

# GOD

## Prayer

God, our heavenly Father, loves us, and He wants the best for us. He is able and willing to take care of us and to supply our every need. So, instead of trying to “do it all ourselves”, we trust in Him. One way that we trust in God is by praying. As we pray, sharing our hearts with our heavenly Father, we express our recognition that He, not we ourselves, is our sufficiency.

We’ll start in Philippians, Chapter 4, where we’ll read verses 6 and 7.

### Philippians

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

4:7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

These two verses are packed with great truths about the importance of prayer. Verse 6 begins by telling us not to be anxious about anything. God knows that we have needs and concerns, but instead of being filled with anxiety, God’s desire for us is that we be at peace. It’s been said, “The greatest cargoes in life come in over quiet seas.” “Peace of God” in verse 7 is a figure of speech (Genitive of Origin) meaning “peace which comes from God”, emphasizing God as the giver of this peace. We can have perfect peace.

Isaiah 26:3 tells us “Thou wilt keep *him* in perfect peace, *whose* mind is stayed *on thee*: because he trusteth in thee”, or, more accurately: “Thou (God) wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed because he trusteth in thee.” As we trust in God, our minds are stayed, established, and God keeps us in perfect peace.

Philippians 4:7 tells us this perfect peace, which is beyond our comprehension, will keep, or guard, both our hearts, the innermost part of our personal lives, and our minds, our thoughts. The verse ends with “through (more accurately “in”) Christ Jesus.” As we trust in God and enjoy the perfect peace which He gives us, we can enjoy fellowship with Him.

The key to having this perfect peace and fellowship with our heavenly Father is contained in verse 6: rather than being anxious about anything, we make our requests known to God by “prayer and supplication with thanksgiving”. To fully appreciate the greatness of what this verse is telling us about trusting in God by praying, we’ll take a closer look.

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

The word “prayer” in this verse is from the Greek word *proseuchē*, which more literally means prayer as “a pouring out” to God. When we pray, we are to “pour out our hearts to God”. Consider Psalm 62 (we’ll return to Philippians 4:6):

## Psalms

- 62:1 Truly my soul waiteth upon God: from him *cometh* my salvation.  
62:2 He only *is* my rock and my salvation; *he* is my defense (*my high place*); I shall not be greatly moved.  
62:5 My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation *is* from him.  
62:6 He only *is* my rock and my salvation: he *is* my defense; I shall not be moved.

As we look to God for what we need, we are firm: we shall not be moved. Notice that this is said twice: it is established.

- 62:7 In God *is* my salvation and my glory: the rock of my strength, *and* my refuge, *is* in God.  
62:8 Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before him: God *is* a refuge for us. Selah (*Consider these words*).

We are to trust in, have confidence in, God. As we look to God, we trust in Him by pouring out our hearts to Him. Let's return to Philippians 4:6:

## Philippians

- 4:6 Be careful (*anxious*) for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

We've seen that "prayer" in this verse is pouring out our hearts to God. "Supplication" is the word *deēsis*, defined as "a petition for something that we need". This word also occurs in James 5:16, which says "...The effectual (*energized*) fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth (*prevails*) much." In that verse, the word "prayer" is this word *deēsis*. We can expect our energized supplication to God to prevail.

The word "requests" in Philippians 4:6 is from the Greek word *aitēma*, which can be defined as "a specific petition for a particular thing". It's another word for prayer. We can gain some additional insight into this word *aitēma* from Psalm 37:

## Psalms

- 37:3 Trust in the Lord, and do good; *so* shall thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.  
37:4 Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.  
37:5 Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him, and he shall bring *it* to pass.

In the Septuagint, a Greek translation of the Hebrew text, the word "desires" in verse 4 is the word *aitēma*. As we trust in God and delight in Him, He shall give us the desires of our hearts, those things we petition Him for by prayer.

Verse 5 says we "commit" our ways to God: we trustingly give it all to Him. As we do, we no longer are burdened with those cares. I Peter 5:7 says: "Casting all your cares upon him, for he careth for you." When you pray, give your cares to God (don't take them back!).

## Philippians

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

We saw that this verse contains three different Greek words for “prayer”. This is the figure of speech “Synonym” used here by God to emphasize the importance of prayer. Notice also that we are to pray with thanksgiving. Look at I Thessalonians, Chapter 5:

## I Thessalonians

5:17 Pray without ceasing.

5:18 In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

It is God’s will, His earnest desire, that we “give thanks” in everything, including prayer. When we have the “attitude of gratitude” we are more open to receiving from God.

The greatest example of a man who prayed to God was our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We can see what he had to say about prayer in the Gospel of Matthew, Chapter 6, where we’ll begin in verse 5:

## Matthew

6:5 And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites *are*: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets (*open places*), that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

The word “pray” in this verse is from the Greek *proseuchomai*, to pray to God. Jesus Christ told his audience that when they pray, they are not to be like the hypocrites who make a show of how devout and religious they are. Those people “have their reward” – they already got all they are going to get for their “prayer”, which is to be seen by others. They won’t get any more because their heart is not right with God.

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

At first glance, this verse looks like when we pray, we should go alone into a closet and close the door! A “closet” in Gospel times referred to a “treasure storehouse”, a secret chamber where treasures were stored. Not everyone had a room specifically set aside to store their treasures, and why would someone want to go into such a room to pray? This verse contains a great figure of speech, which we can understand if we jump ahead to verse 19:

6:19 Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:

6:20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

In these verses, “treasures” refer to our “thoughts”. We should endeavor to keep our thoughts centered on godly, spiritual things, not on sense-knowledge things of the world. “Moth” is a figure of speech for fear that can eat away at our thoughts; “rust” represents worry that can corrode and destroy our godly, positive thoughts. If our thoughts are focused on worldly things, doubt, worry, and fear will allow the thief, the adversary, to break into our lives.

So, we see from these verses that our treasures are our thoughts. Where is the storehouse for these treasures of ours? The next verse gives the answer:

6:21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

Our great “treasures” are our innermost thoughts, which we have in our heart, the seat of our personal life. Knowing this, let’s return to verse 6:

6:6a But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet (*treasure storehouse*) ...

When we pray to God, we don’t need to go into a literal room and close the door: instead, we pray to God from our heart. We can pray to God in any place, at any time, silently or out loud. We are not doing it “for show” like the hypocrites, but as a “heart-to-heart” with our heavenly Father.

6:7 But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen (*Gentiles*) do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.

This verse clearly shows us what prayer is not. When we pray, we are not to recite some pre-written formula. And, we are not to repeat the same prayer over and over again, like the “vain repetition” the Gentiles did as they prayed to their gods. Our prayers are to be from our hearts: spontaneous and in our own words as we pour our hearts out to our heavenly Father.

6:8 Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.

God already knows what we need, even before we ask Him. This brings up the question: If God already knows what we need before we ask, why should we pray? In order for us to receive from God, we need to have the proper mind-set. Prayer establishes our believing and trust: we are acknowledging what Philippians 4:19 tells us: “But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”

Now we come to the first part of verse 9:

6:9a After this manner therefore pray ye...

The prayer that follows, often referred to as “the Lord’s Prayer” even though the Gospels record many other instances where Jesus Christ prayed, was intended to be a one-time, inspired example of how to pray. It was not intended to be something people were to repeat verbatim as part of their personal prayer life, but many people recite this prayer today.

Notice that verse 9 begins with “After this manner...” In other words, “Pray like this...” Jesus had just finished teaching his audience not to pray using vain repetitions, and now he was giving them an example of how to pray to God from the heart. When you pray, it’s your own personal talk with your heavenly Father: God wants to hear what’s on your heart.

One very important thing to keep in mind is that when we pray, we pray with believing. Ephesians 1:19 says “And what *is* the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe...” If we want a power-filled prayer life, we need to believe.

We see this power of believing as we pray in Mark, Chapter 11. In the context, the disciples had just noticed that the fig tree that Jesus had cursed the day before had dried up from the roots overnight, and Jesus took this opportunity to teach. We’ll begin in verse 22:

#### Mark

11:22 And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith (*believing*) in God.

11:23 For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe *that* those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.

11:24 Therefore I say unto you, what things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive *them*, and ye shall have *them*.

In Matthew, Chapter 21 we find a similar record. Here, a second fig tree that Jesus cursed withered away, this time right before their eyes, and Jesus used this opportunity to once again teach on prayer with believing, establishing this great truth. We’ll begin in verse 21:

#### Matthew

21:21 Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith (*believe God*), and doubt not, ye shall not only do this *which is done* to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done.

21:22 And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.

We just read that if we believe God and do not doubt, we can remove mountains. People who read these verses might be tempted to question the strength of their believing, because mountains are, after all, huge piles of rock. But Jesus Christ was not talking about literally making a real mountain disappear (what would the profit be?). Instead, he was referring to an orientalism that was widely known at the time. This is explained in the Companion Bible, where we read: “It was a common proverb to say of a great teacher who removed difficulties that he was a rooter up of mountains.” When Jesus Christ was teaching about prayer with believing, he referred to a nearby mountain to give his listeners something to visualize. At times our problems may seem insurmountable, “like that mountain over there”, but when we pray with believing, God will “remove the mountains”, taking care of any difficulties we may face.

We see how important believing God is in our prayer life in Hebrews, Chapter 11:

#### Hebrews

11:1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

A familiar literal translation of this verse according to usage is: “Now faith (believing God) is the title deed to things prayed for, the evidence they are yours before they are seen.” However, the word “hoped” in the King James Version is from the Greek word *elpizō*, meaning “trusted.” From this verse we see that prayer with believing is trusting in God.

### I John

- 5:14 And this is the confidence that we have in (*toward*) him (*God*), that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:
- 5:15 And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.

The word “confidence” in verse 14 is from the Greek word *parrhēsia*, meaning boldness. Because we trust in God, we can come to Him with boldness. Hebrews 4:16 tells us that we should “come boldly unto the throne of grace...” The word “ask” in verse 14 is from the Greek word *aiteō*, the verb form of *aitēma* which we saw in Philippians 4:6 as a form of prayer. As we boldly, with confidence and trust, go to God with our prayers, He hears us.

Prayer to God is important not just for our own needs: we also pray for others. Consider I Timothy, Chapter 2:

### I Timothy

- 2:1 I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, *and* giving of thanks, be made for all men;

Just like we saw earlier in Philippians 4:6, this verse contains three different words for prayer, that figure of speech “Synonym”. “Supplications” is the word *deēsis*, specific petitions to God. “Prayers” is *prosuchē*, our pouring out our hearts to God. The word “intercessions” in this verse is from the Greek word *enteuxis*. This word is translated “prayer” in I Timothy 4:5, its only other usage, and it more literally means “trusting, confiding access to God, giving prominence to a child-like confidence or trust when we pray”. From this verse, then, we see that it is important that we pray for others as well as for ourselves.

Let’s continue with verse 2:

- 2:2 For kings, and *for* all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.
- 2:3 For this *is* good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior;
- 2:4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

From these verses in I Timothy we see that we are to pray for those who lead our country so that we can live quiet and peaceable lives. When our lives are peaceful, the Word of God can move more freely, helping others to be saved and to learn more so they can “come unto the knowledge of the truth”.

Not only can we pray with our understanding, but in this Age of Grace in which we live God also made it available for us to pray perfectly. Perfect prayer is one of the many benefits we

realize when we speak in tongues, operating one of the nine manifestations of the gift of holy spirit that every one of us received when we got born again:

### I Corinthians

14:14 For if I pray (*proseuchomai*) in an *unknown* tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful.

When we speak in tongues, we don't understand what we are saying, but we are praying by way of our spirit. Look at the next verse:

14:15 What is it then? I will pray with (*in*) the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with (*in*) the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.

God wants us to pray with our understanding, in our own words from our heart, but He also wants us to pray in the spirit by speaking in tongues. Also, remember that when we pray, we should pray with thanksgiving? Look at the first part of verse 17:

14:17a For (*when you speak in tongues*) thou verily giveth thanks well...

What are the benefits of praying by speaking in tongues? Look at Jude 20:

### Jude

20 But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in (*by way of*) the Holy Ghost (the holy spirit, *our gift in manifestation*).

As we pray by way of the spirit, by speaking in tongues, we build ourselves up spiritually.

Praying by speaking in tongues not only benefits us, but it benefits others. Let's read Ephesians 6:18:

### Ephesians

6:18 Praying always with all prayer (*proseuchē*) and supplication (*deēsis*) in the Spirit (*by way of the spirit – speaking in tongues*), and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

So, speaking in tongues is also perfect prayer for others in the household.

But how can speaking in tongues be perfect prayer, and why is it so beneficial to us and others? Let's look at Romans Chapter 8, where we'll begin in verse 26.

### Romans

8:26 Likewise the Spirit (*God*) also helpeth our infirmity (*singular in the text*): for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit (*spirit, our gift*) itself maketh intercession (*all texts omit "for us"*) with groanings which cannot be uttered (*speaking in tongues*).

8:27 And (*But*) he (*God*) that searcheth the hearts (*where you pray from*) knoweth what *is* the mind of the Spirit (*spirit, the gift you have*), because he (*it, holy spirit in manifestation by speaking in tongues*) maketh intercession for the saints according to *the will of God*.

The one infirmity, or thing lacking, in our prayer life is that there are times when we know we should pray, but we don't know what it is we should pray for, or how to best put it into words with our sense-knowledge understanding. God made it available for us to pray perfectly, bypassing our understanding, by speaking in tongues. As we do, we are trusting in God that He already knows what needs to be prayed for, and our trusting, believing action by praying by speaking in tongues gets our mind-set to the point that He can intervene. We see the great result of this perfect prayer by speaking in tongues in the next verse:

8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose.

We know from I John 5:3 that to love God is to keep His commandments, and we know from the context of I Corinthians 14:37 that speaking in tongues is one of the things that God commands us to do.

So, as we pray perfectly by speaking in tongues, we are trusting in God, knowing that all things will “work together for good”.

We have seen that praying is important to us. Prayer to God gives us the proper mind-set to receive from Him, the true source of all our supply. As we pray with believing and thanksgiving, whether by way of our understanding or by speaking in tongues, we are trusting in God that He will always come through for us and for those we pray for. God, our heavenly Father, truly does love us and wants the best for us.

- Dr. Rick Batt