

Melva's Corner



From Impotency To Power!

Part II

June 25, 2007

(Rom. 8:26)

Central Truth: "To me, real prayer is simply communicating with God, inviting Him to talk to you as you talk to Him. There is more to prayer, but this is basic to true prayer."

As we continue our study of prayer we have learned through the years that the average Christian does not know how to pray. A friend of mine who has been a Christian for more than fifty years told me, "I never pray in public, and I know very little about prayer or how to pray." Because so many Christians - new and old alike - know so little about prayer, I wish to share with you in the next week or so some simple, basic truths and answer some vital questions about prayer. We will start with the first two:

1. What is Prayer?
2. Who Can Pray?
3. Why Are You to Pray?
4. To Whom Do You Pray?
5. When Should You Pray?
6. What Should Be Included in Prayer?

What Is Prayer?

Someone has said, "Prayer is a dialogue between two people who love each other - God and man." Simply put, prayer is communicating with God. Every Christian has a direct line of communication with God, available at all times. But most Christians never lift the phone off the hook and often forget the line exists until an emergency arises.

Prayer is much more than words, however. It is an expression of the heart towards God. It is an experience, a relationship, not an activity.

As a child of God you are invited to come boldly before His throne. "Since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God," Paul writes, "let us . . . then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need."

Because the one to whom you pray is the King of kings and the Lord of lords, the Creator of heaven and earth, you come into His presence with reverence. But He is also your loving heavenly Father who cares for you and delights in having fellowship with you. Therefore, you can enter into His presence with a relaxed joyful heart, knowing God loves you more than anyone else has ever loved you or will ever love you.

To me, real prayer is simply communicating with God, inviting Him to talk to you as you talk to Him. There is more to prayer, but this is basic to true prayer.

Who can pray?

Anyone can pray. However, only those who walk in faith and

obedience to Christ can expect to receive answers to their prayers. On the eve of His crucifixion, Jesus promised to those who belong to Him, "You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it."

Man instinctively prays whenever He is faced with tragedy, heartache, sorrow or danger - even if only to false gods made of wood, stone, or His own fallen imagination.

But serious danger exists in this. People always assimilate the moral character of the objects they worship. Those who worship gods of lust, for example, become morally degenerate. Those who pray to gods of blood, gore and war, become militaristic, ruthless and sadistic. Those who bow to the god of materialism become greedy and self-centered. Prayer to anything or anyone apart from God through our Lord Jesus Christ is forbidden. God's Word declares:

Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.

Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts...

Paul writes that "anyone who comes to Him (God) must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him." By coming to Christ and worshipping Him, you are changed into His image:

We, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into His likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

This explains the scriptural emphasis on the worship of and prayer to the only true righteous, Holy and loving God.

According to the Scriptures, "There is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all men..." Jesus Himself is the only way to God. He says, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

Does this sound too exclusive? No. Jesus Christ came to die for all people in all lands. He promises rest for all who are weary and heavy-laden. Many people who have ignored God for a lifetime come to a difficult situation near the end of life and are too embarrassed to turn to Him in prayer. They reason, "I've ignored God all my life - it's too late now."

Do not feel this way. God listens to the prayer of any truly repentant individual. He proved His love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still in our sins. There is nothing that you or I can do that will cause God to stop loving us.

The fact still remains, however, that you cannot expect God to answer your prayers unless you come to Him in the name and authority of the Lord Jesus as your only mediator and confess your sins and receive Him as your Savior and Lord.

You must also come with a clean heart. The psalmist says, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear: Therefore, you cannot expect God to answer your prayers if there is any

unconfessed known sin in your life. Just as the omission of one ingredient in a cake recipe can result in failure, so the omission of confessing any known sin can result in prayer failure.

One of the most frequent hindrances to prayer is an unforgiving spirit. Jesus said, "When you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive Him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins." In our Lord's prayer, the words "give" and "forgive" occur in the same context: "Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors." No prayer except the prayer of confession can be answered by God unless it comes from a heart that is free of unforgiveness and bitterness.

The well-worn compromise, "Well, I can forgive, but I can't forget," only defeats your prayers. What if that were God's attitude? His love has prompted a wonderful forgetfulness in which He has pledged to put all of your sins behind His back and remember them against you no more. You and I must come to God with a forgiving heart if we are to receive the Christian's legacy of power in prayer.

Those who pray in faith can pray. You must also have a believing heart if your prayers are to be answered. The same Lord who says, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me" and, "Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" also says, "You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it" and, "If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer" and, "According to your faith will it be done to you."

Scriptural References:

"In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express" (Romans. 8:26).