

## LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY

One of the vital lessons a disciple of Christ ever learns is how to pray. As Richard Baxter put it, "Prayer is the breath of the new creature."

The eminent scientist, Charles Steinmetz, when asked which field of research offered the greatest opportunity, instantly, "Prayer. Find out about prayer."

The purpose of this recording is to help you find out about prayer. Obviously, all there is to know about this subject could not be put on one recording. However, the basic roots are here, and from them can grow a fruitful life of prayer.

### WHAT IS PRAYER

There are those who are familiar with prayer only as a means of asking; who feel as the little boy when asked by his teacher if he said his prayers every night, answered, "No, not every night. Some nights I don't need anything." To be sure, this is an important part of prayer, but not all.

Though the Bible does not define prayer, through its teachings and examples, we find that there are four basic contents in prayer. There are prayers which contain Praise and Thanksgiving, as found in the book of Psalms. Then there are prayers of Confession in which one confesses his sins to the Lord and ask forgiveness. There are prayers of Intercession when one prays in behalf of others. Finally, there are the familiar prayers of Petition when one asks certain things for one's self. (At the end of the script which accompanies this record you will find examples given of the above.)

To answer the question then, of what prayer is, we might say that it is essentially a visit with the heavenly Father. A visit in which the child of God may open his heart in praise and thanksgiving; confess his sins and ask forgiveness - and ask his Father to care for his every need and the needs of others.

### THE MANNER IN WHICH TO PRAY

In response to the request of his disciples, "Lord teach us to pray." Jesus gave a pattern for prayer. Many have called this the "Lord's Prayer" or the Disciple's Prayer." But, in reality it is an illustration which Christ used in showing his disciples HOW to pray. He began by saying, "After this manner pray ye," In other words, let this prayer be a pattern, or guide, for the manner in which you pray. "Our Father which

art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. They will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine us the kingdom and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen. (Matt. 6:1-3; Lk. 11:2-4)

This is the Manner in which Christ has taught his disciples to pray:

1. In complete reverence toward God as our Father.
2. In complete obedience - "Thy will be done.
- 3 In complete dependence upon God for our daily needs.
4. In complete trust of his forgiveness.
5. In complete faith that he will lead and direct our steps.

Here is another important point about the "Manner" of this prayer. Out of the six petitions, the first three are in behalf of God's cause. It was first:

"Thy name,"

"Thy kingdom,"

"Thy Will."

And last, it was:

"Give us,"

"Forgive us,"

"Lead us,"

God's glory, God's kingdom, and God's will should be the first concern of the children of God.

Let me encourage you to play this part of the record over until it has become a part of you, for the manner in which you pray is by far one of the most important principles in learning to pray "aright."

#### THE PROBLEM

In (Matt. 7:7,8) Jesus made one of the most astounding statements found anywhere in the Bible. "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find, knock, and it shall be opened unto you; For everyone that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth and to him that knocketh it shall be opened."

Truly, a wonderful promise from our Master. But, has you ever heard anyone make this statement: "Yes, I know that's what the Bible says, "Ask and it shall be given you, "but I have asked and it has not been given to me!" What's the problem? Why do some prayers seem not to work? The poet, Robert Burns, answered it this way. "They never sought in vain that sought the Lord aright." The key word is "aright," meaning in the right way. There are certain conditions to acceptable prayer. James 4:3 says "Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss..." So, the problem is not in the promise made by Jesus, nor in the lack of power in prayer, but the problem lies ei-

ther with the prayer itself, or with the one who prays.

#### CONDITIONS OF ACCEPTABLE PRAYER

The beginning of acceptable prayer is RIGHT RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD. First one must be in right relationship with God's will.

"He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be an abomination." (Prov. 28:9)

"We know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshiper of God, and doeth this will, him he heareth." (John 9:31)

The second requirement for relationship with God is right relationship with others. The model prayer reads.

"Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors." (Matt. 6:12)

Later Christ commented on this particular part of prayer saying,

"For if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." (Matt. 6:14)

Always it is the effectual fervent prayer of a RIGHTEOUS man which availeth much. A man who is right with God.

#### FAITH

Another condition of acceptable prayer is Faith.

"But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." (Heb. 11:6)

We must believe not only that he can, but that he will answer our prayers.

"Let a man ask in faith, nothing doubting." (James 1:5,6)

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

You may be asking. "But how? How can I attain a faith that believes and knows my prayers will be answered?" Christ gives the answer in Mark 11:22. "And Jesus answering saith unto them. Have faith in God." Your ability to believe the promise of prayer depends upon the faith you have in the Promisor.

Here is a practical suggestion to follow which will help you look to God and rest upon his promises. Listen attentively to these "Faith-building" words from the Psalms.

"Delight thyself also in the Lord, and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass." (Psalm 37:4)

"In thee, O Lord, do I hope; thou wilt hear, O Lord my God." (Psalms 38:15)

"Verily God hath heard me; he hath attended to the voice of my prayer." (Psalms 66:19)

"O thou that hearest prayers, unto thee shall all flesh come." (Psalms 65:2)

Beginning today, copy these four verses and carry them with you throughout the next three weeks. Several times during each day read them aloud to yourself, especially upon arising in the morning and before retiring at night. Do this, and soon you will be saying with the psalmist, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want." (Psalms 23)

#### HUMILITY AND SINCERITY

"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, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. 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." (Matt. 6:5,6)

Acceptable prayers are always Humble and Sincere.

#### ACCORDING TO HIS WILL

The apostle John wrote, "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us." (1 John 5:14)

Here then, is another condition to acceptable prayer - it must be within God's will. Thus, Christ has taught us to pray. "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." (Matt. 6:10) And he himself so prayed, "Not my will, but thine be done."

"Nothing lies beyond the reach of Prayer, except that which lies beyond the will of God."

#### IN THE NAME OF CHRIST

Finally, it is through Christ that our prayers are accepted by God. "We have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." (1 John 2:1) And Jesus taught his disciples to ask in his name: "Whatsoever ye shall ask

in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in my name, will do it." (John 14:13,14)

And so it is, when one lives in right relationship with God; prays humbly and sincerely in faith, according to the will of God and in the name of Christ - it shall be given him, for God is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him!

#### THE POWER OF PRAYER

It has often been said prayer is the greatest power in the world. This is no exaggeration. Without question, there is no other force as powerful as prayer.

The word power means "the ability to achieve." Prayer is a means of achieving. Through prayer we have the ability of God achieving things which are beyond our abilities.

There are five ways in which I can achieve things for the cause of Christ:

1. Through my influence.
2. Through my words.
3. Through my deeds.
4. Through my money.
5. Through my prayers.

As you can see, the first four are limited in what they can achieve for God. My influence reaches only those with whom I come in contact; my words reach only those to whom I speak; my deeds reach only those I meet; my money is limited to the income I have. But, when we come to the fifth means of achieving - as someone has well said, "we leave the realm of the limited and we enter the realm of the OMNIPOTENT." (Unlimited in power and ability.) Through prayer I can make use of the unlimited ability of God and his Omnipresence! (Present everywhere at once.)

Yes, prayer is the greatest power - it moves the hand that moves the world.

#### THE POSSIBILITY OF PRAYER

"What can I pray about? is a question often asked by those who want to know the possibilities of prayer. The answer is, "There is nothing too great for God's power; and nothing too small for his Fatherly care.

A little child never questions that whatever happens to him will be of interest to his parents. The same is to be true of the child of God. Paul said, "... in everything by prayer and supplication, let your request be made known unto God." In other words, every aspect of life; every circumstance, every situation - great or small - "take it to the Lord in prayer." E. M. Bounds said, "Prayer has in it the possibility to affect everything which af-

fects us." Is it any wonder then, that Christians sing, "What a privilege to carry EVERY THING TO GOD IN PRAYER!"

#### PLAN FOR PRAYER

As we near the end of this recording, let me encourage you to develop specific times for prayer. While it is true that we can pray any time, any place, it is also true to quote Theodore Roosevelt that "He who does not pray at some special time and some special place is not likely to pray at any time or any place."

The Master TOOK time to pray. And we too must "Take time to be holy." In order to do this we must PLAN to do it, so at the end of the script accompanying this record you will find an Action Page and a Time Schedule. Be sure to study it carefully and to follow its suggestions.

#### PORTRAIT OF PRAYER

Prayer did not occupy a secondary place in the life of our Savior. Although he is our Example, he did not pray for that reason only, but he prayed because he wanted and loved to pray. "It is the way the Master went, should not his servants tread it still?"

"Night, with ebon pinion, Brooded o'er the vale:

All around was silent, Save the night wind's wail,  
When Christ, the man of Sorrows, in tears and sweat and blood,

Prostrate in the garden, raised His voice to God."

"In the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed." (Mk. 1:36)

"He went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night to God." (Lk. 6:12)

"And he came out, and went, as he was wont, to the mount of Olives; and his disciples also followed him. And when he was at the place, he said unto them, Pray that ye enter not into temptation. And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed, saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done." (Lk. 22:39-42)

"Abba, Father, Father, if indeed it may,

Let this cup of anguish pass from me, I pray;

Yet if it must be suffered by me, Thine only S O N,

Abba, Father, Father, Let Thy Will BE DONE."

LET US PRAY

Father, in heaven, we give thee thanks for the privilege of prayer. Help us to pray aright. We ask that Thy will be done - beginning with us, and that Thou will quicken our steps as we follow Thy Son and our Savior. In His name we pray. Amen.

"BE THOU FAITHFUL

ACTION PAGE  
FOR  
LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY

1. SCRIPTURE READING FOR THE WEEK:  
Matthew 6:9-15  
Matthew 7:7-11  
1 John 5:14,15

Read these passages through twice each day for the next seven days.  
Read them aloud when possible.

II. MY PERSONAL TIME-SCHEDULE FOR PRIVATE PRAYER:

1. Morning: Time..... Place.....  
2. Mid-Day Time..... Place.....  
3. Evening: Time..... Place.....

III. MY PERSONAL PRAYER LIST:

Loved Ones Friends Enemies Rulers Sick Missionaries

IV. MY PERSONAL NEEDS:

List here also the temptations, weaknesses, and problems in which you need God's strength, forgiveness, and guidance.

V. THINGS FOR WHICH I WANT TO GIVE PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING:

1. Spiritual Blessings 2. Physical Blessings

I want God's will to be done by me and in me. Therefore, I will pray every morning upon arising and every evening before retiring the words of my Master: "Father, not my will, but Thine be done."

VI. EXAMPLES AND TEACHINGS CONCERNING THE CONTENT OF PRAYERS:

1. Thanksgiving 1 Thessalonians 5:18  
Colossians 1:12  
Colossians 3:17  
4:2  
Hebrews 13:15
2. Praise 1 Chronicles 23:30  
Psalms 22:22  
34:1  
86:12  
50:23
3. Intercession Acts 12:5  
1 Timothy 2:1,2  
Colossians 1:3



4. Confession	Psalms	32:3-6 51:
	Proverbs	28:13
	Daniel	9-19
	John	1:9
5. Petition	1 Samuel	1:24-28
	Daniel	6:7,10-11 ,13
	1 John	5:14,15

REMEMBER

"Nothing lies beyond the reach of prayer, except that which lies beyond the will of God."

"PRAY WITHOUT CEASING"

"Take prayer out of the world and it is as if you had torn asunder the bond that binds humanity to God, and had struck dumb the tongue of the Child in presence of his Father....Gustav Theodor Fechner

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