illustration of mic fright in amateur radio, or in recorded speaking or public speaking.
- B. Illustration of not knowing how to pray aloud in a public setting when I was a young(er) person.
- C. God does know what to say, Romans 8:26.

VI. Prayer is not working.

- A. We need to learn to translate our thoughts into what they really mean.
- B. What you really mean is “prayer is not working the way I want or at the time I want.”

VII. I am too busy to pray.

- A. We might not say that out loud, but it is true of our behavior. We get up and hit the ground running in the morning and have to go somewhere or do something and we forget.

VIII. I feel like I have not learned the lessons of prayer.

- A. Luke 11:1 – “Teach us to pray.”
- B. Teach me to teach others to pray!
- C. A good way to learn something is to teach it. It is the difference between taking a class and teaching that same class.
- D. Another good way to learn something is to do it.

IX. The content of our prayers.

- A. Too much asking.
- B. Too little praising.
- C. Too theologically poor.
- D. Too little confessing.
- E. Too little gratitude.
- F. Too much complaint. Not “no complaint” because in the Psalms and Revelation 6 you see the “how long” questions which are a form of complaint.

- G. Too many health requests.
- H. Too little about spiritual health.
- I. Too much self.

X. Trials bring about more prayer.

- A. When we receive bad news, we must not fear, Psalm 112:7.
- B. Instead, we turn to prayer, to the Almighty God who has pre-planned all our trials.

XI. Definition of Prayer

- A. Prayer is communicating with God in a way that shows our dependent, loving relationship with Him, and that reflects His glory.
- B. We need to really think about prayer to ensure that we do honor God in our prayer.
- C. Pray in view of the spiritual battle in which we find ourselves. God gives us armor, the word of God, and prayer as the instruments to face the battle. Spiritual enemies demand spiritual weapons.
- D. Because prayer is part of a relationship, it is not just something we **do**. It is a natural outgrowth of our relationship with God.

Conclusion and Practical Application

We could add a study on Jesus's Public teaching on prayer, like Luke 18:1-8, and his demonstrations of prayer in Matthew 19:13, Luke 3:21, John 17, and many other passages.

But, for now, pray without ceasing!

1. Pray with some others for your upcoming church services and for the next Lord's Table service. Make sure the church is on task, whether there is an upcoming ministry or worship service.
2. Pray a Bible prayer for your spouse or another Christian.
3. Pray for a lost person to be saved and sanctified and glorified.

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