

PRAYER Lesson 1 What Is Prayer?

Prayer is vital to Christian success and power. There seems to be much confusion, especially in America, as to what prayer is and what it is not. With the infusion of Middle Eastern and pagan religions into our society and culture, there seems to be some confusion as to who to pray to and how to pray. We will address these issues.

WHAT BIBLICAL PRAYER IS NOT

- Prayer has nothing to do with candles.
- Prayer has nothing to do with rubbing any kind of charm or necklace or bead.
- Prayer is not silent and mental. It is not meditation.
- Prayer doesn't have to be made in any cardinal direction nor is it based on the location of the sun.
- Prayer has nothing to do with walking a labyrinth.
- Prayer has nothing to do with a shawl, a hat, or a special rug.
- Prayer is not toward the non-virgin Mary. (She died a non-virgin.)
- Prayer is not toward any dead family member.
- Prayer is not toward a dead Apostle or any other dead Christian.
- Prayer is not made through any man on your behalf.
- Prayer is not limited to the confines of a church service.
- Prayer does not require special clothing or garments.
- Prayer is not limited to a prayer closet.

Simply put, prayer is not some ostentatious, religious, ceremonial act. It is the basis for our fellowship with God Himself. **We can talk to God, and He will hear us.**

EXAMPLES OF UNCEREMONIAL (WITHOUT RELIGIOUS FORMALITY) PRAYER

- Samson prayed as a slave chained between two pillars (**Judges 16:25-29**).
- Gideon prayed from within a winepress while doing hard work (**Judges 6:11-18**).
- Jonah prayed from within the belly of the whale and from hell (**Jonah 2:1-7**).
- Paul and Silas prayed while in chains in prison (**Acts 16:23-26**).
- Jesus and a thief prayed while crucified to a cross (**Matthew 27:46; Luke 23:34, 42-46**).
- David prayed while living in a cave (**Psalms 57; 1 Samuel 22:1-2**).
- Paul prayed on a ship in front of many of unbelievers (**Acts 27:22-36**).

PRAYER IS VOCAL

Prayer can be defined as petition and intimacy towards God. But prayer more simply defined is "talking to God." One of the greatest lies of religion is that prayer can be silent and mental. Mental prayer is not prayer. Prayer is spoken. Prayer is not meditation. However, there is a biblical meditation.

Pagan Meditation—*Thinking deeply or focusing one's mind for a period of time, in silence or often with the aid of chanting.* A chanted phrase is called a "mantra." Many Hindu mantras are the names of their demon gods. These mantras are often used in yoga classes.

Biblical Meditation—*Speaking God’s Word over and over again; often meaning to simply muse or reflect.* It can also mean *the sound of a harp when struck.* **Psalm 1:2** says that we are to meditate on the Word of God. We are to think on it and speak it. Biblical meditation is not prayer.

It’s not biblical to pray quietly, that is, to pray in your head.

Of all the people in the Bible recorded praying, only **one** prayed quietly: Hannah.

- **And it came to pass, as she continued praying before the LORD, that Eli marked her mouth. ¹³Now Hannah, she spake in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard: therefore Eli thought she had been drunken. ¹⁴And Eli said unto her, How long wilt thou be drunken? Put away thy wine from thee. ¹⁵And Hannah answered and said, No, my lord, I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit: I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but have poured out my soul before the LORD. ¹⁶Count not thine handmaid as a daughter of Belial: for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief have I spoken hitherto.**
1 Samuel 1:12-16

This is the only person recorded in the Bible to have prayed to God silently. Though it was silent, her mouth still moved, but the high priest marked her mouth and her lack of sound struck him as unacceptable. He judged her to be drunk. This should let us know that even under the Old Testament, silent prayer was an oddity and was not what the God of Israel expected from His people.

- Prayer is spoken communion and fellowship and communication with God.
- Prayer keeps the believer’s relationship with God fresh and powerful.
- Prayer is the believer’s tool to change the world around them.
- Prayer brings God on the scene and provides Him an avenue to move in your life.
- Prayer changes the natural course of events and allows God’s will to be done.

Prayer has several different missions or agendas, but they all work to bring God’s will to pass in the earth. We will be studying the different types of prayer for the remainder of this course: **Prayer of Faith, Prayer of Consecration, Prayer of Agreement, Supplications, Intercessions, Petitions, Giving of Thanks, Groanings and Travailings, and Praying in Tongues.**

PRAYER
Lesson 2
Different Kinds Of Prayer
Part 1—Intercessions, Travails, And Groanings

The Bible teaches and demonstrates several different kinds of prayers. The different types of prayers are defined by both the original language definition and the purpose of the prayer.

- **Pray at all times (on every occasion, in every season) in the Spirit, with all [manner of] prayer and entreaty. To that end keep alert and watch with strong purpose and perseverance, interceding in behalf of all the saints [God’s consecrated people].** **Ephesians 6:18 AMPC**

INTERCESSION

Intercession may be both the most common type of prayer, and at the same time, the least understood and misused. It is only one type of prayer. **Not all prayer is intercession.** The Body of Christ has taken some intercession to extremes. There is no such thing as the office of an intercessor. Every Christian is called to intercede.

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

Intercession literally means *to come along aside someone and aid them*. Intercession also means *to intervene on the behalf of someone, or to light upon (like a butterfly)*. Intercession can best be described as “standing in the gap” for someone. The “gap” refers to a hole in someone’s defenses or wall, allowing destruction, judgment, calamity, or harm to take place.

- **And I sought a man among them, that should make up the hedge and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none. ³¹Therefore have I poured out mine indignation upon them; I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath: their own way have I recompensed upon their heads, saith the Lord GOD.** **Ezekiel 22:30-31**

God is looking for us to intercede on behalf of someone so His will can be done in his or her life. This shows God’s desire to bless people despite their own foolishness and sin. Their sin deserves judgment, but He is still looking to bless and help them. The Spirit of God will often lead us to intercede for someone. Intercession changes the course of life for people. It helps them to not reap what they have sown. In some instances, it even stays/postpones the judgment of God.

BIBLICAL EXAMPLES OF INTERCESSION

- Abraham prayed to God (interceded) on behalf of King Abimelech for healing (**Genesis 20:7, 17**).
- Abraham prayed to God on behalf of Lot and his family to spare them from the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (**Genesis 18:23-33**).

- Moses interceded numerous times on behalf of Israel to avert their destruction. (**Exodus 32:7-14; Psalm 106:23, “breach”**).
- Moses interceded for Miriam and her leprosy (**Numbers 12:1-13**).
- God sought for a man to “**stand in the gap**” for Israel but could find none (**Ezekiel 22:30-31**).
- Jeremiah tried to intercede for Israel to turn away God’s wrath (**Jeremiah 18:20**).
- King David interceded on behalf of Israel during judgment (**2 Samuel 24:17**).
- King David interceded for the life of his child by Bathsheba (**2 Samuel 12:15-23**).
- The Holy Spirit makes intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered, and in doing so, He prays out the will of God for our lives (**Romans 8:26-27**).

GROANINGS AND TRAVAILINGS IN THE SPIRIT

One interesting aspect of intercession are “groanings in the spirit.” This is a biblical experience and can accompany prayer at times. It can often scare those who are unfamiliar with these experiences.

- Jesus groaned within Himself on at least two occasions (**John 11:33, 38**).
- Paul was “stirred” (*provoked, angered*) in his spirit at idolatry (**Acts 17:16**).
- Paul was “pressed” (*urged, compelled*) in his spirit to evangelize the Jews (**Acts 18:5**).
- The Holy Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered (**Romans 8:26**).
- Paul “travailed in birth” until Christ was formed in the Galatian believers again. They had backslidden by keeping the Mosaic Law, and Paul had to intercede for them to get right. Paul described this kind of prayer as “travailing in birth” (**Galatians 4:19**).

INTERCESSION SCENARIOS

- We can intercede for an individual’s salvation (from both hell and natural destruction).
- We can intercede for an individual’s healing.
- We can intercede for an individual’s decision-making and mental faculties.

JESUS—OUR INTERCESSOR

The Bible teaches us Jesus is still interceding for us.

- **Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who maketh intercession for us.**
Romans 8:34
- **Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.**
Hebrews 7:25

Jesus is still coming along side of us to aid us and intervene on our behalf. Amen!!

PRAYER
Lesson 3
Different Kinds Of Prayer
Part 2—Petitions And Giving Of Thanks

PETITIONS/SUPPLICATIONS

Petitions and supplications are prayers you make on behalf of yourself. These words means *to request something that one really needs, and a prayer based on a need, lack, poverty or privation.*

We must realize God is our Father and as our Father He wants to take care of us. We mustn't be afraid to ask our Father for the things we have need of.

- **And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him. 1 John 5:15**

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

Petitions and supplications are prayers we pray based on a personal need or desire. These are biblical prayers. Too many Christians are afraid to ask God for things.

- **Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. James 4:2**

Prayer is the avenue by which we obtain the things that we need from our Heavenly Father. **"Give us this day our daily bread . . ."** God expects us to come to Him with our needs. He is never too busy to help us.

- **And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. ²⁴Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. John 16:23-24**

It glorifies God to answer our prayers because He knows it brings us joy and He knows we will testify how our God took care of us. But let us be thankful when He answers our prayers.

THANKSGIVING

Thanksgiving is a type of prayer. Thankfulness is an attitude pleasing unto God. A grateful heart goes a long way. It has been said that "as goes your attitude, so goes your life." Thankfulness is having a grateful attitude and a heart of appreciation. Thankfulness will change your perspective. Be thankful for what you *do* have; don't complain about what you *don't* have.

"To complain is to remain."

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

Thanksgiving is the necessary additive to make our supplication efficacious (it makes our prayers work).

- **Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. Colossians 2:7**

The Bible tells us we are to abound in the faith with thanksgiving.

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

The Bible exhorts us to not only pray for leaders and people but also to be thankful for them. We are commanded to intercede for them and to give thanks for them.

- **Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the most High: ¹⁵And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me. Psalm 50:14-15**

Thanksgiving is an offering. We can offer up thanksgiving when we have nothing else to give. If you lack money for an offering, offer up thanksgiving. Thankfulness is just as powerful as money in the eyes of God. Thankfulness allows you to call upon God in the day of trouble.

- **Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms. Psalm 95:2**
- **Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name. Psalm 100:4**

Thankfulness is the way we enter into God's presence. It is how we come into His gates. Thankfulness quickly ushers in the presence of God. He manifests where He is appreciated. No one likes to be where they are not wanted.

- **By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name. Hebrews 13:15**

Thanksgiving is also a sacrifice we can offer up. Thanksgiving is instant fruit in our lives.

PRAYER
Lesson 4
Different Kinds Of Prayer
Part 3—Tongues, Prayers Of Faith,
Agreement, And Consecration

PRAYING IN TONGUES

As should be apparent from our study thus far, there are many types of prayers. Several times in the New Testament the saints of God are recorded as spending time in “prayer.” However, the Bible does not tell us what kinds of prayers they were praying (**Acts 4:31; 13:1-3; 16:25**). We can be confident that some of this prayer was in other tongues. Even Paul said, “**I thank my God, I speak in tongues more than ye all**” (**1 Corinthians 14:18**).

WHAT ARE TONGUES?

Tongues refers to a supernatural prayer language where the language spoken is both unknown and unlearned by the Christian praying. This language can be either an earthly tongue or an angelic tongue (**1 Corinthians 13:1**).

- The gift of tongues is established thoroughly throughout the Bible.
 - See **Isaiah 28:11; Mark 16:17; Acts 2:1-13, 10:44-48, 19:1-7; Romans 8:26; 1 Corinthians 14:1-5; Jude 20**.
- Tongues are for everyone.
 - See **Mark 16:17; Acts 2:1-13; 10:44-48; 19:6-7**.
 - In **Acts**, in every account, everyone present received the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues. That is 100% of the believers receiving and speaking.

WHAT PRAYING IN TONGUES ACCOMPLISHES

- It builds, encourages, and recharges you as a believer (**1 Corinthians 14:4; Jude 20**).
- You allow the Holy Spirit to intercede for yourself (**Romans 8:26**).
- You pronounce blessings (**1 Corinthians 14:16**).
- You give thanks well (**1 Corinthians 14:17**).
- You worship God and declare His wonderful works (**Acts 2:11**).
- You speak the unspoken mysteries of God (**1 Corinthians 14:2**).
- Your spirit is praying (perfect prayer) (**1 Corinthians 14:14**).
- You’re speaking directly to God (**1 Corinthians 14:2**).

Praying in tongues can be you praying for yourself, you praying for others, or you magnifying and worshiping God. (See also our PodSchool course on *The Gift of Tongues*.)

THE PRAYER OF FAITH

- **And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. James 5:15**

All prayer should be prayed in faith for “**without faith it is impossible to please [God]**” (Hebrews 11:6) and “**I will therefore that men pray everywhere . . . without wrath and doubting**” (1 Timothy 2:8). But there is a category of prayer called the *prayer of faith*. This is prayer given for something for which there is clear Bible authority to ask for and receive. In James 5:15, the request is for the healing of a sick person. In this instance, the sick person has called for the elders of the church to come and pray for them. The one in need initiated the prayer (as opposed to the Holy Spirit) on their own behalf with someone else doing the praying.

The *prayer of faith* is often free from any tangible anointing or natural feelings. Faith, after all, is not based on feelings. However, it should be noted that the *prayer of faith* can manifest the anointing. The anointing just wasn't there when the prayer started. If the one requesting prayer and the one proffering the prayer are in agreement, then this prayer would also be called a *prayer of agreement*. This type of prayer can be made for yourself or for others.

THE PRAYER OF AGREEMENT

- **Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. ²⁰For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.** Matthew 18:19-20

Jesus stated He had taught this more than once. There is great power in agreement. The *prayer of agreement* is not just limited to two. Jesus said, “**two or three.**”

- Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour (Ecclesiastes 4:9).
- Two lying together have heat. You can't be warm alone (Ecclesiastes 4:11).
- Two shall withstand him, and a threefold cord is not quickly broken (Ecclesiastes 4:12).
- Can two walk together, except they be agreed (Amos 3:3)?
- Jesus sent the disciples out by twos (Mark 6:7; 11:1; 14:13; Luke 19:29).
- The people of Babel were united and in agreement:
 - **And the LORD said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do.**

Genesis 11:6

Because of the power of agreement, we must be mindful of what we consent to. Be careful what you pray for with people. For this reason, “unspoken” prayer requests are unscriptural. What if the unspoken request is for evil to befall an enemy or for a man to leave his wife? We don't want our prayers to be partaking of another person's sins. The *prayer of agreement* can be made for yourself or for others.

THE PRAYER OF CONSECRATION

To **consecrate** means *to sanctify something to God's worship and service*. The *prayer of consecration* refers to prayer used to sanctify and set apart the person who is praying for God's service. This prayer can **only** be made for yourself.

Jesus demonstrated this for us in Gethsemane.

- **“O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.”** **Matthew 26:39b**

The *prayer of consecration* helps the believer to keep their heart and will focused and consecrated to the will of GOD. This should be a frequent, if not daily, prayer in our lives.