



## What Should We Be Praying For?

**Matthew 6:6: (NASB) *But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, close your door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.***



Many, many people pray. And we pray for all kinds of things from wanting more material things in our lives, to wanting to be healed from disease or injury, to wanting bad experiences to end. While we also pray for God's will to be done, it seems as though the focus of most of our prayers is about - well, it is all about me - what I feel, what I want and what I prefer. Think about it - prayer is supposed to be spiritual access to the God of all things and in that access all we can focus on is...me? How is prayer supposed to work? Are there guidelines or rules for HOW we should pray? Are there "do's" and "don'ts" for WHAT we should be praying for? WHO may pray? Is prayer an open and easily accessible tool for anyone who wants to talk to God or is it more of a privilege for those who are seeking God's will?

Prayer can be a tool of life. It has been used in such a way in numerous cultures for thousands of years. Our focus today will be on Judeo-Christian prayer and how it is laid out in Scripture for us to freely use.

To begin, let's go to someone who once believed in God and prayer, who used to be a Christian and then walked away:

 **No one is listening, Does Prayer Actually Help, The Atheist Voice**

- *One of the strangest transitions for me when I finally let go of my faith was that I stopped praying every night before I went to bed. It felt weird and compared to other aspects of religion, prayer actually doesn't seem too bad. I mean, it's just words. How harmful can it be? Well, that's kind of the point. They may not be harmful, but are they really helpful? The obvious answer is "no." Just because you want something really badly and you ask God for it really nicely doesn't mean anything is going to happen because no one is really listening. There's a great saying: "Two hands working can do more than a thousand hands clasped in prayer."*

He states the last thing he let go of was praying before bed. Did he experience what true prayer is supposed to be or was prayer before bed just ritualistic?

This helps us to see at least one of the wildly popular misconceptions about prayer, that is, prayer is all about me! But Scriptures clearly show us differently!

**David is in the wilderness of Judah hiding from King Saul and running for his life:**

**Psalm 63:1-8: (NASB)** <sup>1</sup>*O God, You are my God; I shall seek You earnestly; my soul thirsts for You, my flesh yearns for You, in a dry and weary land where there is no water.* <sup>2</sup>*Thus I have seen You in the sanctuary, to see Your power and Your glory.* <sup>3</sup>*Because Your loving-kindness is better than life, my lips will praise You.* <sup>4</sup>*So I will bless You as long as I live; I will lift up my hands in Your name.* (David is not complaining or asking for protection. He is extolling the greatness of



God in his life.) <sup>5</sup>My soul is satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and my mouth offers praises with joyful lips. <sup>6</sup>When I remember You on my bed, I meditate on You in the night watches, <sup>7</sup>for You have been my help, and in the shadow of Your wings I sing for joy. <sup>8</sup>My soul clings to You; Your right hand upholds me.

David only focuses on his own needs *after* putting God in perspective in his own mind and thoroughly praising and extolling God.



**Prayer Observation:** True, deep and life-changing prayer has or seeks a godly perspective.

David sought God's perspective. When you talk about the greatness of God in your head and heart, it changes the way you look at what is happening in front of you.

Science shows us that the very act of praying can actually affect our brains in a positive way. This by itself can be seen as a negative for those who do not believe.

 **The value of the act of prayer, *Does Prayer Actually Help, The Atheist Voice***

- *So, if I'm sick and I'm an atheist and I pray really hard to get better, nothing's going to happen. But if I am sick and I'm religious and I pray, believe it or not, sometimes you actually do get better. Studies have shown that, but it has everything to do with your mindset and your willingness to get better and nothing to do with God coming down from above and fixing things. The same thing applies if you're sick and religious and you know people are praying for you. Again, something might happen, you might actually get better because that happens when you know there are people out there who care for you and might be able to give you strength that you might not otherwise have on your own. Again though, it has nothing to do with God. The real question is what happens with intercessory prayer? So, what happens when you're sick and there are tons of people praying for you, but you don't know they're praying for you? Does that make a difference? What if a million people are praying for you and you have no idea?*





*Prayer is a tool* that requires several components to be effective. There are three basic points regarding prayer that we will focus on:

**Privilege:** Having your prayers go before God in a respectable and acceptable way.

**Process:** What makes a prayer into a good prayer - is it format? Sincerity? Praise? Posture?



**Persistence:** Is persistence vital in prayer? Does persistence go against God - we don't get the answer we want so we keep asking - what if He said "no?"

How do we access the point of "privilege"?  
What does it take to be noticed?



**Privilege:** Having your prayers go before God in a respectable and acceptable way.

Our theme text is taken from the context of "The Lord's Prayer."

While the "Our Father" prayer is "viral" in the Christian community, few of us know the verses (that are often ignored) that precede the Lord's Prayer: Matthew 6:5-8: (NASB) <sup>5</sup>When you pray, you are not to be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners so that they may be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.



Jesus is talking about the general subject of prayer and is saying very strongly, here is what *not* to do: *Do not be like the hypocrites.*



We want to begin to determine where we are on the “prayer privilege scale” by examining the WHY of our prayers. Are we truly seeking the attention of God or the attention of others, or even stroking our own ego? Is it to make a show with eloquent speech or do we pray as a representative for those around us to talk to God? Public prayer is not unacceptable, but we must be wary of *how* we are praying. If we are trying to impress those around us, then we are abusing the privilege of prayer.

<sup>6</sup>*But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, close your door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.*

This is the exact opposite of hypocrites who pray to impress the crowd. Jesus is telling us not to pray as a spectacle but to be humble. He says *when you pray, go in private and focus on talking with God. When you truly honor God, there is great humility.*

*Go into your inner room, close your door and pray - (Source: Biblical commentary by Albert Barnes) Verse 6. Enter into thy closet. Every Jewish house had a place for secret devotion. The roofs of their houses were flat places for walking, conversation and meditation in the cool of the evening.*

Every Jewish home had a place for quiet devotion. There is something to be said for finding solitude for prayer in a specific place, or a place inside of your mind, maybe by listening to music or reading certain Scriptures.

We are not entitled to prayer; prayer is a privilege for the humble. The HOW of our prayers needs to be built on this foundation.

<sup>7</sup>*And when you are praying do not use meaningless repetition as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words. <sup>8</sup>So do not be like them; for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.*

Prayer is a privilege for the sincere. It really is about needs and not at all about wants - it is really about our hearts and not about our eloquence - it is really about *our thoughts* and not about our words.



**Prayer Observation:** Prayer’s privilege can be found by anyone willing to truly put God first!

This is the key to prayer - it must be God first!

### The Lord’s Prayer

This is perhaps the best-known prayer amongst Christians. It is a prayer given *as a model* of how to pray. It is *not* a prayer for repetition. It is simple, focused and eloquent.

Here we learn how to pray:

**Matthew 6:9-13:** (NASB) <sup>9</sup>*Pray, then, in this way: Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. <sup>10</sup>Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. <sup>11</sup>Give us this day our daily bread. <sup>12</sup>And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. <sup>13</sup>And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil.*



 **Prayer is personal, How to Pray Without Ceasing, James Houston, Biola University**

- *Well, I think you might say that one's prayer life should be considered as one's spiritual fingerprints. In other words, prayer is a gift of a unique relationship you have with God that you have with no one else. And one of the problems that I found in my earlier life when I was struggling to pray was that the more books you read on prayer the more certainty you'll have that you're not praying, because you're always trying to imitate what these great classics or these great prayer warriors are doing. So, no, prayer has to be your own gifted relationship with God and it's not imitative.*



Prayers should be your fingerprints of your spiritual life because it is showing your unique relationship with God.

**We must be sure our prayers are godly:**

**Matthew 6:9:** (NASB) *Pray, then, in this way: Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.*

- **First order of business Jesus teaches us: Recognize the privilege! Glorify God our Father!**

The simple beginning of prayer is to first remember we are talking with the Creator of the Universe. We must slow down and honor His greatness.

**Romans 8:15:** (NRSV) *For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, Abba! Father!*

Privilege lies in the realization that God is VERY approachable - just like a daddy should be to his child. (The title *Abba* is a tender, fatherly term similar to the English "daddy.")

**Isaiah 64:8:** (ASV) *But now, O Jehovah, thou art our Father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand.*

Privilege lies in the realization that God shapes us and our lives - we do not shape His will. If we are praying properly, He can shape *our* will.

**What would keep us away from the privilege of prayer?**

We need to learn about the privilege of prayer so we can position ourselves to be granted that privilege, because privilege does not come to everyone. First, it seems as though we are to have a godly perspective about our God and about ourselves.

**If we don't, this could keep us from the privilege of prayer:**

**Isaiah 57:15:** (NRSV) *For thus says the high and lofty One who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with those who are contrite and humble in spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite.*

Humility and contriteness (being sorry when you have done something wrong) - are these all that is necessary for the privilege of prayer? They are a good start...



**Next, built upon these we need to be living in a manner that would be pleasing to God:**

**Proverbs 15:6-9:** (NRSV) *<sup>6</sup>In the house of the righteous there is much treasure, but trouble befalls the income of the wicked. <sup>7</sup>The lips of the wise spread knowledge; not so the minds of fools. <sup>8</sup>The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD, but the prayer of the upright is his delight. <sup>9</sup>The way of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD, but he loves the one who pursues righteousness.*

In Scripture, righteousness is not merely being "good" it is being "godly good" and having godly principles! It is not good enough for our prayer life to be vital if we are just being good and not striving to be godly good.

**Does this all mean that everyone who prays is NOT on equal footing before God? Yes!**

**Proverbs 15:28-29:** (NRSV) *<sup>28</sup>The mind of the righteous ponders how to answer, but the mouth of the wicked pours out evil. <sup>29</sup>The LORD is far from the wicked, but he hears the prayer of the righteous.*

**Prayer does not change  
God, but it changes  
him who prays.  
- Soren Kierkegaard**

**God actually explained these things to Isaiah regarding Israel and their idolatrous behavior:**

**Isaiah 65:1-5:** (NASB) *<sup>1</sup>I permitted Myself to be sought by those who did not ask for Me; I permitted Myself to be found by those who did not seek Me. I said, Here am I, here am I, to a nation, which did not call on My name.*

Israel was God's chosen people in the Old Testament and they strayed away from His laws. God said, *I permitted myself to be sought* by them even though they were looking for something else; I put myself before them in spite of themselves.

Seeking spirituality or seeking higher power or intervention is not necessarily seeking GOD! You need to be godly good in seeking Him.

*<sup>2</sup>I have spread out My hands all day long to a rebellious people, Who walk in the way which is not good, following their own thoughts, <sup>3</sup>A people who continually provoke Me to My face, Offering sacrifices in gardens and burning incense on bricks; (This was not in accordance with godliness.)*

(Source: John Gill's Exposition of the Bible) *...that sacrificeth in gardens; to idols ...as they were under every green tree; or in groves, where idols were worshipped... "Upon bricks" ...when they made bricks, they put upon them incense for idols; or, "upon tiles"; upon the roofs of their houses, which were covered with tiles;*

God is literally describing Pagan ritualistic worship practices from His own chosen people. They were seeking spirituality and goodness but not God or godly goodness.

Today is probably the time of the greatest idolatry in the history of Mankind.

*<sup>4</sup>Who sit among graves and spend the night in secret places; who eat swine's flesh, And the broth of unclean meat is in their pots.*

(Source: John Gill's Exposition of the Bible) *In order to practice necromancy, to consult the dead, where they imagined demons and departed spirits haunted, and of whom they fancied they might get knowledge of future things: ...whole nights for the same purposes...Which eat swine's flesh; forbidden by the law.*



Compare this with today's movie industry, which directly reflects this. This is not a way to find God. This is Spiritism!

<sup>5</sup> Who say, Keep to yourself, do not come near me, for I am holier than you! These are smoke in My nostrils, A fire that burns all the day. (If you get smoke in your nostrils, it is irritating. This is what God is saying. This is an irritation to me and is not honoring me.)

Arrogance - idolatry and false worship - all things that do NOT honor God!

 **Intercessory prayer doesn't help, *Does Prayer Actually Help, The Atheist Voice***

- *That's kind of the ultimate prayer test isn't it? If all these people were praying for you to get better and let's say they're not praying for the person next to you who has the exact same problem and you got better, wouldn't that suggest that prayer had something to do with it? It's kind of like this ultimate science experiment. Well, guess what? They've done that experiment. They've done controlled experiments, at least as much as they could be controlled anyway, where some group of patients in a hospital are prayed for by strangers and they don't know about it, and those same strangers do not pray for the controlled group. Guess what? There's no difference. Who would have thought? So look, prayer doesn't help unless you are the person praying and you genuinely believe it makes a difference. In which case you might get better but that has nothing to do with God. There's nothing supernatural at play here.*



**Prayer Observation:** We cannot find God in places and things that takes His glory and power for their own!

 **More than supplication, *This is Prayer, Igniter Media.Com***

- *In many ways prayer is a simple thing to do but sometimes we can have a limited view of what prayer actually is. Now don't get me wrong, prayer is a means of supplication and making request to God, it's just that prayer is also more than that. Prayer is both talking to God and having a relationship with Him. Prayer is making yourself available to God and allowing Him to make Himself available to you. Prayer is a way to ask God for provision for tomorrow and a means by which He provides the sustenance we need for today. So, we pray not to get our own way but rather we pray to align ourselves to God's will. We pray not for things that might create independence from God but rather we pray as an expression of dependence upon God.*



If we can grasp that we pray not to get our own way but to align ourselves to God's will, that is such a powerful use of the tool. If we try to get our own way, then we are misusing the tool.



**Process:** What makes a prayer into a good prayer - is it format?  
**Sincerity? Praise? Posture?**

What makes a prayer a good prayer? Is it how you do it, is it the order of the things you say, is it about your heart, is it about what you're doing or where you are?

**Matthew 6:10:** (NASB) *Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.*

- Second order of business - pray for the plan of God to unfold



A caller from Connecticut suggests: In Solomon's prayer he prayed for wisdom. **1 Kings 3:9:** *Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?*

Solomon prayed for wisdom and he received it. He stopped praying and he lost it.

Prayer throughout the Bible is varied. The clearly specific "list" of do's and don'ts we have thus far revolves around seeking the true God and being humble and now seeking God's will above all things and God's kingdom as well.

**Jesus only doing the will of the Father made this kingdom possible:**

**Matthew 26:37-44:** (NASB) <sup>37</sup>And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and distressed. <sup>38</sup>Then he said to them, my soul is deeply grieved, to the point of death; remain here and keep watch with me. <sup>39</sup>And he went a little beyond them, and fell on his face and prayed, saying, my Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not as I will, but as You will. <sup>40</sup>And he came to the disciples and found them sleeping... <sup>42</sup>He went away again a second time and prayed, saying, my Father, if this cannot pass away unless I drink it, Your will be done. <sup>43</sup>Again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. <sup>44</sup>And he left them again, and went away and prayed a third time, saying the same thing once more.

Jesus showed deep humility in saying, Father this is what I want, but what I want doesn't matter. God, it is what you want! Your will be done! Jesus gloriously walked into the trial and torment of his experience because he knew he was doing the will of the Father. This is why we pray for the Kingdom, because Jesus did what God wanted him to do.

**Jesus paved the road for this kingdom and it must come by replacing the kingdoms of this world:**

**Daniel 2:44:** (NASB) *In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever.*

**And it must come through the growth of Israel as a nation - God's chosen people:**

**Jeremiah 23:2-5:** (NASB) <sup>2</sup>Therefore thus says the LORD God of Israel concerning the shepherds who are tending My people: You have scattered My flock and driven them away, and have not attended to them; behold, I am about to attend to you for the evil of your deeds," declares the LORD. <sup>3</sup>Then I Myself will gather the remnant of My flock out of all the countries where I have driven them and bring them back to their pasture, and they will be fruitful





*and multiply.* (We can see a dramatic fulfillment of this prophecy in our day. After WWII Israel was allowed to go back to their land. Now they are a powerful, developed sovereign nation.) <sup>4</sup>*I will also raise up shepherds over them and they will tend them; and they will not be afraid any longer, nor be terrified, nor will any be missing, declares the LORD.* <sup>5</sup>*Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch; And He will reign as king and act wisely And do justice and righteousness in the land.*



**Prayer Observation:** The process of prayer calls upon us to have God's Plan firmly fixed in our minds!

**Prayer is about Praising God, seeking His will and His kingdom.  
What about me?**

Process: What makes a prayer into a good prayer - is it format? Sincerity? Praise? Posture?

**Matthew 6:11:** (NASB) *Give us this day our daily bread.*

This part of the prayer is petitioning for *our immediate needs.*

- **Third order of business - petitioning for basic needs**

The process of our prayers when followed is truly built with success in mind... We begin with the privilege of approaching the Almighty God and then we rehearse His will and his kingdom. It is only now after we have honored God and rehearsed His Kingdom that our minds can see our own needs with a clear vision; a vision that has just been reminded that God's got this!

**It is now all about our needs and not our wants! God knows our needs before we even ask.**

**Matthew 4:4:** (NASB) *But He answered and said, It is written, MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE, BUT ON EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD.*

This can have two different meanings: Physical sustenance and spiritual sustenance. The word of God is also our "daily bread."

**1 Timothy 6:8:** (NASB) *If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content.*

**Jesus is generous about what may be before us if we would only ask:**

**Matthew 7:7-11:** (NASB) <sup>7</sup>*Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.* <sup>8</sup>*For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.* <sup>9</sup>*Or what man is there among you who, when his son asks for a loaf, will give him a stone? <sup>10</sup>Or if he asks for a fish, he will not give him a snake, will he? <sup>11</sup>If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!*

Whatever we ask, it should be; "in accordance with your will, Father."

The best way to learn to pray is to follow the way Jesus prayed.

**Knowing prayer's process, we also know that we can fall into godlessness in our own prayers:**

**James 4:1-3:** (NASB) <sup>1</sup>*What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members? <sup>2</sup>You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. You are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask. <sup>3</sup>You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures.*



We must not ask with wrong motives. Some churches teach and encourage if there is something you want that you feel will enhance or fulfill your life, go and physically touch what you are looking for. What you touch God will bring to your life. (A bigger house, a better job etc.) The problem is they have forgotten the James' Scripture. The key is not to touch something so you can get it. The key is to ask God if it is His will for you so He can bless you in the way that *He sees best*. God's answer could be yes, no or wait. The most important thing is to focus on the will of God.



A listening growing way of life, [This is Prayer, Igniter Media.Com](http://This is Prayer, Igniter Media.Com)

- *Yes, God loves to hear our prayers and requests. He listens to them. He delights in them and He responds to them. It's just that prayer is also where we can confess our sins, praise His goodness, listen to His voice, and be reminded of truth. Prayer isn't just a way to ask for more fruit but through prayer we begin to bear more fruit. Prayer isn't just words spoken at specific times during the day. It's living with a mindset that allows God to transform you throughout all of your days. So, don't think of prayer as just an activity done before meals or bedtime but rather think of prayer as a way of life.*



We do not always have to be physically on our knees to pray but our posture should be one of humility and reverence.

We may not always be able to follow the process of prayer when urgent prayers are necessary.

*True prayer is neither a mere mental exercise nor a vocal performance. It is far deeper than that - it is spiritual transaction with the Creator of Heaven and Earth. — Charles Spurgeon*

**Matthew 6:12:** (NASB) *and forgive us our **debts <3783>**, as we also have forgiven our debtors.*

- **Fourth order of business -Being forgiven and forgiving**

**Debts:** Strongs #3783 *opheilema* (of-i'-lay-mah); something owed, a due; morally, a fault.

**NOTHING WORKS WITHOUT FORGIVENESS! We can forgive because we are forgiven:**

**Ephesians 1:7:** (NASB) *In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace.*

**Matthew 18:21-22:** (NASB) <sup>21</sup>*Then Peter came and said to him, Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?* <sup>22</sup>*Jesus said to him, I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven. (Part of the way we can reflect being forgiven is to be forgiving.)*



**Prayer Observation:** Our own needs and forgiveness are best viewed in the context of God's plan for ALL!



Listen for more on forgiveness! Coming up on our September 12, 2016 program, "Does God Really Forgive Me?"

Because God knows our thoughts, should we limit our asking for something to just once?

*Persistence:* Is persistence vital in prayer? Does persistence go against God - we don't get the answer we want so we keep asking - what if He said "no?"

**Matthew 6:13:** (NASB) *and do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil.*

- Fifth order of business: Seeking God's overruling and protection

Persistence is not for the purpose of getting God's attention - it is for the purpose of focusing our attention on His overruling providence, for His providence most often comes in unexpected ways!

2 Peter 2:9: (NASB) *Then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the Day of Judgment...*

As godly individuals, do we want to be rescued from temptation? Do we offer a prayer of urgency under those circumstances? Are we willing to take the lifeline even if it is not the one you wanted? God CAN and WILL deliver us when we NEED delivering!

Romans 12:12: (NASB) *rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer...*

Notice how our hopes and trials and prayers are all intertwined? We can rejoice in hope and persevere in trials *if we are devoted to prayer.*

**Opportunity to grow/pray for the opportunity, *Evan Almighty*, movie (2007)**

- (Woman) *What is the story about then, the ark?*
- (Character playing God) *Well, I think it's a love story about believing in each other. You know the animals showed up together in pairs. They stood by each other side by side. Just like Noah and his family. Everybody entered the ark side by side.*
- (Woman) *My husband says God told him to do it. What do you do with that?*
- (Character playing God) *Sounds like an opportunity. Let me ask you something. If someone prays for patience do you think God gives them patience? Or does He give them the opportunity to be patient? If they prayed for courage, does God give them courage or does He give them opportunities to be courageous? If someone prayed for the family to be close, do you think God zaps them with warm fuzzy feelings? Or does He give them opportunities to love each other?*

God doesn't necessarily give us what we pray for in terms of development, but he gives us opportunity for that development to happen.



**God is looking for people to use, and if you can get usable, he will wear you out. The most dangerous prayer you can pray is this: 'Use me.' – Rick Warren**

Be willing to be vulnerable for whatever God has in store for you.

Let us observe and learn from the humble petitioning of two of God's faithful servants.

**Daniel was in Babylon for YEARS and continually prayed for the return of Israel to their home:**

**Daniel 9:17-19:** (NASB) <sup>17</sup>So now, our God, listen to the prayer of Your servant and to his supplications, and for Your sake, O Lord, let Your face shine on Your desolate sanctuary. <sup>18</sup>O my God, incline Your ear and hear! Open Your eyes and see our desolations and the city which is called by Your name; for we are not presenting our supplications before You on account of any merits of our own, but on account of Your great compassion. <sup>19</sup>O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and take action! For Your own sake, O my God, do not delay, because Your city and Your people are called by Your name.

Daniel representing his nation is asking God to return them to their land. He is praying for something that was an expectation. Daniel is not praying as a powerful leader, he is putting himself in the context of all of the others who have sinned. He is showing humility in prayer. He is asking for the fulfillment of his prophecy.

**Nehemiah, a rarely spoken of servant of God, was instrumental in the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem. His prayers and actions brought this most improbable task to fruition!**

**Nehemiah 1:4-7:** (NASB) <sup>4</sup>When I heard these words, I sat down and wept and mourned for days; and I was fasting and praying before the God of heaven. <sup>5</sup>I said, I beseech You, O LORD God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who preserves the covenant and loving-kindness for those who love Him and keep His commandments, <sup>6</sup>let Your ear now be attentive and Your eyes open to hear the prayer of Your servant which I am praying before You now, day and night, on behalf of the sons of Israel Your servants, confessing the sins of the sons of Israel which we have sinned against You; **I and my father's house have sinned.** <sup>7</sup>We have acted very corruptly against You and have not kept the commandments, nor the statutes, nor the ordinances which You commanded Your servant Moses.

Nehemiah is mourning and crying over this for days. In his prayer he is saying, "We have sinned." He is not blaming others. God overruled in his life because of his petition in prayer.



**Prayer Observation:** Persistence brings personal and lasting value to prayer, for it is through persistence that habits are developed and new habits build a new life!

When we look at the great examples of great moving prayers in Scripture, we see individuals praying for God's will, God's way, God's timing and individuals who see themselves in terms of their own humility, their own brokenness and the greatness of God. They put it all in perspective, just like Jesus showed us how to do in "The Lord's Prayer." Honor God first! Honor God's Kingdom! Honor God's will, honor the basic needs of your life and then seek forgiveness. Make sure your prayer life is well rounded by seeking God's will first. It is not about being good but about being righteous, which is godly good. Pray without ceasing in a godly fashion.



*So, what should we be praying for?  
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...  
Think about it...!*



*And now even more to think about...  
only in the **Full Edition** of CQ Rewind!*

**Psalm 86:1-6:** (NASB) <sup>1</sup>Incline Your ear, O LORD, and answer me; For I am afflicted and needy. <sup>2</sup>Preserve my soul, for I am a godly man; O You my God, save Your servant who trusts in You. <sup>3</sup>Be gracious to me, O Lord, for to You I cry all day long. <sup>4</sup>Make glad the soul of Your servant, For to You, O Lord, I lift up my soul. <sup>5</sup>For You, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive, and abundant in loving-kindness to all who call upon You. <sup>6</sup>Give ear, O LORD, to my prayer; and give heed to the voice of my supplications!

There are many religious and cultural implements of prayer - we will list a few:

**Prayer Shawl:** A shawl with fringed corners worn over the head or shoulders by Jewish men - especially during morning prayers.

**Prayer Wheel:** A cylinder of wood or metal that revolves on an axis and contains written prayers and that is used in praying by Tibetan Buddhists

**Prayer Rug:** A small Oriental rug used by Muslims to kneel on when praying

**Prayer Book:** A book containing prayers and often other forms and directions for worship

**Prayer Beads:** A string of beads by which prayers are counted, *specifically:* Rosary

What does this tell us? It tells us that we, as frail human beings do many things to try and focus our minds on spiritual things.

**This next text is a good example:**

**Acts 16:13-14:**(KJV) <sup>13</sup>And on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither. <sup>14</sup>And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.

(Source: Biblical commentary by C.T. Russell) Not having the facilities of a synagogue they probably had not Scripture parchments, and hence no reading of the Law, but merely prayer and worship.

**Why, how and for what, should we pray?**

- **WHY:** The world brings a level of trouble that we cannot cope with on our own
- **HOW:** As we go through our experiences instinctively, not necessarily needing an outward posture of prayer but always in the mode of an inner posture of prayer
- **FOR WHAT:** The sustaining, refilling and balancing of our hearts!

**Psalm 43:5:** (NRSV) *Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my help and my God.*



Our personal experiences can drain us emotionally unless we continually refill spiritually.

**Ephesians 6:18:** (KJV) *Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;*

The brotherhood's experiences can drain us emotionally unless we continually refill spiritually.

How, why and for what should we pray?

**Another parable of Jesus that illustrates these three points:**

**Luke 18:9-14:** (NASB) <sup>9</sup>And he also told this parable to some people who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and viewed others with contempt: <sup>10</sup>Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. <sup>11</sup>The Pharisee stood and was praying this to himself: 'God, I thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. <sup>12</sup>I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get. <sup>13</sup>But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, God, be merciful to me, the sinner! <sup>14</sup>I tell you, this man went to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted.

**More on the Isaiah 65 verses from the program:**

**Isaiah 65:2-5:** (NASB) <sup>2</sup>I have spread out My hands all day long to a rebellious people, who walk in the way which is not good, following their own thoughts, <sup>3</sup>A people who continually provoke Me to My face, offering sacrifices in gardens and burning incense on bricks;

(Source: John Gill's Exposition of the Bible) ...that sacrificeth in gardens; to idols, as the Targum, placed there, as they were under every green tree; or in groves, where idols were worshipped. Fortunatus Scacchus thinks this refers to their having their sepulchres in their gardens, where they consulted the dead; which is favored by a clause in the next verse: ...and burneth incense on altars of brick: or, "upon bricks". Kimchi says, when they made bricks, they put upon them incense for idols; or, "upon tiles"; upon the roofs of their houses, which were covered with tiles; see Jeremiah 19:13 when incense should only have been burnt upon the golden altar erected for that purpose, Exodus 30:1,3, not that these idolatrous actions were committed by the Jews in the times of Christ and his apostles, the times preceding their last destruction; for, after their return from the Babylonish captivity, they were not guilty of idolatry; but these were the sins of their fathers, which God would recompense into their bosoms, according to Isaiah 65:7 they now filling up the measure of their iniquities, Matthew 23:32.

<sup>4</sup>Who sit among graves and spend the night in secret places; who eat swine's flesh, and the broth of unclean meat is in their pots.

Verse 4. Which remain among the graves, etc.] In order to practice necromancy, to consult the dead, where they imagined demons and departed spirits haunted, and of whom they fancied they might get knowledge of future things:

...and lodge in the monuments: whole nights for the same purposes. The Vulgate Latin version is, "that sleep in the temples of idols"; after the manner of the Heathens, who used to sleep there in order to obtain dreams, whereby they might be able to foretell things to come, as they did in the temple of Aesculapius; or, "in desolate places", as Kimchi and Ben Melech interpret it; where they expected to meet with demons and noxious spirits, to give them knowledge of things to come.

The Targum paraphrases both clauses thus, "who dwell in houses built of the dust of graves, and lodge with the corpse of the children of men;" so corpse, according to Jarchi, are expressed by this word, which signifies "kept" or "preserved", as in Isaiah 49:6, because they are put in a strait place, from whence they cannot get out; though some think idols are meant, called so by way of derision, because kept for fear of being stolen, or because they cannot



keep themselves, nor their votaries:

*...which eat swine's flesh; forbidden by the law...*

...and broth of abominable things is in their vessels; or "pots": broth made of swine's flesh, and of other sorts of flesh which were unclean by the law. Our version follows the marginal reading; as do the Targum, Aben Ezra, Jarchi, and Kimchi; but the written text is, "a fragment", or piece, or pieces, of abominable things; both may be retained in the sense of the passage; slices of flesh unclean, and so abominable by the law, were put into their pots and stewed, and made broth of, which they drank. Spencer thinks the milk in which kids were boiled is meant, which the Zabians kept in vessels, and sprinkled on the trees in their gardens, to make them more fruitful; hence mention is made of idolatrous practices in gardens, in the preceding verse.

*<sup>5</sup>Who say, keep to yourself; do not come near me, for I am holier than you! These are smoke in My nostrils, a fire that burns all the day.*