

Prayer: What Does the Bible Teach?



28 tips on improving the effectiveness of your prayers.

"Daniel...knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days." (Daniel 6:10)

Bob Thiel, Ph.D.

Prayer: What Does the Bible Teach?

28 tips on improving the effectiveness of your prayers.

By Bob Thiel, Ph.D.

Copyright © 2016/2017 by Nazarene Books. Edition 1.2. Booklet produced for the *Continuing Church of God and Successor*, a corporation sole. 1036 W. Grand Avenue, Grover Beach, California, 93433 USA.

Scriptural quotes mainly taken from the New King James Version, sometimes abbreviated as NKJV (Thomas Nelson, Copyright © 1997; used by permission).

ISBN 978-1-940482-06-4

Cover and Photos: The Bible tells of various positions for prayer, including being on the knees and looking towards the heavens. The front cover picture is by Stephen Gjertson, titled *The Prayer of Daniel the Prophet*, 1998, Oil on canvas 28 ¾ x 59 3/8, Private Collection, used under license. *Priest of Mithras* was from *Dura-Europus*. Other photos come from public domain sources, except the *Gregory 13* photo, which was taken by Joyce Thiel. The back cover photo was taken by Prioryman.

Prayer: What Does the Bible Teach?

28 tips on improving the effectiveness of your prayers.

By Bob Thiel, Ph.D.

People talk a lot about prayer. Many pray in public.
Does God listen?

What does the Bible teach about prayer?

Can what you do or do not wear be a factor?

How can your prayers be more effective?

Why doesn't God seem to answer all prayers?

How should you deal with the difficult?

How should you deal with 'the impossible'?

Would you like to know about that and more?

Introduction

What is prayer?

Prayer is simply talking to God. It can be out-loud, though it is often silent. Prayer is an important part in the worship of the Great Creator.

Prayer gives us an opportunity to express love towards others, explain our circumstances, and give thanks to God for the many blessings we are given.

We have an opportunity in prayer to ask God for help, for guidance, for strength, and to support His work.

Prayer is the completion of a two-way conversation between God and humans. God speaks to people through His Word, and people speak to Him through prayer.

When you pray, understand that this is not really doing God a favor. Believe it or not many people think that God should be grateful that we will try to talk to Him. Should it not be the other way around?

When you pray don't you realize you are speaking to the most perfect and powerful being in the universe? Which of you should be honored by that?

In this busy 21st century, in our busy lives, it can seem that there is never enough time to do all the things we want or need to do. When there is not enough time to go around, what do even some Christians neglect?

Prayer.

As never before, as we see the end approaching (Hebrews 10:24-25; Luke 21:34-36), true Christians should be drawing near to God in prayer. Yet some true Christians have confessed that they have not prayed for days, weeks, or even months.

We are not to wait long to talk to God, but should:

⁶ Seek the Lord while He may be found, Call upon Him while He is near. (Isaiah 55:6, NKJV throughout, except where otherwise noted)

Also, don't you want to support the work of God as we get closer to Jesus' return (cf. Matthew 6:33; 24:14)? While that work ultimately involves the entire universe, God's work in this age includes HIS people.

Which means, that while many feel that they could better serve God if He answered their prayers a certain way, the reality is that YOU and your spiritual state are more important than you probably think. God may not answer prayers the way people want Him to, because God wants to help perfect His people more than probably most realize. Do your part, God will do His.

Notice what followers of Jesus have been told:

⁴⁸ Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect. (Matthew 5:48)

²⁸ And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. ²⁹ For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. ³⁰ Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and

whom He justified, these He also glorified. (Romans 8:28-30)

If you believe that ALL THINGS WORK TOGETHER FOR GOOD TO THOSE THAT LOVE GOD, TO THOSE WHO ARE CALLED ACCORDING TO HIS PURPOSE, then presuming you love God and were called, whatever God does in response to your prayers means that He has answered them in a way that HE KNOWS is best for you. He wants to help perfect you now (Psalm 138:8).

On the other hand, it should also be understood that many seem to believe that God's work is primarily about helping themselves physically in this age. This is a distortion of reality. This wrong belief is often the result of unrecognized selfishness and listening to ministers that promote it (cf. 2 Peter 2:1-3). God's work is MORE than just you or how you feel.

But getting back to prayer, can it change anything?

Certainly.

Throughout history, people have utilized prayer. Prayers and intercessions by Moses, Joshua, Ezekiel, and others have been shown to change outcomes.

Yet also throughout history, God's people have also had questions about how to pray. This booklet provides 28 tips about prayer to keep in mind that can lead to the type of answers that most should really want.

Tip Number 1: Pray to God the Father

Jesus' disciples wondered about how to pray. Notice:

¹ Now it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, that one of His disciples said to

Him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples."

² So He said to them, "When you pray, say:

Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. (Luke 11:1-2)

We see here that we should normally direct our prayers to God the Father. We must first acknowledge the greatness of our heavenly Father. Our faith increases when we realize that what He has promised He can and will perform! He is the God of Heaven -- the Ruler of the whole universe. It is His name, His authority, that is to be hallowed—to be considered holy.

Even in Old Testament times, David realized that he should pray to God the Father:

¹⁰ ... David said:

"Blessed are You, Lord God of Israel, our Father, forever and ever. ¹¹ Yours, O Lord, is the greatness, The power and the glory, The victory and the majesty; For all that is in heaven and in earth is Yours; Yours is the kingdom, O Lord, And You are exalted as head over all. ¹² Both riches and honor come from You, And You reign over all. In Your hand is power and might; In Your hand it is to make great And to give strength to all.

¹³ "Now therefore, our God, We thank You And praise Your glorious name. (1 Chronicles 29:10-13)

Do you glorify the majesty, the power, and the wisdom of God in prayer like David did?

David realized that God was the Father, God was great, and that

His name should be praised. There are several concepts in David's prayer that Jesus shared with His disciples when they asked Him how to pray.

Jesus personally prayed to the Father:

²⁵ At that time Jesus answered and said, "I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes. ²⁶ Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight. (Matthew 11:25-26)

⁴¹ And He was withdrawn from them about a stone's throw, and He knelt down and prayed, ⁴² saying, "Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done." (Luke 22:41-42)

We should follow His example (cf. John 13:15; 1 Peter 2:21).

Tip Number 2: Worship God in Truth

Many people do not understand who or what God is. Because of that they often do not pray to the true God of the Bible.

Because of the 'progress' of the interfaith and ecumenical approaches to religion, many think that praying to some vague 'spirit being' or to an idol of a Hindu deity is the same as praying to the true God of the Bible. But that is not the case.

Notice something that the Apostle Paul taught:

⁵ For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as there are many gods and many lords), ⁶ yet for us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ,

through whom are all things, and through whom we live.
(1 Corinthians 8:5-6)

Notice what Jesus Himself taught:

²³ But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. ²⁴ **God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.** (John 4:23-24)

Many think that it does not matter what or how they worship, only that they make some attempt. That is not what Jesus said that the Father wants.

Jesus also taught:

⁸ "These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And honor Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me. ⁹ And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men." (Matthew 15:8-9)

People may pray out loud or silently, but notice that they can be worshiping God in vain if they are following the imaginations of their own mind or 'traditions' of human beings which are contrary to God's ways. Intentionally praying to the east (Ezekiel 8:16) and certain holidays that many who claim Christianity observe, do not come from the Bible, but from compromises with pagan "traditions of men" (see also our booklet *Should You Observe God's Holy Days or Demonic Holidays?*).

Since Jesus warned that one can worship God in vain and that the Father seeks those who will worship Him in truth, those who want to truly worship God and receive answers to their prayers should not rationalize away disobedience to Him and His ways.

Notice something that Jesus prayed:

¹ Father, the hour has come... ¹⁶ They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. ¹⁷ Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. ¹⁸ As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. ¹⁹ And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth. (John 17:1, 16-19)

Jesus also taught:

⁴ It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.' (Matthew 4:4)

The world compromises with the truth and does not adequately believe that the word of God is truth. While many pay lip-service to the idea of believing the Bible, most accept 'traditions of men' that the Bible does not condone above truly living by every word of God.

However, it is not that God never hears the prayers of those that do not really know Him, but if one truly intends to worship God, they should worship the true God.

Even if you do not believe that you are worshiping God in vain, consider examining your own life (Galatians 6:3-4) as there are probably areas in it that are not true to God. Do not overlook this tip as it also specifically applies to true Christians in these end times (cf. Revelation 3:1-22).

Tip Number 3: Believe God

The Bible warns that there are those who do not really believe God, and because of that, they do not get their prayers answered.

Notice:

⁵ If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. ⁶ But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. ⁷ For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; ⁸ he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways. (James 1:5-8)

⁶ But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. (Hebrews 11:6)

Jesus taught that those who pray need to have faith in God:

²² So Jesus answered and said to them, "Have faith in God. ²³ For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says. ²⁴ Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them. (Mark 11:22-24)

You need to believe that God will answer you. If it is God's will, yes, the prayers of the truly faithful can move mountains. The time will come when this likely will literally happen. Where does faith come from? The Bible says that "faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17). (For more on faith, check out our free booklet *Faith for Those God has Called and Chosen*.) Study and believe God's word.

While God is aware of all prayers, some prayers God listens to. Notice whose prayers God listens to:

² Says the Lord. "But on this one will I look: On him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, And who trembles at My word. (Isaiah 66:2)

Tremble at His word—do you really believe the Bible over false traditions of human beings?

In the Bible, God declares:

⁸ "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," says the Lord. ⁹ "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts. (Isaiah 55:8-9)

Do you really believe that? While that can seem to be hard to accept at times, the reality is that God "inhabits eternity" (Isaiah 57:5) and knows so much more than any of us possibly can. That is part of why it is good, wise, and right to submit to His will.

Jesus said:

⁴⁶ "But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do the things which I say? (Luke 6:46)

Are you humble enough that you will believe God over your own opinions and feelings? All the time?

Really?

Tip Number 4: Obey God: Do More than the Demons

Christians are to obey God.

The demons believe that God is, but they do not wish to obey

God. Your faith needs to go beyond simply believing that there is a God. Notice:

¹⁸ But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. ¹⁹ You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe — and tremble! ²⁰ But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead? (James 2:18-20)

True followers of God realize that faith without works is dead. The demons have faith in God, but do not obey Him. They have the works of Satan the devil. And the demons have influenced many to go the way of Satan.

The demons accepted temptations and failed to be kept "from the evil one" (Matthew 6:13). Do not be like the demons, realize that Satan's temptations are not good to follow.

Speaking of the demons, even those who seem to have cast them out, are themselves subject to being cast out if they do not obey God:

²¹ "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. ²² Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' ²³ And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!' (Matthew 7:21-23)

Notice what the Apostle John wrote about who really knows Jesus:

⁴ He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His

commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.⁵ But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him.⁶ He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked. (1 John 2:4-6)

The demons do not obey, nor do those that have been highly influenced by them. Do you?

Tip Number 5: Worship God in Spirit

Humans have a tendency to be physically-minded and often want physical representations to worship God. Yet, Jesus taught that God wants to be worshiped in spirit and in truth (John 4:23-24).

Notice also something that the Apostle Paul wrote:

⁶ For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. ⁷ Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. ⁸ So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

⁹ But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. (Romans 8:6-9)

Icons are not spirit. All icons are physical objects. Not one adequately conveys the truth about the image of the Father or the Son. Thus, no one should use icons or other idols as 'an aid' to worship or pray.

The Apostle Paul was pleased that pagans had interest in God, but he told them that true God was not to be worshiped with idols nor icons:

²² Then Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, "Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious; ²³ for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription:

TO THE UNKNOWN GOD.

Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you: ²⁴ God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. ²⁵ Nor is He worshiped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things. ²⁶ And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, ²⁷ so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; ²⁸ for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, 'For we are also His offspring.' ²⁹ Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man's devising. ³⁰ Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, ³¹ because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead." (Acts 17:22-31)

While some have said that having icons around reminds them to pray, the Apostle John wrote:

²¹ Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen. (1

John 5:21).

He did not say that idols/icons should be around to encourage prayer. The pagans did that. And the Bible teaches that the true God does not want to be worshiped as other gods have been (Leviticus 18:24-30; Deuteronomy 12:29-31).

The Bible points to God's throne being in the far north (Psalm 48:1,2; Job 37:22; Isaiah 14:13; Ezekiel 1:4) and when I pray, I tend to look towards the heavens to the north, presuming God's throne is above that (cf. Isaiah 40:22). This helps remind me that God rules the expanses of the universe, not that He is confined to some trinket made of wood, silver, and/or gold.

Now, it should be noted that God, in His mercy, does sometimes choose to answer the prayers of the unconverted. This is not only documented in the Bible (e.g. Judges 16:30; 1 Samuel 3:9), but even in some scientific studies in the 21st century verify that prayers involving those who are not truly converted are of value. God also does hear children (cf. Luke 18:17) and seeks godly offspring (Malachi 2:15).

If someone you know sincerely prays to God, God may hear them as He knows that their ignorance of His ways is not always deliberate and that their personal sincerity is real.

Sometimes when God is calling someone (John 6:44), God will cause miracles to occur and/or answer certain prayers to encourage them. But no one should believe that if they remain in a state of sin, that God is pleased or is somehow obligated to answer.

Tip Number 6: Resist Satan

People often tend to ignore Satan, but his influences are real. Satan deceives the whole world (Revelation 12:9).

Satan does not want you to pray to the true God or to trust Him. Satan is called “the prince of the power of the air” (Ephesians 2:2) and he broadcasts his rebellious attitude. Satan provides a lot of temptations (cf. 1 Corinthians 7:5) and wants you to be selfish, and not show the love that God wants you to.

Satan has little problem with selfish prayers. Satan wants you to focus on yourself and your perceived needs. Selfish prayers are warned against in scripture:

³ You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures. (James 4:3)

The devil wants you to think that you deserve something and not really believe God (e.g. Genesis 3:1-6). Satan wants you to have a selfish attitude. When you are tempted to think thoughts that are not in alignment with God, you should say a silent prayer and attempt to draw closer to God:

⁷ Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. ⁸ Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. ⁹ Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. ¹⁰ Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up. (James 4:7-10)

This is very effective when practiced. And it should be practiced all the time. If you want prayers answered and wish to have godly character built within you, resist Satan’s temptations and draw near to God.

Tip Number 7: Don't Fight God

This should be obvious, but don't fight God. Yet many Christians

do.

The Bible shows that Jonah rebelled against what God wanted him to do (Jonah 1:1-3), so God took strong action (got Jonah swallowed by a great fish, Jonah 1:17) to get Jonah to do what he should have done. And even later after he did it, Jonah was upset about it (Jonah 4:1-4).

Consider that the previous rebellion of the children of Israel against God was “written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come” (1 Corinthians 10:11). In the New Testament, before becoming the Apostle Paul, Saul realized that something wasn't right about his persecution of Christians, but resisted doing the right thing until Jesus stopped him (Acts 26:12-15).

Resist Satan (James 4:7), do not resist God, be willing to change (Revelation 3:19), and do not fight God (cf. Acts 23:9). Satan rebelled against God and wants you to as well. You can succeed:

³¹ What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? (Romans 8:31)

¹⁴ For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. (Romans 8:14)

You might be thinking:

“What, me fighting God? I obey God and really try to keep His commandments. You must be referring to others.”

If that is what you are thinking, consider how you react sometimes when you are cranky, fatigued, tempted, experiencing certain moods, or feeling overwhelmed.

Conscientiously pray to resist Satan and submit to God. Many do not really wish to be led when tempted. But they should.

Recall that Jesus said:

³³ So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple. (Luke 14:33)

So, if you are or wish to be a real Christian, do not fight God. Be willing to be led by His Spirit and be willing to grow in grace and knowledge (2 Peter 3:18).

Tip Number 8: Pray for Others

Pray for others.

The word pray/prayed in the Old Testament comes from the Hebrew word transliterated as *palal* (paw-lal') to entreat, intercede, pray, make supplication. The first time it is used in the Bible (NKJV) was when Abraham was to pray for someone else (Genesis 20:7,17).

Many people really do not want to pray for others, but that lack of effort on their part is wrong. Many want others to pray for them, but tend not to pray for many others.

Samuel said it would be a sin for him not to pray for others:

²³ Moreover, as for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you; (1 Samuel 12:23)

Paul prayed for the Colossians and Thessalonians:

⁹ For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be

filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; (Colossians 1:9)

¹¹ Therefore we also pray always for you that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of His goodness and the work of faith with power (2 Thessalonians 1:11)

The Apostle John also prayed for the physical needs of people:

² Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers. (3 John 2)

It is more than just leaders that are to pray for others. The Apostle James wrote that Christians were to “pray for one another” (James 5:16).

Jesus taught:

⁴⁴ But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, ⁴⁵ that you may be sons of your Father in heaven (Matthew 5:44-45)

³⁵ It is more blessed to give than to receive. (Acts 20:35)

It is blessed to pray for others, including enemies, but many do not do it. Remember to bless and this often can immediately help you. Many feel that they will get to praying for others after they feel they are taken care of. Yet, selfishness is not what prayer is all about—we are to be God’s sons!

Tip Number 9: Pray for Your Needs

Can you pray for your needs?

Certainly. It is okay to pray for what you need. Do not neglect to do so. James taught:

² Yet you do not have because you do not ask. (James 4:2)

¹⁶ Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. ¹⁷ Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning. (James 1:16-17)

¹³ Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. (James 5:13)

Many think that they can always rely on themselves, so they do not properly pray. Yet, the way humans live and die shows the fallacy of that.

All of us need help when we are born, and most of us need assistance before we die. In addition, we all could use God's interventions and blessings throughout our lives.

We should not neglect to ask God who supplies every good gift (James 1:17). Many people pray only when they and/or loved ones are facing difficulties. It is fine to pray then, but that is not what prayer is all about.

Tip Number 10: Remember God's Will and Have Your Priorities in Order

You need to have the right priorities when you pray. Jesus laid out an outline of prayer as He taught:

⁹ In this manner, therefore, pray:

Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. ¹⁰ Your

kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven. ¹¹ Give us this day our daily bread. ¹² And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors. ¹³ And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen. (Matthew 6:9-13)

I personally try to keep that outline in mind when I pray. Not that I simply repeat the above words vainly, but I add details. Details about doing the work of God (the Kingdom, for example, will not come until Matthew 24:14 is fulfilled), details about the daily needs of others, forgiveness, details of the daily needs for myself and family, details about my own sins/debts and sins/debts of others.

We truly are to want God's will to be done. Furthermore, Jesus specifically taught that His faithful followers should have the right priorities. Notice some of what He taught after teaching His disciples how to pray:

²⁵ "Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? ²⁶ Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? ²⁷ Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature?

²⁸ "So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; ²⁹ and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. ³⁰ Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?

³¹ "Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' ³² For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. ³³ But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. ³⁴ Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble. (Matthew 6:25-34)

³⁸ Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest. (Matthew 9:38)

Your prayers and entire approach to life need to have the correct focus, including God's kingdom and work. The spiritual needs of others and yourself are more important than your physical needs. Yet, few truly have faith.

Notice also what the Apostle John wrote:

14 Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. 15 And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him. (1 John 5:14-15)

We need to accept God's will and align our priorities with Him.

Tip Number 11: Praying Positions from the Bible

Some have said that "the Church of God goes forward on its knees." This basically means that prayer, whether or not on the knees, is an important factor in doing God's work. And those that wish to support the end time Philadelphian work of God (Revelation 3:7-13) should be praying.

The Bible shows that Solomon and others prayed on their knees and/or with their arms spread towards the heavens:

⁵⁴ And so it was, when Solomon had finished praying all this prayer and supplication to the Lord, that he arose from before the altar of the Lord, from kneeling on his knees with his hands spread up to heaven. (1 Kings 8:54)

¹⁰ Daniel...with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days. (Daniel 6:10)

¹¹ For it is written: "As I live, says the Lord, Every knee shall bow to Me, And every tongue shall confess to God." (Romans 14:11)

⁸ I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting; (1 Timothy 2:8)

Now, I should add that this does not mean that Christians are to be bouncing/dancing around in public with their arms raised and/or with their palms up as many evangelicals and others do.

Nor do these scriptures mean that all prayers need to be done on the knees or with arms raised (cf. 1 Thessalonians 5:17; Luke 18:13-14). Praying on the knees shows humility and can help one focus when praying. Looking up can also help with focus.

Yet it should be mentioned that Jesus, and apparently Jehoshaphat, also sometimes prayed looking down:

³⁹ He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, (Matthew 26:39)

¹⁸ And Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground, and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem bowed before the Lord, worshiping the Lord. (2 Chronicles 20:18)

Jesus did not, however, always pray looking down. He also prayed looking up to the heavens (Luke 9:28-29). You do not always need to pray on your knees, facing down, or looking up.

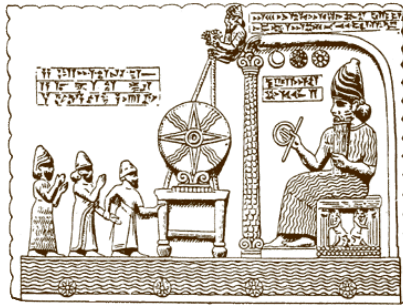
Notice also that sometimes God expects more than just oral/silent requests. Notice what happened with Moses:

¹¹ And so it was, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed; and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. ¹² But Moses' hands became heavy; so they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat on it. And Aaron and Hur supported his hands, one on one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun. (Exodus 17:11-12)

While you do not have to have your arms raised every time you pray, some matters take more effort than simply asking.

Related to instructions for the first Passover, the Bible says, “the people bowed their heads and worshiped” (Exodus 12:27), so praying with one’s head bowed would seem consistent with that. But God does not want you to bow down before statues or similar icons (Deuteronomy 5:8-9).

The Bible describes prayers given while standing, kneeling, bowing down, or prostrate with the head touching the ground. Sometimes the Bible shows hands are lifted, though not always. Yet nowhere in the Bible is there any mention of holding the hands with palms together with the fingers pointed upward as is shown on so many religious pictures or artifacts, like one for the Babylonian priests praying to the sun god Shamash c. 888 B.C.



Priests praying before sun symbol and Shamash

Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims, and others follow practices similar to the ancient Babylonians. Since God does not want to be worshiped as the pagan gods were worshiped (Deuteronomy 12:29-31), clasped hands would not seem to be appropriate for Christians.



Hindus praying to goddess Durga (by Hasan Iqbal Wamy)

As far as other positions go, some people, because of physical infirmity, can't kneel or even stand. God's ability to hear and to answer prayers isn't limited by such circumstances.

Tip Number 12: Pray Every Day

Christians should pray regularly, and preferably at least daily:

¹⁷ pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

¹² continuing steadfastly in prayer (Romans 12:12)

³⁶ Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man. (Luke 21:36)

The prophet Daniel prayed three times per day (Daniel 6:11), so did King David:

¹⁷ Evening and morning and at noon I will pray, and cry aloud, And He shall hear my voice. (Psalms 55:17)

Notice also that David knew that God heard him. He believed that God was there and was listening.

Jesus prayed early in the day:

³⁵ Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed. (Mark 1:35)

Normally “I rise before the dawning of the morning” (Psalms 119:147) and pray for about forty-five minutes. Immediately afterwards, about four days a week, I jog, and tend to meditate and sometimes pray while doing so. I will also pray other times throughout the day.

It is too easy to get busy during the day, so many find it is good to start your day off with prayer.

The Bible does not specify any amount of time for you to pray, but encourages daily prayer. The late evangelist Leroy Neff wrote:

Some people in their zeal and enthusiasm pray more than they should. They become practically prayer-and-

Bible-study hermits! Children and spouses are neglected while they spend long hours "getting in their prayer time." They are not giving as they should in outgoing concern for their family and the rest of the world. On the other hand, take heed to this appropriate saying: Seven days without prayer makes one weak!

The Bible nowhere states how long we should pray each day — just like the financial offerings we give and the frequency or length of our fasting. God leaves it to us to decide, and watches to see what we will do.

Jesus, when He knew He was going to be crucified within 24 hours, prayed for a solid hour, then went back to continue twice more (Matt. 26:38 and following verses).

On another occasion, when Jesus was about to make the important decision of selecting the 12 apostles, He prayed all night (Luke 6:12). So it should seem obvious that five, 10 or 20 minutes a day before our Creator God is insufficient. (Effectiveness in Prayer. Good News, May 1979)

Some days five, ten, or twenty minutes might be fine. Yet, as he properly wrote, God leaves the amount to us to decide.

Tip Number 13: Forgiveness

One reason that people do not get their prayers answered is that they have failed to truly forgive others. Many feel that "those that did them wrong" do not deserve to be forgiven.

After giving an outline of prayer, Jesus said:

¹⁴ For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵ But if you do not forgive

men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. (Matthew 6:14-15)

Yet, many seem to think that their relationship with God is sufficiently close that they do not really need to forgive others. This is wrong.

Most people have not forgiven someone from what they perceive someone did to them.

Jesus taught that forgiveness needed to be done before worship:

²³ Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, ²⁴ leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. (Matthew 5:23-24)

Forgiveness is a two-way street. In the above account, it appears that perhaps the worshiper needed forgiveness and apparently needed to ask for it. Forgiveness is important. More important than simply showing up somewhere to worship.

Tip Number 14: Recognize God's Spirit

Despite forgiveness you might still feel unworthy. Notice the following:

² And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear to him, was sick and ready to die. ³ So when he heard about Jesus, he sent elders of the Jews to Him, pleading with Him to come and heal his servant. ⁴ And when they came to Jesus, they begged Him earnestly, saying that the one for whom He should do this was deserving, ⁵ "for he loves our nation, and has built us a synagogue."

⁶ Then Jesus went with them. And when He was already not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to Him, saying to Him, "Lord, do not trouble Yourself, for I am not worthy that You should enter under my roof." ⁷ Therefore I did not even think myself worthy to come to You. But say the word, and my servant will be healed. ⁸ For I also am a man placed under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."

⁹ When Jesus heard these things, He marveled at him, and turned around and said to the crowd that followed Him, "I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!" ¹⁰ And those who were sent, returning to the house, found the servant well who had been sick. (Luke 7:2-10)

Jesus, Himself did not go over to heal that servant. God's Spirit did. Remember also:

²⁶ Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

²⁷ And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God. (Romans 8:26-27, KJV)

We do not always know how to pray as we ought to, but if we have God's Spirit, it assists.

But also notice what the next verse teaches:

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. (Romans 8:28, KJV)

What many Christians fail to realize is that God ALWAYS ANSWERS YOUR PRAYERS, though not always as YOU WANT THEM to be answered. ALL THINGS WORK TOGETHER FOR GOOD—in accordance with God's will for you.

The problem is that most do not realize how much sin they need to truly repent of. Part of the reason that God does not answer prayers the way Christians want is because what they want is not always best for them.

Tip Number 15: Pray for What the Bible Says to Pray For

Would you like to be certain about what God's will is for you to pray for?

Then pray for what the Bible tells you to pray for!

Wisdom is one thing that the Bible says to ask for:

⁵ **If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.** (James 1:5)

GOD PROMISES TO GIVE YOU WISDOM IF YOU ASK! Don't we all need to be wiser? *It most certainly is God's will for you to have wisdom.*

You should also pray for discernment and understanding:

³ **Yes, if you cry out for discernment, And lift up your voice for understanding,** ⁴ **If you seek her as silver, And search for her as for hidden treasures;** ⁵ **Then you will**

understand the fear of the Lord, And find the knowledge of God. (Proverbs 2:3-5)

¹⁶⁹ Let my cry come before You, O Lord; Give me understanding according to Your word. (Psalms 119:169)

God promises if you truly seek discernment and understanding, according to God's word, He will grant understanding and allow you to find the knowledge of God.

You can also pray that others will have wisdom and spiritual understanding as the Apostle Paul did:

⁹ For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; ¹⁰ that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; (Colossians 1:9-10)

Notice something else the Bible says to pray for:

³⁷ Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. ³⁸ Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest." (Matthew 9:37-38)

² Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving; ³ meanwhile praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains, ⁴ that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak. (Colossians 4:2-4)

The work of God is important. Pray for it and what God wants.

Tip Number 16: Ask for Spiritual Gifts

There are various types of spiritual gifts to pray for. In my normal morning prayer, I tend to ask that I may have:

²²...love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control. (Galatians 5:22-23)

I also add wisdom, understanding, as well as to be a proper example and witness to that list.

And yes, I also pray as Paul wrote to:

¹ Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy. (1 Corinthians 14:1)

This does not mean that all will become prophets or that all will prophesy, though it concludes that some will, but that we all need to pursue love and spiritual gifts. It also means that we will allow God to use us to speak rightly on His behalf when we should (1 Peter 3:15).

Spiritual gifts vary, but love is what we all need:

⁴ There are different spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit gives them. ⁵ There are different ways of serving, and yet the same Lord is served. ⁶ There are different types of work to do, but the same God produces every gift in every person. ⁷ The evidence of the Spirit's presence is given to each person for the common good of everyone. ⁸ The Spirit gives one person the ability to speak with wisdom. The same Spirit gives another person the ability to speak with knowledge. ⁹ To another person the same Spirit gives [courageous] faith. To another person the same Spirit gives the ability to heal. ¹⁰ Another can work

miracles. Another can speak what God has revealed. Another can tell the difference between spirits. Another can speak in different kinds of languages. Another can interpret languages.¹¹ There is only one Spirit who does all these things by giving what God wants to give to each person. (1 Corinthians 12:4-11, GOD's WORD translation)

^{12:27} Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.²⁸ And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues.²⁹ Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles?³⁰ Do all have gifts of healings? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?³¹ But earnestly desire the best gifts. And yet I show you a more excellent way.

^{13:1} Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.² And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. (1 Corinthians 12:27-13:2)

We all are to pray for wisdom and grow in grace and knowledge (2 Peter 3:18), but the amount of each varies. We all have different roles and gifts.

The Bible says that God did not *call* many wise, mighty, or noble in this age, lest any should boast (1 Corinthians 1:26-29), but that He would grant gifts like wisdom.

The Bible also says that an important part of God's work will be done by His Spirit (Zechariah 4:6-7). Pray for spiritual gifts.

Never forget that love is the most important gift.

Do you really pray for love?

Tip Number 17: Don't Pray for Show

Many seem to wish to pray to be seen by others. I have also seen various 'evangelicals' somewhat dancing around with their arms raised to indicate that they are praying or somehow worshipping God. I also have witnesses of people crawling on their knees, possibly praying, at the shrine in Fatima, Portugal.

Jesus warned against praying for show:

⁵ "And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. ⁶ But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. (Matthew 6:5-6)

You pray to draw closer to God, not to try to impress others. It is not that there are not times for public prayer (biblically there are), but we are not to pray just to impress others.

While I am not opposed to people praying out loud over meals (and have done this from time to time as it seemed appropriate), normally I privately thank God for my meals in a silent prayer. Therefore, normally I do not consider that public prayer in small restaurant settings is needful.

Public prayers over church services are not done with the intent for outward show. These short prayers should help get the attendees better focused for the service. Jesus is there when two

or more are gathered in His name (Matthew 18:20) and the public prayer normally will be asked in Jesus' name.

Tip Number 18: Obey the New Testament About Head Coverings

Does the covering or uncovering of your head make any difference to God?

According to the Apostle Paul it does:

¹ Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.

² Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things and keep the traditions just as I delivered them to you. ³ But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God. ⁴ Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonors his head. ⁵ But every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head, for that is one and the same as if her head were shaved. ⁶ For if a woman is not covered, let her also be shorn. But if it is shameful for a woman to be shorn or shaved, let her be covered. ⁷ For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man. ⁸ For man is not from woman, but woman from man. ⁹ Nor was man created for the woman, but woman for the man. ¹⁰ For this reason the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels. ¹¹ Nevertheless, neither is man independent of woman, nor woman independent of man, in the Lord. ¹² For as woman came from man, even so man also comes through woman; but all things are from God.

¹³ Judge among yourselves. Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered? ¹⁴ Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him? ¹⁵ But if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her; for her hair is given to her for a covering. ¹⁶ But if anyone seems to be contentious, we have no such custom, nor do the churches of God. (1 Corinthians 11:1-16)

While the above is mainly discussing hair, it also seems to be prohibiting Christian males from wearing hats or other head coverings when praying in public (though I do not believe that if a man is wearing a hat because it is cold he cannot pray) as well as allowing for women to wear veils or other head coverings when they pray. Males should have relatively short hair and not wear head coverings while praying. Women should have relatively long hair, but can (but are not required to) wear head coverings like hats or veils when praying.

Although it is true that the Levitical priesthood had head coverings, the Bible shows that there was a change of the priesthood in the New Testament (Hebrews 7:12).

It should be understood that neither Jesus nor the Apostle Paul wore head coverings when praying—and Christian males should also imitate them this way. According to *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, the type of head coverings that Greco-Roman religious leaders now wear did not even become formally part of their churches until after the 4th century arrival of Roman Emperor Constantine, a devotee to the sun-god Mithras.

Many religious head coverings that are worn in the 21st century are adaptations from pagan faiths.

If you see any male praying with head coverings like the pagans wore, you can be assured that he does not believe he must take



Priest of Mithras
(3rd Century)



Pope Leo I
(Reigned 440-461)



Pope Gregory 13
(Reigned 1572-1585)

passages of the Bible such as those in 1 Corinthians 11 literally. But you and he should.

Additionally, the type of baldness that many Buddhist and Catholic monks have imposed on themselves, is directly contrary to statutes of the Bible (Leviticus 21:1,5; Ezekiel 44:15,20), so be careful not to imitate them.

Tip Number 19: Ask Often, Do Not Use Vain Repetitions, But Be Fervent

Jesus encouraged asking God for something frequently:

¹ Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart, ² saying: "There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor regard man. ³ Now there was a widow in that city; and she came to him, saying, 'Get justice for me from my adversary.' ⁴ And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, 'Though I do not fear God nor regard man, ⁵ yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.'"

⁶ Then the Lord said, "Hear what the unjust judge said. ⁷

And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? ⁸ I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:1-8)

You need to be persistent. Many do not really have the faith they should. Christians are to have the faith of Jesus (cf. Revelation 14:12; Galatians 2:20)—a real and productive faith. More information about faith can be found in our free booklet *Faith for Those God has Called and Chosen*.

Although we should continue to pray regularly, Jesus also warned against the use of 'vain repetition' type prayers:

⁷ And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words.

⁸ "Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him. (Matthew 6:7-8)

Thus, while the outline of prayer Jesus gave in Matthew 6:9-13 gives us priorities and certain specifics to pray about, true Christians do not just repeat those words in rote multiple times in a row as do some faiths who profess Christ. In some cultures, they actually spin a wheel and believe that each rotation sends up a prayer to the gods. In at least one place in Asia, I recall seeing 'prayers' that were on wheel spun by the wind. This is not what God wants.

Still others, in both Eastern and Western cultures, use a counting system involving beads to keep track of their repetitions that they strive for. But that, too, is not what God wants.

Though God knows what you want, He wants you to ask so you will know that He hears you, as well as for you to be thankful for

what He gives you. Make your petition to God clear and do not use vain repetition. Notice also:

¹⁶ Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. ¹⁷ Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. ¹⁸ And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit. (James 5:16-18)

Those who use bead-counting systems for prayer are not being truly fervent nor effectual. God wants His people to “cry out to Me with their heart” (Hosea 7:14).

Let’s look at what Jesus did:

⁴⁴ And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground. (Luke 22:44)

Jesus was quite fervent at times as the above shows.

Tip Number 20: If You Are Suffering or Sick, Pray About It

God’s word instructs us to pray if we are suffering or are ill:

¹³ Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms. ¹⁴ Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. ¹⁵ And the prayer of faith will save the sick,

and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. (James 5:13-15)

There is a time to heal (Ecclesiastes 3:3), so pray for it. Those who are ill can also call for the elders to anoint them.

We are healed by the stripes of Jesus:

²⁴ who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness — by whose stripes you were healed. (1 Peter 2:24)

Moses prayed that God would heal his sister Miriam (Numbers 12:13). David prayed and fasted when others were sick:

¹³ But as for me, when they were sick, My clothing was sackcloth; I humbled myself with fasting; And my prayer would return to my own heart. (Psalms 35:13)

Isaiah told Hezekiah that God would heal him:

⁵ 'Thus says the Lord, the God of David your father: "I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; surely I will heal you. (2 Kings 20:5)

God heals:

² O Lord my God, I cried out to You, And You healed me. (Psalms 30:2)

¹⁴ Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; (Jeremiah 17:14)

Prayer is connected with healing in the Bible. When you are suffering, remember to pray.

Tip Number 21: Pray for Church Leaders

We are to pray for our spiritual leaders.

Notice some teachings from the Apostle Paul:

²⁵ Brethren, pray for us (1 Thessalonians 5:25).

¹ Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run swiftly and be glorified, just as it is with you, ² and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men; for not all have faith (2 Thessalonians 3:1-2).

Christians were told by Christian leaders:

¹⁸ Pray for us; for we are confident that we have a good conscience, in all things desiring to live honorably. (Hebrews 13:18)

Jesus taught we are to pray for more leaders:

² The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest (Luke 10:2).

We also are to pray:

¹⁴ The will of the Lord be done (Acts 21:14).

Tip Number 22: Pray for Secular Leaders

In the Old Testament, some leaders asked for God's people to pray for them, and they did (1 Kings 13:6; Ezra 6:8-10).

What about the New Testament? While some people believe that the problems humanity has would be best solved by voting or rioting, the Bible says we need to pray for our secular leaders and those in the government who have authority over aspects of our lives.

¹ Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men,
² for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence.
³ For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior (1 Timothy 2:1-3).

Many of us face complications with governmental officials and their policies. Are you praying for them like you should? As far as international governmental matters go, the Bible also says to “Pray for the peace of Jerusalem (Psalms 122:6).

Tip 23: Put Jesus in Your Prayers

There is only one name under heaven by which we can be saved: Jesus (Acts 4:10,12). We need to put Jesus in our prayers. This does not mean that we are mainly to pray to Jesus, though that can be done (e.g. Acts 7:59), we need to realize that we can come to the Father because of what Jesus has done for us.

The Book of Hebrews teaches:

¹⁴ Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. ¹⁵ For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶ Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. (Hebrews 4:14-16)

We can, and should, come boldly before the throne of grace, because of Jesus.

Notice also what Jesus taught:

¹³ And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴ If you ask anything in My name, I will do it. (John 14:13-14)

Are there limits? Notice what the Apostle Paul wrote:

¹³ I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. (Philippians 4:13)

⁵ Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, (Philippians 2:5)

¹ Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ. (1 Corinthians 11:1)

If you have repented, been baptized, and received God's Holy Spirit, the blood of Jesus has washed you clean (Revelation 1:5). If you will truly imitate Jesus, you can do all things through Him. Try to be and think like Jesus.

The Apostle John wrote:

²³ Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you. (John 16:23)

Because of Jesus' sacrifice, we should pray, ask the Father, in Jesus name/authority. I normally close my prayers by asking for all I prayed for in the name/authority of Jesus, in accordance with God's will. Jesus is the only mediator between humankind and God (1 Timothy 2:5): do not pray to/ through His mother or others.

Tip Number 24: The Difficult: Remember Fasting

Some matters are quite difficult. What should you do?

Consider the following:

¹⁷ Then one of the crowd answered and said, "Teacher, I brought You my son, who has a mute spirit. ¹⁸ And wherever it seizes him, it throws him down; he foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth, and becomes rigid. So I spoke to Your disciples, that they should cast it out, but they could not."

¹⁹ He answered him and said, "O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him to Me." ²⁰ Then they brought him to Him. And when he saw Him, immediately the spirit convulsed him, and he fell on the ground and wallowed, foaming at the mouth.

²¹ So He asked his father, "How long has this been happening to him?"

And he said, "From childhood. ²² And often he has thrown him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him. But if You can do anything, have compassion on us and help us."

²³ Jesus said to him, "If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes."

²⁴ Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!"

²⁵ When Jesus saw that the people came running together, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it,

"Deaf and dumb spirit, I command you, come out of him and enter him no more!" ²⁶ Then the spirit cried out, convulsed him greatly, and came out of him. And he became as one dead, so that many said, "He is dead." ²⁷ But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose.

²⁸ And when He had come into the house, His disciples asked Him privately, "Why could we not cast it out?"

²⁹ So He said to them, "This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting." (Mark 9:17-29)

Fasting is an adjunct to prayer. Difficult situations often need fasting along with prayer.

Once when there was a problem with the tribe of Benjamin, the children of Israel took military steps that God approved (Judges 20:18-20). Yet, the children of Israel suffered greatly (Judges 20:21). And this happened a second time (Judges 20:25). So, the children of Israel took steps including fasting (Judges 20:26-31), and were victorious (Judges 20:32-36). Sometimes, even when the requests are consistent with God's will, God does not answer immediately and fasting is helpful.

When Nehemiah heard about how terrible the conditions in Jerusalem were, he prayed AND fasted (Nehemiah 1:4). Nehemiah was only a person who brought the king things to drink (Nehemiah 1:11). Yet, after prayer and fasting, he assisted and later became governor in Judah (Nehemiah 5:14; 8:9). The people in Jerusalem were in a difficult way, and God provided relief through one who prayed and fasted.

Notice also:

⁶ "Is this not the fast that I have chosen: To loose the bonds of wickedness, To undo the heavy burdens, To let the oppressed go free, And that you break every yoke? ⁷ Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, And that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out; When you see the naked, that you cover him, And not hide yourself from your own flesh? ⁸ Then your light shall break forth like the morning, Your healing shall spring forth speedily, And your righteousness shall go before you; The glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard. ⁹ Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; You shall cry, and He will say, 'Here I am.' "If you take away the yoke from your midst, The pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness, ¹⁰ If you extend your soul to the hungry And satisfy the afflicted soul, Then your light shall dawn in the darkness, and your darkness shall be as the noonday. (Isaiah 58:6-10)

For difficult situations, do not forget fasting. The Bible recommends it.

Tip Number 25: Pray With Thanksgiving

You should thank God in your prayers, and God wants you to do this:

⁸ Oh, that men would give thanks to the Lord for His goodness, And for His wonderful works to the children of men! ⁹ For He satisfies the longing soul, And fills the hungry soul with goodness. (Psalms 107:8-9)

²⁰ giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ submitting to one another in the fear of God. (Ephesians 5:20-21)

⁵⁷ But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Corinthians 15:57)

¹⁷ And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him. (Colossians 3:17)

¹⁵ Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name. (Hebrews 13:15)

¹⁷ I will offer to You the sacrifice of thanksgiving, And will call upon the name of the Lord. (Psalms 116:17)

⁶ Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; (Philippians 4:6)

Pray with thanksgiving!

Does God want you to thank and praise Him because His ego needs it?

No.

Many people do not really understand much about God. He wants YOU to do this because it is best for YOU.

How so?

You should realize that your sins have hurt not only you, but others. Despite this, God sent His Son to die for you (John 3:16) and He provides for you. The truth is that you should be grateful. All of us should be.

In addition to being thankful for your calling, your spiritual blessings, your life, and your physical blessings, the Book of Psalms is filled with specific items to be thankful for. You may wish to read them over if you are looking for some ideas.

Tip Number 26: Deal With ‘Secret Sins’

Sometimes you have sins that are in the way, including secret ones. God will not hear you if you accept iniquity:

¹⁸ If I regard iniquity in my heart, The Lord will not hear.
(Psalms 66:18)

¹ Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, That it cannot save; Nor His ear heavy, That it cannot hear. ² But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear. (Isaiah 59:1-2)

Some do a good job of hiding their sins from others. Some even hide sins from themselves. But God knows:

⁵ O God, You know my foolishness; And my sins are not hidden from You. (Psalms 69:5)

⁷ For we have been consumed by Your anger, And by Your wrath we are terrified. ⁸ You have set our iniquities before You, Our secret sins in the light of Your countenance. (Psalms 90:7-8)

God will allow you to face tests and trials to purge you from sins:

² My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, ³ knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. ⁴ But let patience have its perfect work, that

you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.
(James 1:2-4)

We are to strive to be perfect in God's sight, not our own. Jesus taught:

⁴⁸ Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect. (Matthew 5:48)

We cannot hide sins from God and should strive not to hide sins from ourselves.

Notice what the Old and New Testaments teach:

³⁹ Why should a living man complain, A man for the punishment of his sins? ⁴⁰ Let us search out and examine our ways, And turn back to the Lord; ⁴¹ Let us lift our hearts and hands To God in heaven. (Lamentations 3:39-41)

²⁷ Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. ²⁸ But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. ²⁹ For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. ³⁰ For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep. ³¹ For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. ³² But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world. (1 Corinthians 11:27-32)

But humans do not tend to believe this. We seem to prefer to think our problems are physical and require a physical solution, when many are spiritual and require a spiritual solution.

That does not mean to neglect the physical, but understand also the spiritual:

⁷ Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the Lord and depart from evil. ⁸ It will be health to your flesh, And strength to your bones. (Proverbs 3:7-8)

² Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, And let your soul delight itself in abundance. ³ Incline your ear, and come to Me. Hear, and your soul shall live; (Isaiah 55:2-3)

¹² Along the bank of the river, on this side and that, will grow all kinds of trees used for food; their leaves will not wither, and their fruit will not fail. They will bear fruit every month, because their water flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for medicine. (Ezekiel 47:12)

⁷ But reject profane and old wives' fables, and exercise yourself toward godliness. ⁸ For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come. ⁹ This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance. ¹⁰ For to this end we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe. ¹¹ These things command and teach. (1 Timothy 4:7-11)

Examine yourself and change. Remember the Bible teaches:

¹² Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. (1 Corinthians 10:12)

All of us need more faith and patience. Jesus even asked if He would really find faith when He returns:

⁸ Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth? (Luke 18:8)

Jesus prophesied that there would be problems with faith in the end times. We all need more faith, we all need to change.

Tip Number 27: Change Can Make the Impossible, Possible

What if what you are going through seems impossible?

According to the Bible it is not:

¹³ No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it. (1 Corinthians 10:13)

Remember during tests and trials to resist Satan, and God will make a way for you to bear it. Turn potentially destructive events into character building ones.

Items like weight loss and cessation of smoking are difficult, but not impossible. Items like an adult growing 1 1/2 feet (Matthew 6:27) or one who is born blind being able to see without medical intervention (John 9:30-33) are basically impossible. Sometimes we face the impossible, because God believes we can handle it and it will help us build character. Sometimes, perhaps it is also to motivate us more to be closer to God.

Some trials and tests need to be taken one day at a time. Don't sell yourself short. For almost everything you can hold out for another day. Do not worry and tell yourself you cannot continue. Recall that Jesus taught:

³¹ "Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' ³² For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. ³³ But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. ³⁴ Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble. (Matthew 6:31-34)

A lot of trials should only be looked at one day at a time as Jesus implied above.

We also need to be careful about comparing ourselves to others:

¹² For we dare not class ourselves or compare ourselves with those who commend themselves. But they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise. (2 Corinthians 10:12)

Why do some trials for Christians seem more difficult than for those outside?

¹⁷ For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God? ¹⁸ Now

"If the righteous one is scarcely saved, Where
will the ungodly and the sinner appear?"

¹⁹ Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator. (1 Peter 4:17-19)

So, Christians may find that they encounter issues that others do not. Despite problems, we must try to do good, even when suffering.

As far as prayer goes, what if what you want is 'impossible'?

Well, as far as God is concerned, nothing is impossible:

²⁶ But Jesus looked at them and said to them, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."
(Matthew 19:26)

²³ Jesus said to him, "If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes." (Mark 9:23)

³⁶ And He said, "Abba, Father, all things are possible for You. Take this cup away from Me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what You will." (Mark 14:36)

You might say, that is fine for God, but I'm imperfect and thus the impossible will not happen for me. Well, do you really believe the Bible? The Bible teaches:

¹³ I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.
(Philippians 4:13)

You might be telling yourself, "Well that was true for the Apostle Paul. Paul was a great man of faith, but I am a nobody. I have sinned a lot."

Well, remember that the Apostle Paul earlier had "persecuted the Church of God beyond measure" (Galatians 1:13). You probably did not do anything worse than that. Even if you did, you still can repent.

But the real point is that yes, through Christ, His followers can do all things.

This includes healing:

² Bless the Lord, O my soul, And forget not all His benefits: ³ Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases, ⁴ Who redeems your life from destruction, Who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies, ⁵ Who satisfies your mouth with good things, So that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

⁶ The Lord executes righteousness And justice for all who are oppressed. ⁷ He made known His ways to Moses, His acts to the children of Israel. ⁸ The Lord is merciful and gracious, Slow to anger, and abounding in mercy. ⁹ He will not always strive with us, Nor will He keep His anger forever. ¹⁰ He has not dealt with us according to our sins, Nor punished us according to our iniquities.

¹¹ For as the heavens are high above the earth, So great is His mercy toward those who fear Him; ¹² As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us. (Psalms 103:2-12)

But you may say, you or someone you are praying about has not been healed.

While God does heal all diseases, He does so when He feels it will truly help the one.

Sometimes it is not clear why you do not get the answer you are expecting or even pleading for. Is this *necessarily* because you lack faith?

No.

Notice what happened with the Apostle Paul who wrote:

⁷ And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. ⁸ Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. ⁹ And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. ¹⁰ Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong. (2 Corinthians 12:7-10)

Why did God not heal the Apostle Paul?

Because it may have affected Paul in the wrong way. The above passage indicates that Paul and/or the people around him could not properly handle matters if Paul did not have the particular infirmity. Or perhaps because Paul did have the character to endure and be an example, God decided it was best.

Paul probably felt that HE could do God's work better if only God would heal him of whatever this was. Because of statements in Galatians 4:15 and 6:11, some feel that this affliction may have had something to do with his vision. If so, consider that since Paul wrote more books of the New Testament than anyone else, that God did not need to have Paul healed of this, irrespective of what Paul may have thought.

Nor did Paul's likely prayers heal everyone he was involved with. Paul refers to Timothy's recurring stomach problems in 1 Timothy 5:23, and also says, "Trophimus have I left in Miletum sick" (2 Timothy 4:20).

Building character is more important to God, and God's will, than physical healing. That does NOT mean that the 'impossible' will not be done. Yet, the experience of the Apostle Paul helps demonstrate that God's ultimate will for you exceeds what you may prefer physically.

You might think that you are unworthy for God to hear your prayer, but all sin:

²³...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, (Romans 3:23)

⁸ If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰ If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us. (1 John 1:8-10)

If you believe and confess your sins, God will hear you. But you may have more character to develop in areas than you might think.

Tip Number 28: Close with Amen

Jesus ended the prayer He gave in Matthew 6 with the term "Amen." In the "Received text," the Greek word is ἀμην, transliterated as into Latin characters as "amen" (anciently pronounced ah-min or ah-men).

Some do not like the word "Amen." Some claim it is pagan and that using it is calling out to, or praying to, an Egyptian sun-god.

However, "amen" stems from the Hebrew verb aman (anciently pronounced ah-main) meaning "to support, confirm, or rear up" (Harkavy, *Students' Hebrew and Chaldee Dictionary*). This Hebrew word (אמן) differs from the word for the Egyptian god

Amon used in the Bible (אֱמֹן). Yet, some falsely claim that saying “Amen” is actually a prayer to that pagan deity.

Amen itself means “truly” (Harkavy).

Christ often used this word in the New Testament. In the King James Version it is often translated as “verily.”

Basically, the word אמן/אֱמֵן signifies that you believe and agree with what was stated before.

Believe what you pray. Have the right attitude. Amen.

Summary

Here is a listing of the 28 tips:

1. **Pray to God the Father**
2. **Worship God in Truth**
3. **Believe God**
4. **Obey God: Do More than the Demons**
5. **Worship God in Spirit**
6. **Resist Satan**
7. **Don't Fight God**
8. **Pray for Others**
9. **Pray for Your Needs**
10. **Remember God's Will and Have Your Priorities in Order**
11. **Praying Positions from the Bible**
12. **Pray Every Day**
13. **Forgiveness**
14. **Recognize God's Spirit**
15. **Pray for What the Bible Says to Pray For**
16. **Ask for Spiritual Gifts**
17. **Don't Pray for Show**
18. **Obey the New Testament About Head Coverings**
19. **Ask Often, Do Not Use Vain Repetitions, But Be Fervent**

- 20. If You Are Suffering or Sick, Pray About It**
- 21. Pray for Church Leaders**
- 22. Pray for Secular Leaders**
- 23. Put Jesus in Your Prayers**
- 24. The Difficult: Remember Fasting**
- 25. Pray With Thanksgiving**
- 26. Deal With 'Secret Sins'**
- 27. Change Can Make the Impossible, Possible**
- 28. Close with Amen**

Some may be thinking:

“Wait a minute! I want God to do things MY WAY. That is why I pray. And you keep quoting verses that I should confess my sins, pray for others, pray for the work, pray for God’s will to be done, give thanks, and even fast. Those are not the kind of tips I was hoping for.”

Well, you either believe the God of the Bible or you do not. You can pray for your wants and needs, but you need to understand that prayer is intended to be more than a 'please give me this, please give me that' process.

Study, review, and strive to understand all the tips in this booklet. Read the Bible. Pray regularly to the Father.

If you do believe and will follow what the Bible says, God will answer your prayers. The twenty-eight tips in this booklet should give you at least a start to realize how God wants you to view prayer.

¹⁷ Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin. (James 4:17)

Pray.

Continuing Church of God (CCOG) Websites

CCOG.ASIA This site has focus on Asia and has various articles in multiple Asian languages, as well as some items in English.

CCOG.IN This site is targeted towards those of Indian heritage. It has materials in English language and various Indian languages.

CCOG.EU This site is targeted toward Europe. It has materials in multiple European languages.

CCOG.NZ This site is targeted towards New Zealand and others with a British-descended background.

CCOG.ORG This is the main website of the *Continuing Church of God*. It serves people on all continents.

CCOGAFRICA.ORG This site is targeted towards those in Africa.

CCOGCANADA.CA This site is targeted towards those in Canada.

CDLIDD.ES La Continuación de la Iglesia de Dios. This is the Spanish language website for the *Continuing Church of God*.

PNIND.PH Patuloy na Iglesia ng Diyos. This is the Philippines website of the *Continuing Church of God*. It has information in English and Tagalog.

News and History Websites

COGWRITER.COM This website is a major proclamation tool and has news, doctrine, historical articles, videos, and prophetic updates.

CHURCHHISTORYBOOK.COM This is an easy to remember website with articles and information on church history.

BIBLENEWSPROPHECY.NET This is an online radio website which covers news and biblical topics.

YouTube Video Channels for Sermons & Sermonettes

BibleNewsProphecy channel. CCOG sermonette videos.

CCOGAfrica channel. CCOG messages in African languages.

CDLIDDSermones channel. CCOG messages in the Spanish language.

ContinuingCOG channel. CCOG video sermons. It also contains messages for Holy Days.

Continuing Church of God

The USA office of the *Continuing Church of God* is located at:
1036 W. Grand Avenue, Grover Beach, California, 93433 USA.

English language website: <http://www.ccog.org>

In addition to producing our Bible News Prophecy magazine in multiple languages some of our booklets are available in over 100 languages.

Free booklets (in multiple languages) include:

Continuing History of the Church of God Many do not realize the truth about the history of the church that Jesus had His apostle found. This highly-referenced book shows the truth.

Faith for those God has Called and Chosen Can faith be increased? If so, how?

Prayer: What Does the Bible Teach? Do you know how to pray? This booklet has 28 tips on who to pray as the Bible teaches.

Should You Observe God's Holy Days or Demonic Holidays? Which are God's Holy Days? Do many people who claim Christianity keep demonic holidays?

The Ten Commandments: The Decalogue, Christianity, and the Beast Are Christians to keep all the Ten Commandments?

The Gospel of the Kingdom of God Do you understand it?

Where is the True Christian Church Today? Many profess to be Christian, but how can you tell if a church truly is?

The Continuing Church of God has congregations and scattered supporters around the world. We believe that the Bible is the word of God. We strive to teach all things that the Bible teaches in accordance with the commands of Jesus (Matthew 24:14; 28:19-20).

PRAYER

Jesus prayed (e.g. Matthew 14:23). Jesus taught His disciples to pray (Matthew 6:5-15). The Prophet Daniel (Daniel 6:10-11). The Apostle Paul prayed (2Corinthians 13:7-9) and taught about prayer (1 Thessalonians 5:17), as did the Apostle James and others (James 1:5; 5:13-18).

Yet nowhere in the Bible is there any mention of Christians holding the hands with palms together with the fingers pointed upward as is shown on so many religious pictures or artifacts, like one for the prayed Babylonian priests praying to the sun god Shamash around 888 B.C.



Priests praying before sun symbol and Shamash.

Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims, and others follow practices similar to the ancient Babylonians. Should Christians follow such practices (cf. Deuteronomy 12:29-31; 1 Corinthians 10:19-20)?

Would you like to know more than about proper positions to pray, but see what the Bible discusses relating to 28 aspects of prayer?

The fervent effectual prayer of the righteous avails much (James 5:16).

Would you like to learn more about improving your prayers?