

## **What Every Christian Ought to Know - Adrian Rogers**

### **How to Pray (with Power) - Chapter 11**

In Matthew 6:9-13, Matthew records how Jesus showed His disciples how to pray. Before He prays, He doesn't say, "Repeat after me" or "Pray this prayer". He says, "*Pray, then, in this way*".

Prayer is communication with God and it is personal. It is from the heart and not the head. It should not be recited. It should not be repeating a prepared prayer unless it is telling God what you need from your heart and you want to get the words correct. Such as praying in front of people and not wanting your nervousness to cause you to misspeak.

Prayers like "God is great. God is good. Let us thank Him for this food." This prayer is recited to get children accustomed to praying or thanking God for our many blessings, such as food. But as Paul says in 1 Corinthians 13:11, we are to put off childish ways as we mature as Christians.

There may be times when your needs match those that Jesus prayed about and in the Lord's prayer then it would be okay to repeat it but it should match what is in your heart.

How many times have you said the Pledge of Allegiance mindlessly without saying it from your heart? That is NOT what God wants. I believe that prayer can take you right to the throne room of God and should be treated that way.

### **Learning to Pray**

The Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6 was given to His disciples as a model prayer. It is a model of a prayer from the Son of God to His Heavenly Father. It is from a child to His father.

John 1:12 (NLT) says “*But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God.*” A conversation with someone that you don’t believe exists makes no sense. You can only be a “child of God” if you believe that God is real and truly believe that He can supply your needs.

Some believe that God is the Heavenly Father for everyone because He created them but He does not claim them as His children unless we are willing to claim Him by rebirth.

In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus cries out to God as “*Abba, Father*”. In Galatians 4:6 and Romans 8:15, Paul refers to God as “*Abba, Father*.” This is the same as referring to God as “*Daddy*”. How much more personal can you get? Is your relationship with God to the point that you can refer to Him as “*Daddy*”? It is what God wants.

Rogers says, “You can go directly to God, your Father, if you are born again by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Savior and Lord.”

### **The Purpose of Prayer**

Matthew 6:10 gives us the purpose of prayer and that is for God’s will to be done. Prayer is communication with God so that we can know and understand God’s will for us. Prayer is a way of getting God’s will done on earth.

God loves us and wants to make sure that we are taken care of. Read the following verses and see what they say about God giving us what we need.

Matthew 7:11 – God knows how to give good gifts if we ask.

James 1:17 – Every good gift comes from God.

Philippians 4:19 – God will supply all our needs.

These verses do not say, “If I need a car then I should pray for a Lexus.” That is the prosperity gospel and is an improper gospel.

We spent a whole chapter on understanding and doing God’s will. John 15:7 tells us that Jesus said, “*If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.*”

Charles Spurgeon says of this verse, “Prayer comes spontaneously from those who abide in Jesus... Prayer is the natural outgushing of a soul in communion with Jesus.”

There is a hymn that I have come across, “I Must Tell Jesus” that sums up the way we should feel if we abide in Jesus. The lyrics are “I must tell Jesus all of my trials; I cannot bear these burdens alone; In my distress, He kindly will help me; He ever loves and cares for His own.”

When good or bad things happen, we should go to God in prayer. In my opinion, calling God or Jesus a friend makes them too familiar. We are supposed to go to them humbly.

One of the purposes of the Holy Spirit is to show us what and how to pray. If we mumble through the prayer then the Holy Spirit will make it perfect. With the Holy Spirit abiding in us, He knows what we need and want to pray. He communicates our needs to God but you still have to try or pray. This is called praying in the spirit.

Rogers says, “The Holy Spirit in us helps us to pray. We pray *to* the Father, *through* the Son and *in* the Spirit. If we surrender to the Spirit of God and abide in Christ, then His Word abides in us. Therefore, we can pray for whatever we will. Because strangely and wonderfully, what we now will is what He wills because we now have the mind of Christ. As we pray, we think the thoughts of Christ after Him.” . . . “*the prayer that gets to heaven is the prayer that starts in heaven.*” “God lays something upon our hearts to pray for, we pray for it and it goes right back to heaven.”

In the Lord's Prayer that is "*Thy kingdom come, thy will be done.*" It is still about the will of God. I have heard pastors pray "If it be your will Lord, heal this person." We hope it is God's will that this person be healed but sometimes it is what we want or think we need but it is not God's will.

### **The Provision of Prayer**

Philippians 4:19 says that God will supply our needs. Again, He says needs but consider what King David wrote in the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm, "*My cup runneth over.*" Also, consider what Paul wrote in Ephesians 3:20, our God "*is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine.*" But don't fall into the prosperity gospel trap.

In the Lord's Prayer, Jesus says, "*Give us this day our daily bread.*" He didn't say, "Give me everything I need and want." If He supplied you with wealth to get you through a lifetime, then your lifetime would be spent without God. He wants you to look to Him daily. When we accepted Jesus, He removed all of our past sins but He still wants us to rely on Him so we have to ask for forgiveness for future sins.

When Jesus prayed for God to supply our daily bread, He wasn't just asking for bread every day. Substitute your current need for daily bread. From 1986 through 2000, I survived numerous downsizings at work. To me at the time, my job was my daily bread.

Our God is a God of Provision. He will provide our needs. Read Matthew 6:25–34. Also consider that during the exodus from Egypt, God gave them manna or their daily bread. When they complained He gave them quail to eat also.

James 4:2 says, "*You do not have because you do not ask God.*" Jesus told us in Matthew 7:7-12 to Ask, Seek and Knock. Verse 7 begins with "*Ask and it will be given to you.*" Again He is not talking about asking for what you want, He is talking about your needs. These needs are to be in line with God's will.

This is the provision of prayer: "Give us this day our daily bread."

## **The Pardon of Prayer**

The next part of the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:12) says, "*And forgive us our debts (trespasses), as we also have forgiven our debtors (trespassers).*" Jesus asked forgiveness as an example because He never sinned.

Rogers begins this section with some reasons why our prayers are not answered. Sometimes prayer is not answered because:

We are not praying to God as our Father. We have never been saved.

We are praying for the Will of God to happen. "Thy will be done."

We do not ask.

We have unconfessed or unrepented sin in our lives.

Based on this list from Rogers, the logical thing to do is confess our sin and get rid of it. Remove any chance that the unconfessed sin is the barrier to God answering your prayer. Ask for forgiveness.

Even in the O.T., some verses say that if we have unconfessed sin in our hearts, then God will not answer our prayer. Psalm 66:18 says, "*If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened.*"

Isaiah 59:1-2 says the same thing. It says, "*Surely the arm of the Lord is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear. 2 But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you.*" Think of it this way, our unconfessed sin or sin that we are holding onto is preventing God from hearing us specifically. He is still listening but there is interference caused by our sin.

Before you pray for an important need in your life get rid of your sin, either by confessing it before you start or including it in your prayer as Jesus did.

Remember that 1 John 1:9 says, "*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.*"

## **The Protection of Prayer**

The next verse in the Lord's Prayer asks for protection against the attacks of Satan. Verse 13 says, "*And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.*" Remember from our VBS that we are to put on the full armor of God every day. The last step after putting it on is to pray for protection against Satan. Ephesians 6:18 says, "*And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.*" Praying for God's protection is critical for us in our daily walk.

Rogers says, "It has been said that the devil trembles when he sees even the weakest saint upon his knee. And so, my friend, we need to pray, "*Lord, lead us not into temptation.*"

There has been discussion about whether or not God leads us into temptation. James 1:13 says, "*For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone.*" That verse of the Lord's prayer can be interpreted as "Lord protect me, otherwise I may fall into temptation."

2 Peter 2:9 says that God knows how to keep us from being tempted. He is able to protect us from ourselves and Satan. Just because we know when we are tempted, doesn't mean that we won't fall into Satan's trap.

Sometimes we fall into the same traps. Have you ever prayed this prayer? "God, it's me again. I tried but I did it again." Psalm 103:12 says that God separates us from our sin, "*As far as the east is from the west.*"

How many times will He forgive us? Read Matthew 18:21-22. We are to forgive others seventy times seven or 490 times or as long as it takes. God will do the same but He does expect you to reach a point where we stop committing the same sin.

In the Lord's prayer, we pray "*And forgive us our debts (trespasses), as we also have forgiven our debtors (trespassers).*" There is one huge 2 letter word in this verse that people overlook. It is "AS". God will forgive us our sins in the same way that we forgive others.

How well do you do with that one? We are to forgive others the way that we want to be forgiven. Do you hang on to grudges? We are to forgive and forget. As far as the east is from the west. We are to give others a full pardon.

### **The Praise of Prayer**

Jesus ends the Lord's prayer with "*For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.*" This is praise. Not all translations include this ending. My Bible has a footnote that says, "This clause was not found in early manuscripts." I learned to include it.

Rogers says, "All powerful prayer I pray packed with praise. Why? Because praise is an expression of faith! Prayer is faith turned inside out. Faith causes our prayers to be answered."

The KJV translates Psalm 22:3 to say, "*But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.*" We are to praise God because He is worthy of our praise.

A shortened version of Isaiah 58:11 is "*Where the Lord guides, He will provide.*" Through our prayers, we can communicate our needs to Him. Through our prayers, we can develop a personal relationship with Him. As a Christian, the most important thing that we can do besides reading and studying His Word, is to pray.