

PRAYER

Do You Know What Prayer Is ... and How to Pray?

By Dr. Frederick K.C. Price

Pastor of Crenshaw Christian Center

Los Angeles, California

Most people, and this means Christians, do not even know what prayer really is and why it was instituted, so, of course, they do not know there is a right way and a wrong way to pray. Nor do they know there are different prayers for different circumstances. It is no wonder they never get their prayers answered!

Prayer is a means of communication and contact with your heavenly Father. Combined with faith in God's Word, prayer is a channel through which and by which His power can be released to meet our needs, allowing Him to get involved in our circumstances.

Prayer is not a Russian Roulette game that you play whereby sometimes you "hit it" (get answers) and sometimes you do not. You should be getting answers to every prayer you pray if you are praying correctly.

Although many Christians believe they know how to pray, there is a real lack of understanding about the operation of prayer, and therefore God is being falsely accused of things He had nothing to do with.

If you do not know how to do something, you will certainly not gain the benefits of having done it. Sometimes you can think you are doing something right and end up finding out you have been doing it in the wrong way.

Now God does not hear your prayer because you cry, whine, beg, or because you are on your knees, nor because you are sincere. He does not even hear you because you are in a church building. God hears your prayer because you pray in line with His Word.

For years I did not think God heard me if I did not get on my knees and have my hands folded and my eyes closed. I saw other people do that and I thought that was the proper way to pray. But God does not hear you because of your posture, nor because of how long your prayer is. You can pray standing on one foot and God will hear you! We have been locked into a lot of things because of tradition, not because we found those things in the Word of God.

There is a common consensus that God can do whatever He wants to do, but that is not exactly correct. He can do anything He good well pleases from the standpoint of having ability - because He is God. However, based upon the way He has designed this system to work - the world, man, the planet, the universe - He has built into it certain laws that govern and control it. So, in that sense, He cannot do anything that violates that law that He has set in motion. If He does, He is violating Himself and it means His law is no good. If His law is no good, He is no good.

Now this is the shocker! But God has to be given permission to work in this earth realm on behalf of man. And we give Him permission through prayer! You may say that is ridiculous, but it is true. And the reason why can be found in Genesis 1:26:

"And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness:and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth."

Let me give you this illustration: Let us say I have this beautiful gold watch and I decide to give it to another man. If I give it to him, whose watch is it now? And who no longer has it? It is now the man's watch, and he has a right to do whatever he wants to do with it. Now if I want to borrow it, I would need permission from that man. Then and only then could I wear it - and only because I have his permission.

What does dominion mean? It means "control, rule, reign, authority, possession." Yes! You are in control! So, if man has control, who no longer has it? God.

I know that sounds awesome, but it is true. He did not say, "Let us share dominion with man." He said, "Let them (man) have dominion." Where is the dominion? Over everything that is in the earth. If man has dominion, then God does not; and God can not come and wear my watch, so to speak, unless I let Him by permission - through prayer.

Do you honestly think God has this world messed up the way it is? The earth is messed up because of us. We have been given control!

When He said give them dominion, and so forth, He did it through a representative, and the representative was Adam, and his wife, Eve. But a "con man" named Lucifer (commonly known as Satan or the devil) came along and talked this woman, Eve, into eating the forbidden fruit. Then the woman gave some to her stupid, dumb husband.

The woman did not have the authority; Adam did. He used the ploy of getting to the woman to get to Adam. And when Adam sinned by disobedience, he gave the watch, so to speak (remember my illustration), to the devil. So, it is no longer Adam's. Adam no longer has dominion, but the one that he gave it to has dominion - and that is the devil. The Bible says he is the god of this world. He is not the God of all the ages, but he is the god of this world. He is in control of the world system. That is why the world is so messed up.

When God gave Adam dominion, that meant God no longer had dominion. So, God cannot do anything in this earth unless we let Him. And the way we let Him or give Him permission is through prayer.

How does God have permission? Because Adam represented all mankind. But Adam did it in a negative way. Then God sent the "last Adam" - Jesus Christ. Why is Jesus called the "last Adam"? Because He is a representative person and He acted on behalf of mankind. Now every man who accepts Jesus, accepts what Jesus did, and accepts God's plan and accepts God's Fatherhood; then he becomes a son of God and has a right to everything that God has created, because He originally created it for Adam.

How do we get God present in the circumstances of our life? Through prayer and faith working in conjunction with each other. When we invite Him into our situation through prayer and faith, we give Him the opportunity and the permission once again to get involved in this earth realm on our behalf.

I went through four different denominations over a 17-year period, and I never heard any such thing as I have just told you! Nor did I hear anything about how to pray, nor the fact that there are different kinds of prayer. They just said pray. In fact, what they would say is pray harder. I did not even really know how to pray, let alone pray harder. How do you pray harder when you do not know how to pray?

I thought you just beg God, and if you do it long enough, maybe He will give you what you ask for. But He does not work that way.

I do not care how sincere you are or how big your need is, God does not respond to your need; He responds to His Word through prayer and faith. Your need will get His attention, but He does not move on the basis of your need.

There are certain Biblical rules and principles regarding prayer, but some people act like they have spiritual infantile paralysis! They cannot comprehend spiritual things, yet they operate in rules and principles in their daily lives. We are precise when it comes to anything we call worldly, but when it comes to spiritual things dealing with God, we want to argue, fuss and fight!

I used to think praying was praying. But I found out there are different kinds of prayer for different kinds of circumstances, and each kind of prayer has its own spiritual rules that govern it. You have to know the rule that governs the kind of prayer you are using or it will not work!

Illustration: Football, baseball, basketball, tennis, golf, field and track are all classified as sports. But you cannot play baseball with track and field rules. And you cannot play tennis with basketball rules. Different rules govern the games. In tennis, you do not shoot baskets, you hit a ball back and forth across the net.

Think now of prayer under one classification: "sports prayer": there is football prayer, baseball prayer, basketball prayer, tennis prayer, golf prayer, and field and track prayer. Just as there are different rules that govern golf and tennis, there are spiritual rules that govern different kinds of praying. Let me present them to you:

1. Prayer of Agreement. This involves more than one person getting into agreement in prayer about one particular thing they are believing God for.

Matthew 18:19 gives the rule that governs that kind of prayer. It says, "...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."

According to the scripture, it is a prayer for people who live on earth! And it says they have to ask. And they have to be in agreement in asking it. She cannot ask for a Lincoln Town Car when he is asking for a Corvette. They must agree or it will not work!

This is one of the greatest ways for a husband and wife to pray. Because if anybody ought to be in agreement, it ought to be the husband and wife.

2. Prayer of Faith Petition Prayer. Mark 11:24 is the scripture that governs this prayer. This prayer is a petition to God for you. "Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them."

Notice that in this prayer, it is all about you. Some people want to pray this on somebody else - like their husband or wife. "I am believing my husband gets filled with the Holy Ghost and will speak with other tongues." Now the husband is totally opposed to this and he has told her so. He does not want anything to do with those tongue-talkers, but his wife is very zealous. She wants him filled and speaking according to the Bible. You cannot do that! Not and use this scripture, because the rule to this "basketball prayer" game - not "tennis prayer" - says "Therefore I say unto you!..."

Matthew 21:21 and 22 actually parallels Mark 11:24 in regard to the prayer of faith/petition prayer. Verse 22 says, "And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." Jesus did not say that you would receive something that resembled what you prayed for. No! He said

whatever you ask, you get that. He did not say see that you receive them. He did not say understand that you receive them. And He certainly did not say, feel like you receive them. He said, believe it.

You say, "How can I believe that I am healed when my body still feels like it is sick?" Simple. Are you gainfully employed? I dare say that 95 percent of all jobs do not give you any money until after you have worked 40 hours.

And when a relative asks, you are not ashamed to say, "I got a job and I am going to get paid on Friday." How can you say you are going to get paid \$250 per week when you have not seen the money? "Yes, but Brother Price, the man told me that he was going to pay me." Well, I am here to tell you that the Man said if you believe, you receive it; you will have it. It is the same principle.

You do not really know if your employer has the money in the bank to pay you at the end of 40 hours, but you are trusting in his word. Why can not you give God equal time?

When you operate in the prayer of faith, there is no sight - meaning no physical senses involved. And that is where many people miss it because they are bound by their senses "I do not feel like it." Or "I do not understand it," etc.

But Hebrews 11:1 says, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." If you see it, you do not need any faith, because faith is the evidence of things not seen.

What is evidence or proof? Evidence or proof takes the place of the thing that it is the evidence or proof of until the thing gets there. Once that thing arrives, you do not need any more evidence of it, because you now have it. If faith is my evidence of things not seen, that means that I cannot look to anything in the sense realm to validate my faith. I have to look to a higher source, which is the Word of God. My faith is based on the Word of God, which changes not, but your feelings, your experiences, and emotions change. Everything changes, but the Word of God remains the same.

You cannot pray effectively or intelligently without knowing the will of God. And we know the will of God by knowing the word of God - because God's will is revealed in God's Word.

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

If you do not know God's will, then you have not been reading the Bible, because that is how He makes His will available to you.

Now if you have confidence that you have prayed according to God's will, you should be confident that He heard you, and therefore, you should not pray for the same thing a second time, because that is like saying you did not get it the first time.

Here is a good example of how you can pray the Prayer of Faith Petition Prayer, using Mark 11:24 as your rule:

Monday morning: You get up and say, "heavenly Father, You said in Your Word 'What things soever I desire I can have.' I desire a new pair of shoes. In the name of Jesus, I now pray and I believe that I receive a pair of new shoes. You said when I pray to believe I receive. I now believe that I receive a pair of brand new shoes, and now, You said I shall have it. I want to thank You. I believe that I now receive it.

Tuesday morning: The shoes have not come, so in your prayer you say, "Father, I just want to remind You and thank You that I believe that I received my shoes on Monday. I believe that I have them and I thank You for them."

Wednesday morning: "Father, I thank You and praise You. I believe I received my shoes on Monday. I want to thank You. I believe that I have them. I am not 'going to get' them. I believe that I have them by faith."

Thursday - Sunday: Pray the same prayer: "Father, I want to thank You. I praise and glorify Your name, and I want to remind You that I believe that I received my shoes last Monday. I believe that I have them now and I thank You for them."

Monday morning: There is a knock on the door and the delivery man says, "Mr. Price, I have a pair of shoes for you - no charge, sign here." I sign for the package and I go before the Father and say, "Father, I want to thank You. I now have my shoes as a physical fact." That is the end of that prayer transaction. That is the way it works, no matter what it is - healing, a new job, a new car.

Start using your faith on the little things and build yourself up to the point where you can believe for the bigger things. It is a process; it is progressive growth, and as you continue to grow, it will work.

3. Prayer of Intercession. (Romans 8:26) This is when you pray for somebody else totally and completely: and when you pray for someone else (or some other things) without knowing what the circumstances and situations are.

There are two sides of intercession - one where we get in agreement about somebody or something and pray for them in English, telling God what we want. The other - the very high end of intercession - is where you may not even know who you are praying for. The Holy Spirit will place a strong urge in your spirit to pray for something or someone. Sometimes the Lord may even place someone before you and you will have a mini-vision and see someone, but you do not know what you are supposed to pray about or you do not know their problem or what they need. This is where you get into true intercession, you will not do this in your native language, because you will not know what to pray for. This is what Romans 8:26 is referring to.

4. The Prayer of Praise and Worship. It is a prayer between you and the Lord, and all you are doing is telling Him how much you love Him, just like you do your sweetheart. You are not asking Him for anything. You are sending up a sweet savor unto Him or adoration, appreciation and thanksgiving.
5. Prayer of Consecration and/or Dedication. This is a prayer whereby you place yourself in a position to be used of God. You have to use "If it be Thy will" in this type of prayer, because you cannot find God's will in the Bible.

Example: When the Lord called me to preach the Gospel, there was no scripture in the Bible that I could go to and find my name, designating the exact place I would go to minister. So I had to pray a prayer of consecration and dedication and say, "Lord, You have called me and I accept and acknowledge Your call upon my life. I am prepared to do whatever You want me to do. If it be Thy will that I go to Long Beach, California, to establish a ministry, I am willing to go - not my will, but Thy will be done." What you are doing is placing yourself in a position to be used of God and giving Him license and acknowledging His claim over your life.

This was the type of prayer that Jesus prayed before He went to the cross. In Jesus' case, it was going to cost Him His life - not only physically, but it was going to cost Him by being separated from the Father God, and He had never known separation.

But you never use a dedication and consecration prayer when you are trying to pay your bills. If you tack an if it be Thy will onto a petition prayer, you are praying in doubt. To do so would be to cancel out the prayer.

Now that I have shared with you what prayer is and how to do it, you need to know what to do with what you know how to do. In other words, you can know how to start up an automobile, but that does not mean you know what to do with it once it gets started!

If you will learn to apply the following ingredients, I can guarantee you on the authority of the Word of God that every prayer you pray will be answered. (I am dealing here with petition prayer, which is the prayer that has to do with you and the Father - just the two of you):

Ingredient #1: Decide what you want from God; then find the scripture that promises you that.

If you do not know what you want, that is exactly what you are going to get - nothing. And that is why some of you have not received anything - because you have never been specific.

Your foundation for prayer is the clearly revealed Word of God. If you are praying outside the will of God, the prayer is doomed before it leaves your mouth. You find out whether it is outside God's will by finding out what the Word of God says. Do not pray for something if you cannot find scripture that promises you that. You will have to use wisdom in searching the scripture, because you are not going to find in there a Cadillac or a new Rolls-Royce or a new house on the hill specifically stated.

When you have decided what you want from God and the scripture that promises you that, and you are standing on that scripture, be prepared for a fight. If you are not prepared for a fight, you are not prepared to pray, because Satan is going to contest every inch of ground that you try to reclaim.

Ingredient #2: Ask God for the things that you want, then believe that you have them. I did not say believe that you are "going to get them," but believe that you have them. That is present tense. It might not make sense, but we are not dealing with the senses, we are dealing with God's Word and with faith in His Word.

You must ask! There is no such thing as a silent or unspoken request. There is such a thing as silent in the sense that I might say something so softly and inaudibly as far as you are concerned that you will not verbally hear me say it, but I am still saying it. Even if I whisper - I am speaking.

Whether you hear me does not make any difference, as long as the main Man hears, and that is Who I am talking to. A whisper is not thinking, a whisper is talking - it is just not loud talking.

How did God create this world? The Bible says that God said, let there be, and behold there was. It did not say God thought. Nothing came into existence until after God said it. And nothing is coming to you until after you say it.

Ingredient #3: Let every thought and desire affirm that you have what you ask. Guard against and resist the negative thoughts Satan will try to intimidate you with. Do not accept anything other than what you have asked for.

Some people do not have much patience, but you have to be prepared to stand for 10,000 years, if it takes that long, for the manifestation of your answer.

Ingredient #4: Thoughts are governed by or controlled by observation, association and teaching. You need to stay away from all places and things that do not support your affirmation that God has answered your prayer. That means you might have to stay away from some churches, and from some Christian television and radio. I appreciate the wonderful things some men are doing, but you cannot listen to everything - not unless it affirms the fact that you have what you asked God for.

What affects your thinking will affect your talking, and what affects your talking will affect your faith, and what affects your faith will affect your life. Be careful what you read, and be careful who you associate with. You cannot afford to be around negative people. Love and pray for them from afar, but do not let them drag you down.

Never bring God's Word down to the level of human experience. Every experience must come up to God's Word. If the experience doesn't measure up to the level of God's Word, cast it out. Bring every thought into obedience to the Word of God. If you want to stay stable and consistent, you have to stay with the winner, the Word of God.

Ingredient #5: Think constantly on the promises on which you have based the answer to your prayer. (Proverbs 4:20)

If you take a steady diet of God's Word, it will keep you healthy. Do not think on the problem, think about the solution. Do not talk about the problem, talk about the solution. See yourself out of the problem. Base the solution on God's Word.

Ingredient #6: In your waking moments, think on the love, mercy, goodness and blessings of God, and it will boost your faith. You talk about a shot of heavenly adrenaline, it will shoot your faith right up to the top. Think about how good He is. Constantly praise Him for what He is doing in your life. The word says, "Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord (Psalm 150:6). It will keep your faith vibrant.

Ingredient #7: Make every word relative to what you have asked a statement of faith. (Romans 10:17) Make your word a statement of faith, rather than a statement of doubt and unbelief. God says you have enough faith so you say you have enough faith. Learn what God says about you in His Word.

In Christ by the power of His Spirit, you can finally find out who you are from the One Who created you. Come before God expecting to talk to the Father God and expecting that He will hear you and grant you the request that you ask Him when you make that request based on His Word. Make every statement a confession of faith, not a confession of doubt.

Titus 1:2: That scripture is telling us something very important. God cannot lie. If He cannot lie, then that means He can only tell the truth. If He can only tell the truth, when He tells me to pray and believe I receive and I shall have, bless God, it is on its way. I have it; it is mine!

You ought to know His will before you pray. If you do not, you do not have any business praying.

Remember, never put an if it be Thy will in a petition prayer or a prayer of agreement. You will be praying in doubt if you do. First find out His will, and what the covenant says about it, and pray the Word.

You can have a strong confidence in the fact that when God tells you to do something, you can count on it.

One reason many people have a difficult time believing the Word of God and standing on it with confidence, without any doubt, is because they are so used to not telling the truth, they do not believe anybody else can tell the truth, and that includes the Father God!

The reason I get all my prayers answered is because I pray the Word. I find out what He says about the need or desire I have which is consistent with a godly life and I just pray the Word. And the Bible says He confirms His Word with signs following. (Mark 16:20).

Since God is no respecter of person, and only confirms His Word, you, too, by praying correctly and living a godly life can receive an answer to every prayer you pray.