

WHAT EVERY GROWING CHRISTIAN NEEDS TO KNOW ABOUT PRAYER

Ephesians 6 and Luke 11

What makes someone a strong Christian? How is it that some people become strong, committed believers, while others never really make it out of the starting blocks?

The short answer: because they choose to. If you truly desire to grow in your faith, you will do so, by God's grace. But if you don't want to mature as a believer, no amount of encouragement or teaching will change that mindset.

Assuming that you want to grow as a Christian, there are certain things we can do that will help us succeed in our spiritual walk. So far, we've already talked about getting into the Word of God, reading it and studying it. Next is prayer—the act of communicating with and listening to God.

PRACTICAL PRINCIPLES

- 1. We should pray because God tells us to.** In Luke 18:1, we read that Jesus taught that “men ought always to pray and not lose heart.” He also modeled this behavior in His life, constantly going to His Father in prayer in every situation, from the feeding of the 5,000 to His final moments on the cross. If Jesus felt the need to pray constantly, in every circumstance, shouldn't we take the time to pray as often as possible too?
- 2. We should pray because prayer is God's appointed way for obtaining things.** Prayer is not meant to be a time for asking God for stuff, but it is the way for us to approach Him for the things we need in life. Scripture tells us, “You have not, because you ask not” (James 4:2). How many things do you wish for—knowing God's will, boldness in sharing the gospel, healing from a physical need—that you haven't taken to God in prayer? You have nothing to lose by praying about it, right?
- 3. We should pray because it is the way that God helps us overcome anxiousness and worry.** No matter how hard we try, there will be times in our lives when we are anxious, afraid, and worried. Instead of dwelling on the fear and worry, why not pray? Philippians 4:6 says, “Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything.” That doesn't mean that God will take away that thing in your life that causing the fear, but as Philippians 4:7 says, God will give you His peace that surpasses all understanding.
- 4. We should pray because it is one of the ways that we make ourselves ready for Christ's return.** Jesus told us that no man knows the day or the hour of His return, therefore we should be watching and praying. Luke 21:34–36 tells us that we need to pray constantly so that we will have the strength and wits to survive everything that is come.

GREG'S NOTES

A NEW BEGINNING TEACHING OUTLINES



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RELEVANT REMINDERS

The Lord's Prayer in Luke 11 is the template that God has given us for prayer. Rather than use it as a default prayer in times of trouble, we can take three petitions within it as a model for how we should approach God with our needs.

“Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Your name”—The word “hallowed” means “to be set apart.” It is an acknowledgement that Jesus Christ is set apart in your life, and a desire on our part to live a holy life in recognition of that.

“Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven”—You must pray according to the will of God, lining your will up with His. Prayer is not getting our will in heaven, but getting God's will here on Earth. It is trusting that God knows better than us.

“Give us this day our daily bread”—Now that we have given God the glory, and sought His will, then we may bring our petitions (our desires and wants) to Him. This is also an acknowledgement that everything we have comes from Him.

APPLICABLE ACTIONS

If you want to grow spiritually, prayer must be a vital and regular part of your life. So stop worrying and start praying. Pray about everything. Communicate with God throughout the day, and the night. Prayer is a privilege of the believer.