

The Path 42

Prayer 5: Modes of Prayer

In our last lesson we covered the importance of praising God in our prayers. Below are a few other essential elements which should be included in our prayers.

- We must forgive others in our prayer. Mark 11:25-26 says:

“And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. {26} But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven _____ your trespasses.”

Early in prayer, we deal with sin. First, we forgive others and ask God’s forgiveness for their sins committed against us, and then:

- We ask His forgiveness for our own sins. David asked God to search his heart for any unconfessed sin (Psalm 139:23-24):

“Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any _____ way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”

The old trains, running in early America across wilderness lines, had a cow-catcher on the front of the engine. This served to push animals or limbs from the track, permitting the train to follow through on the tracks. Forgiveness is our cow-catcher in prayer. It clears the way for powerful praying. Do not attempt to pray without it. As you pray for forgiveness, you must also confess any wrongdoing to God and ask His forgiveness. A person unwilling to confess sins will never know the joy of prayer.

- A third aspect of our prayers is petitioning. Petitioning is making a request of God for the things and the provisions that we need. God encourages us to ask for that which we need. James 4:2-3 says:

“... Ye have not, because ye _____ not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss...”

We can feel confident in praying for our own personal needs because Jesus wants us to do so. Jesus taught His disciples to include petitioning in prayer. (Matthew 6:11)

“_____ us this day our daily bread.”

Jesus included the above request in “The Lord’s Prayer”: the model that He gave His disciples exemplifying what elements to include in prayer.

- A fourth element in prayer is interceding.

We must learn to involve ourselves in praying for our lost and dying world, and for the needs of Christians. God is counting on us to pray for those around us. Around us are people with desperate needs. Intercession is praying for those people and especially for the unsaved. It is the most intense form of prayer.

Intercession is a crying out of the heart for others. Intercession is working with God in the job of redeeming others. Intercession is praying for people. We must work harder in intercessory prayer than we work in any other area of prayer. God is counting on His church to pray for people the prayer that will make a difference.

Author Andrew Murray says, “God’s intense longing to bless seems in some sense to be graciously limited by His dependence on our intercessory prayers. God regards intercession as the highest expression of His people’s readiness to receive and yield themselves wholly to the working of His almighty power.”

- Pray the Word

When we pray the Word, we read the Word aloud. We pray the exact words of the scriptures. We may spend part of the time reading the Word to ourselves, then praying the words that we

have read. The Bible reveals the will of God for mankind. When we pray the Word, we are praying the will of God. Personalize the words to fit you, and pray directly from the Word of God.

- Thanksgiving: In praise, we exalt the virtues of God. In thanksgiving, we express thanks for the specific things He has done in our lives. Although thanksgiving should be sprinkled throughout our prayers, we need to plan to spend a special period in thanking God out loud for all things in our lives. We do not give thanks for all things; however, we give thanks in all things. 1 Thessalonians 5:18 says:

“In every thing give _____: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.”

We are encouraged to give God thanks during prayer. Philippians 4:6 says:

“Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with _____ let your requests be made known unto God.”

We must not box ourselves in by these modes of prayer. We should never feel so structured by this prayer method that we think we must put ten minutes into each aspect of prayer. Use these modes of prayer as a general guideline in prayer. Allow the Spirit to lead. Intercession, for example, may take longer than one of the other aspects of prayer. Therefore, we will allow more time for some things and less for others. It would not be unusual to spend an entire hour in praise or interceding for others as the Spirit directs.

By using this prayer system, prayer will become easier and more meaningful for us. However, when we begin a personal prayer program in our lives, the enemy of prayer, Satan, will begin a spiritual attack against us. Satan cares little about those who talk about prayer, but he unleashes his power against those who actually begin to do it. We must be firm in our commitment to pray. We must let nothing hold us back.

Writer Samuel Chadwick sums up the importance of prayer with this statement: “The one concern of the devil is to keep Christians from praying. He fears nothing from prayerless studies, prayerless work, prayerless religion. He laughs at our toil, mocks at our wisdom, but trembles when we pray.”



The way to learn to pray, is to pray. The words of prayer advocate, S.D. Gordon, contain a conviction that every apostolic should have and hold: “The greatest thing anyone can do for God and man is pray. It is not the only thing, but it is the chief thing. The greatest people on earth pray. I do not mean those who talk about prayer, nor ye those who can explain about prayer; but I mean those people who take time to pray.”

Discussion:

- 1. Why should we forgive others and then ask for forgiveness ourselves toward the beginning of our prayer time?**
- 2. Why do you think that God wants us to petition Him for our needs?**
- 3. What is “interceding” in prayer? Have you experienced a deep need to pray for others?**
- 4. Have you ever tried praying the Word? What benefits did you receive from doing so?**
- 5. Why is “thanksgiving” an important mode of prayer?**
- 6. Why is it true: “The way to learn to pray, is to pray?”**