

God Centered Prayer

Lesson One: Prayer is an Opportunity to Commune with God!

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Introduction: Overcoming “Me-Centered Prayer.”

- A. Ironically, many people have taken their focus off of God in prayer.
 - 1. Some view prayer as a way to exalt oneself (**Luke 18:9-12**) and prove one’s own religious piety or “spirituality” to others (**Mat. 6:5**).
 - 2. Many think of prayer as presenting a list of wishes, as if God was like Santa Claus who will grant our desires if we are “good enough” (**Jas. 4:3**).
 - 3. Many more consider prayer as a means to feel good, as a “psychological fix”, equating emotional bliss with closeness with God (**cf. James 4:8-10**).
 - 4. There is a danger of prayer becoming ritualized in which we habitually pray with our lips, yet our hearts are far away from God (**Mat. 15:8**).
- B. For prayer to be prayer, our main focus must be upon God.
 - 1. Our hearts to be centered on “*Our Father who art in Heaven*” (**Mt 6:9**).
 - 2. Prayer requires setting our minds upon God who is above (**Col. 3:2**).
 - 3. The blessedness of prayer comes only as we believe that “God is” – acknowledging the reality and presence of the living God (**Heb. 11:6**).

I. Approaching the Throne of God.

- A. God’s sits on His holy throne in Heaven (**Ps. 11:4; 47:8; 103:19; Isa. 66:1**).
 - 1. God is holy and will not associate with the unholy (**Isa. 6:1-7**).
 - 2. “*Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Thy throne*” (**Ps. 89:14**). Thus, every sinner will be judged accordingly (**Rom. 3:23; 6:23**).
 - 3. What chance then do we have to approach the Lord Almighty!?!
- B. In Christ, we can have access to God!
 - 1. Only those in Christ, after having obeyed the gospel (**Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Gal. 3:27**), have access to the throne of God (**Eph. 2:18; 3:12**).
 - 2. In Christ, we are *privileged* to approach God’s throne! (**Heb. 4:14-16**).
 - 3. Confidently, we may draw near to the most holy God (**Heb. 10:19-22**).
 - 4. As we continue to “walk in the light”, we will have fellowship with God and the continued privilege to approach God’s throne (**1 John 1:5-10**).

II. The God of Heaven Listens to Us!

- A. It is a great honor for God our King to listen to us!
 - 1. As it is a privilege to enter the presence of a king and gain his hearing (**Est. 4:11**), much more so is it to enter the presence of the King of kings! (**Ps. 47:2; 95:3; Mal. 1:14b; 1 Tim 6:15; Rev 17:14; 19:16**)
 - 2. God in Heaven actually *listens* to our prayers! (**Ps. 6:9; 65:2**).
- B. God listens to the prayers of the righteous.
 - 1. God does not listen to the sinner’s prayer, to those who practice wickedness (**1 Pet. 3:12; Prov. 1:28-29; 15:8, 29; Jn. 9:31; Isa. 1:15-16**).
 - 2. The ears attend to the prayers of the righteous *only* (**1 Pet. 3:12**).
 - a. In Christ, we can be righteous (**2 Cor. 5:21**); to remain in Christ and maintain our righteousness, we must be faithful (**Rom. 5:1**).
 - 3. However, for the lost sinner who is seeking God and His truth, his prayers are heard by God (**e.g., Acts 10:1-4**).

- C. We can call upon God for help and He will listen to our plea.
 - 1. God answers us when we call Him (**Ps. 4:1, 3**).
 - 2. Our cry for help in prayer reaches God's ears (**Ps. 18:6; 28:1-2, 6-7**).
 - 3. Anytime we may call upon God, He hears our voices (**Ps. 55:16-17**).
 - 4. In the day of trouble, God is *always* ready to help (**Ps. 86:5-7; 102:2**).
 - 5. Christians should call upon the Lord *as long as they live!* (**Ps. 116:2**).
 - 6. Though God's throne is in heaven (**Ps. 11:4**), God is near to all who call upon Him in truth (**Ps. 145:18**).

III. Prayer is a Special Time with God.

- A. "*When shall I come and appear before God?*" (**Ps. 42:1-5**).
 - 1. Prayer is set apart as a special occasion when we "*appear before God.*"
 - 2. Can you relate to the Psalmist's words? How deep is your desire to spend time with God in prayer? Does your soul *long* for His presence?
 - 3. Our desire for prayer reflects the love we have for God (**Luke 10:27**).
 - 4. The Lord invites: "*Seek My face*" – He wants us to take the time to talk to Him in prayer! (**Ps. 27:7-9**).
- B. Spiritual fulfillment in God.
 - 1. The purpose for which God created us was to seek Him and find Him (**Acts 17:24-28**), to have a *meaningful* relationship with Him.
 - 2. Without God, we are incomplete, lacking true happiness in life.
 - 3. Prayer is an opportunity to draw near to the presence of God resulting in real joy with gladness of heart (**Ps. 4:6-7; 21:6**).

IV. Wonderful Blessings Come from Communion with God in Prayer!

- A. Prayer is a place of needed refuge.
 - 1. Without prayer, the world, like thorns, will "choke the life out of us" in which we become spiritually unfruitful (**Mark 4:18-19**).
 - 2. Prayer is a needed escape from the world where we can be at peace and hand over all our worries to God who cares for us (**Phil. 4:6-7; 1 Pet. 5:7**).
 - 3. When life is chaotic or troublesome or when dangers threaten, God is our refuge, a safe haven of protection (**Ps. 18:1-6; cf. Ps. 7:1; 16:1; 34:8**).
- B. Prayer strengthens and renews us spiritually.
 - 1. God gives strength to our hearts and souls (**Ps. 73:26-28; 138:3**).
 - 2. Prayer is essential to remain "*strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might*" (**Eph. 6:10, 18**).
 - 3. Prayer gives us strength to endure the severest of trials (**Lk. 21:34-36**).
 - 4. The Christian who ceases to pray (**1 Thes. 5:17**) will become weak spiritually and will eventually fall away from God (**cf. Heb. 3:12**).
- C. Prayer brings deliverance (**Ps. 31:1-5**).
 - 1. God is our help and deliverer from evil doers and affliction (**Ps. 70**).
 - 2. When trouble is overwhelming and the strength of persecutors seem too much, God hears our cries in prayer and delivers us! (**Ps. 142**).
 - 3. Deliverance from evil, the ability to overcome temptation (**Mat. 6:13**).
 - 4. Deliverance from sins or forgiveness (**Ps. 25:17-18; 79:8-9; 1 Jn. 1:9**).

Conclusion: Prayer is absolutely essential to Our Relationship with God. Take Time to Pray to the Lord Each Day and You Will Be Blessed!