

# Basic Principles of Prayer

By Jeff Rath May 2010

One of the foundational principles of Christianity is prayer. All Christians believe they should pray. But how should Christians pray? And how did Jesus Christ teach his followers to pray?

John 14:13 And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

Philippians 2:10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth;

God wants us to use the name of Jesus Christ in prayer. Because of what Jesus Christ accomplished that name has power. When we pray in the name of Jesus Christ then we have the same power and authority that Jesus Christ had. It is as if Jesus Christ himself spoke himself. It is in the name of Jesus Christ that the sick are healed, and it is the name of Jesus Christ that prayers get results.

John 16:23 And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give *it* you.

John 16:24 Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.

While Jesus Christ was on the earth his followers looked to him and asked him about many things. But we see here that Jesus Christ taught his followers to look to God and to ask God in the name of Jesus Christ. In our day we don't ask Jesus questions or pray to Jesus. We look to God our father and pray to God our father in the name of Jesus Christ.

Mark 11:24 Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive *them*, and ye shall have *them*.

Another principle is we need to believe to receive when we pray. Without believing prayer is ineffective. It says that when we believe then we receive.

Matthew 6:7 But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen *do*: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.

This is an example of God's people using memorized prayers like those in pagan religions. Repeating a memorized prayer over and over does not get results. God does not want us to pray that way. This memorized repeated prayer is a practical error that has crept into the Christian Church due to the lack of adhering to the simple doctrine written in the Word of God.

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Matthew 6:8 Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.

God already knows our needs before we pray for them. Jesus Christ laid out some simple easy to follow principles in what is quite often called “The Lord’s Prayer”. The following prayer is for the most part memorized and recited word for word over and over without understanding. Or it is ignored. Both are practical errors.

Matthew 6:9 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

Here Jesus Christ is beginning to instruct his followers on how to properly pray. Notice that Jesus Christ first teaches them to pray “after this manner”. He did not say memorize this and repeat it word for word without understanding! The next point is when we pray we address God as “Father”. We do not pray to Mary, or Jesus we pray to God our Father only. The next point is we respect God.

Matthew 6:10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as *it is* in heaven.

The next principle is we must pray within God’s will. If you pray for something that is outside of God’s will then God cannot answer that prayer. If I pray to become a better bank robber then that prayer will not be answered. Also some Christians don’t know or don’t believe that healing is available or they don’t think it is God’s will for their basic needs to be met. Many Christians believe that God is testing them with sickness and poverty. So some Christian’s will pray God if it be your will then meet my need. We as Christians need to read the Bible and see that our Father knows our needs before we pray and that he wants to meet those needs and give us health and prosperity.

3 John 1:2 Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.

Matthew 6:11 Give us this day our daily bread.

The first word in that verse is “give”. Give is a command. Jesus Christ is teaching his followers to demand that God meet their needs. Bread is a figure of speech that represents our needs for food, shelter, finances, clothing and health. So we pray to our heavenly Father and we say “ Give me what I need today”. It is much like going into a bank with a check and demanding full payment. We don’t go to the teller and say if it be your will could you give me some money for this check, of course not, we boldly go to the teller and demand full payment. We must do the same when we pray. God wants us to speak with authority. God does not desire wimpy prayers, He wants us to take ownership of the prayer and see it through to the end. We have the same power that Jesus Christ had and God wants us to operate that power and get results.

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John 14:12 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater *works* than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.

John 14:13 And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

Hebrews 4:16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

Matthew 7:28 And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine:

Matthew 7:29 For he taught them as *one* having authority, and not as the scribes.

We must have forgiveness to get prayers answered. Our forgiveness is no longer conditionally based on whether or not we forgive others. Our forgiveness is based on what Jesus Christ did for us. Because of Jesus Christ we are forgiven and we continue to be forgiven.

Matthew 6:12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

Ephesians 1:7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

Ephesians 4:32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

The next principle is we pray to be lead in a good way, and finally we acknowledge God's kingdom and power. Also we should notice that the verbs in this prayer are commands. We pray Father give me what I need. Lead me in a good way. Forgive my sins. And we also acknowledge that our Father is almighty and has power.

Matthew 6:13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

God Wants us to pray that His Word has free course. That nothing holds back or hinders the movement of the Word, and we are to pray for laborers to help move the Word.

2 Thessalonians 3:1 Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have *free* course, and be glorified, even as *it is* with you:

Matthew 9:36 But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.

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Matthew 9:37 Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly *is* plenteous, but the labourers *are* few;

Matthew 9:38 Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.

Following these simple principles we can learn to pray boldly and get better results. It is time to end the weak ineffective prayers that Christians have been praying for years. It is God's will for us to pray in the name of Jesus Christ and believe to receive. We do not recite memorized prayers over and over like the heathens and pagans do. We acknowledge that God is our father and give him great respect. We pray according to God's will. We find a promise in God's Word that we need and in prayer we demand full payment on that promise. We pray "Father give me what I need today." We go boldly before God's throne when we pray. We have confidence and believing when we pray, and we are not fearful and timid. We know we are forgiven and we are forgiving to others when we pray, and finally we pray that our Father leads us in a good way and that He delivers us from evil. This is how Christians should pray. This is how Jesus Christ taught his followers to pray.

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