

# Prayer—Its Importance

Intro: Prayer is something that is important in the Christian's life. Yet, I sometimes wonder if we realize just how important. Do we pray like we should? If we realize its important, it might lead us to pray more.

## I. WE SEE THE IMPORTANCE IN THE LIFE OF JESUS.

### A. He is our example in all things.

1. We are to have His mind; Phi. 2:5 <sup>45</sup> Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:"
2. He is our example.
  - a. Gal. 4:19 <sup>19</sup> My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you,"
  - b. 1 Pet. 2:21 <sup>21</sup> For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:"
3. He should be our example in prayer also.

### B. Christ prayed often; before every major event in His life.

1. Associated with His baptism; Luke 3:21 <sup>21</sup> Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened,"
2. An example of many instances; Luke 5:16 <sup>16</sup> And he withdrew himself into the wilderness, and prayed."
3. Luke 6:12-13 <sup>12</sup> And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. <sup>13</sup> And when it was day, he called *unto him* his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles;"
  - a. Prior to choosing His 12 apostles.
  - b. He spent the entire night in prayer.
    - (1) When have we spent the whole night in prayer?
    - (2) Would we run out of things to say after a few minutes?
4. At the transfiguration; Luke 9:29 <sup>29</sup> And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment *was white and* glistening."
5. Luke 10:21 <sup>21</sup> In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight."
  - a. After the 70 return.
  - b. They reveal and rejoice with their power over the demons.
  - c. Jesus reminds them to rejoice instead that their names were written in heaven.
6. Raising Lazarus from the dead; John 11:41 <sup>41</sup> Then they took away the stone *from the place* where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up *his* eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me."
7. Prayed in behalf of Peter; Luke 22:31-34 <sup>31</sup> And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired *to have* you, that he may sift *you* as wheat: <sup>32</sup> But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren. <sup>33</sup> And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death. <sup>34</sup> And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me."
8. Prayed in connection with the supper He instituted; Mat. 26:26-29 <sup>26</sup> And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed *it*, and brake *it*, and gave *it* to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. <sup>27</sup> And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave *it* to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; <sup>28</sup> For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. <sup>29</sup> But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

9. Several in connection with His death upon the cross.
    - a. John 12:27-28 <sup>“27</sup> Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. <sup>28</sup> Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, *saying*, I have both glorified *it*, and will glorify *it* again.”
    - b. In the shadow of the cross; John 17
      - (1) He prayed for Himself; John 17:1-5
      - (2) He prayed for His apostles; John 17:6-19
      - (3) He prayed for all those who believe on Him through the apostles preaching; John 17:20-26
    - c. His three prayers in the garden of Gethsemane;
      - (1) Mat. 26:39-44 <sup>“39</sup> And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou *wilt*. <sup>40</sup> And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour? <sup>41</sup> Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed *is* willing, but the flesh *is* weak. <sup>42</sup> He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done. <sup>43</sup> And he came and found them asleep again: for their eyes were heavy. <sup>44</sup> And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words.”
      - (2) Luke 22:39-46 <sup>“39</sup> And he came out, and went, as he was wont, to the mount of Olives; and his disciples also followed him. <sup>40</sup> And when he was at the place, he said unto them, Pray that ye enter not into temptation. <sup>41</sup> And he was withdrawn from them about a stone’s cast, and kneeled down, and prayed, <sup>42</sup> Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done. <sup>43</sup> And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him. <sup>44</sup> And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground. <sup>45</sup> And when he rose up from prayer, and was come to his disciples, he found them sleeping for sorrow, <sup>46</sup> And said unto them, Why sleep ye? rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.”
  10. While on the cross.
    - a. His first words; Luke 23:34 <sup>“34</sup> Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.”
    - b. Mat. 27:46 <sup>“46</sup> And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”
    - c. At the end of the ordeal; Luke 23:46 <sup>“46</sup> And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost.”
- C. If Christ, being Deity, recognized the importance of prayer, then how important should it be in our lives?**

## II. ITS IMPORTANCE SEEN IN THE TEACHINGS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

- A. In the sermon on the mount; Mat. 7:7-11** <sup>“7</sup> Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: <sup>8</sup> For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. <sup>9</sup> Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? <sup>10</sup> Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? <sup>11</sup> If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?”
- B. Continue in prayer.**
  1. Acts 2:42 <sup>“42</sup> And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.”
  2. Rom. 12:12 <sup>“12</sup> Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer;”
    - a. Romans 12 is a summation of Christianity.
    - b. Be ready to pray at a moment’s notice.

3. 1 The. 5:17 “<sup>17</sup>Pray without ceasing.”

**C. In connection with the Christian’s armor**

1. Eph. 6:10-18 “<sup>10</sup>Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. <sup>11</sup>Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. <sup>12</sup>For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*. <sup>13</sup>Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. <sup>14</sup>Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; <sup>15</sup>And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; <sup>16</sup>Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. <sup>17</sup>And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: <sup>18</sup>Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;”
2. Eph. 6:18 “<sup>18</sup>Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;”

**D. With Thanksgiving**

1. Phi. 4:6 “<sup>6</sup>Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.”
  - a. Don’t worry.
  - b. Pray
  - c. With thanksgiving
2. Col. 4:2 “<sup>2</sup>Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving;”

- E. Male pray in every place; 1 Tim. 2:8** “<sup>8</sup>I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.”

### III. ITS IMPORTANCE IS SEEN IN WHAT IT ACCOMPLISHES.

**A. God hears prayer.**

1. Psa. 65:2 “<sup>2</sup>O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come.”
2. 1 John 5:14 “<sup>14</sup>And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:”

**B. Prayer accomplishes much.**

1. Jam. 5:16 “<sup>16</sup>Confess *your* faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”
2. 1 John 3:22 “<sup>22</sup>And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.”
3. 1 John 5:15 “<sup>15</sup>And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.”
4. Examples:
  - a. Elijah;
    - (1) Jam. 5:17-18 “<sup>17</sup>Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. <sup>18</sup>And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.”
      - (a) 1 Kings 17-18
      - (b) Not only prayer concerning the rain, but also when he prayed in the contest with the prophets of Baal.
    - (2) Raising the widow’s son; 1 Kings 17
  - b. Moses
    - (1) During the plagues.
    - (2) Deliverance at the Red Sea; Exo. 14
    - (3) For Miriam’s leprosy; Num. 12

- (4) Several times for the people.
- (5) Exo. 33:13, 17 “
- c. Hanna’s prayer for a man-child; 1 Sam. 1
- d. Solomon asked for and received wisdom; 1 Kings 3
- e. Daniel for the interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream; Dan. 2.
- f. Zacharias (John’s father) for a son; Luke 1
- g. Peter prayer for Dorcus to be restored; Acts 9
- h. Disciples praying for Peter; Acts 12

**C. What prayer accomplishes:**

1. It gives strength and comfort.
  - a. Even atheist pray in time of trouble for the comfort it gives.
    - (1) In World War II, they said there were no atheist in foxholes.
    - (2) The famous atheist, Robert Ingersoll when his brother died:
      - (a) Prayed: “Oh God in heaven, if there is a God in heaven; bless this soul of my brother, if he has a soul..”
      - (b) He prayed because of the strength and comfort prayer gives.
  - b. That strength and comfort will come to one who is not qualified to pray even as to one who is qualified.
2. Prayer will stop sin; likewise, sin will stop prayer.
3. Prayer will bring us closer:
  - a. To God.
  - b. To spiritual things.
  - c. For those things for which we are praying.
    - (1) Family
    - (2) Friends
    - (3) Rulers
    - (4) Those who are lost
4. It will alter what would be.
  - a. We might not know everything about this: how, when, etc.?
  - b. We know it is not miraculous.
    - (1) We pray for the sick:
      - (a) God brings about their healing.
      - (b) Not miraculous but through natural means.
    - (2) We pray for rulers.
      - (a) 1 Tim. 2:1-2 “<sup>1</sup> I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, *and* giving of thanks, be made for all men; <sup>2</sup> For kings, and *for* all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.”
      - (b) God will raise up and destroy rulers to effect His purposes.
      - (c) Dan. 4:25 “<sup>25</sup> That they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and they shall wet thee with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over thee, till thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.”
  - c. All these things (and others) based upon the prayers of the saints.

**Conclusion:** Prayer is important in the life of the Christian, even as it was in the life of our perfect example, Jesus the Christ.