

Prayer: The Mechanics of Prayer

Ricardo Campos, Teaching Elder Grace Chapel, Orange, CA June 6, 2010

I. Introduction

Prayer is basically communicating with God. When we pray, we thank God, we come to Him with our needs, and we praise Him. But what is prayer exactly? Is there a right way to pray? Is there a wrong way to pray? How can our requests affect what God does, i.e., how can our prayers change anything He does?

II. The Mechanics of Prayer

- A. *The Model: The Lord's Prayer, Matt. 6:9–13*, the Lord taught us to pray when He gave us the model prayer. It contains five basic components: **Address your prayers to God the Father**, 6:9. **Ask for His will to be done**, 6:10. **Ask for your needs**, 6:11. **Confess your sins**, 6:12 (notice that it doesn't have to be at the beginning of your prayer). **Ask for protection from the Devil**, since Satan's on the prowl (1 Pt. 5:8), we need God's protection, 6:13.

In 6:13, "temptation" does not mean "entice [us] to sin"; it means "test." Thus, we're to ask God to keep us from "testing" and instead to protect us from Satan. However, God may/may not answer such a request. It depends on whether or not this is His will for your life, e.g., He did not deliver Job from Satan.

- B. *Don't Pray to Get Attention or Empty Repetitive Phrases, Matt. 6:5–7*, if you're praying to get attention, then the attention you get is your reward; you will not get a reward from God (this is not a prohibition against public prayer, cf. 1 Kin. 18:36–37). Nor should we pray empty repetitive phrases as the religious pagans did in Jesus' day.
- C. *Pray in Jesus' Name, Jn. 14:13–14 (15:16; 16:23–24, 26)*, Jesus said, "No one comes to the Father except through Me," Jn. 14:6. Thus, when we pray to God the Father it must be done in Jesus' name.
- D. *Pray with Belief not Doubt, Matt. 21:20–22; Heb. 11:6; Jam. 1:5–8*, if you doubt that God can do what you ask, then you will receive nothing from Him.

- E. *Pray with a Thankful Attitude, Phil. 4:6; Col. 4:2*, when we come to God in prayer, sometimes we're in extreme pain. But God reminds us to never relinquish our heart of thanksgiving. We must give thanks in everything for this is God's will for us, 1 Thess. 5:18.

- F. *Pray According to His Will not Against It, Jam. 4:3; 1 Jn. 5:14*, when we pray we must pray in keeping with God's will not our own (especially if it's a sinful desire).

- G. *Pray with Confidence, if You're Rightly Walking with God, Jn. 15:7; 1 Jn. 3:22*, if you are being obedient to God, walking properly with Him, then you should be confident when you pray.

Does that mean that I can ask God for \$1,000,000? You can ask, but whether or not He gives you \$1,000,000 depends on what you want it for and it depends on His will for your life. If you want it for a sinful desire, the answer is "No!" (Jam. 4:3). If you're walking with God and He either wants to bless you with it or give it to you in order for you to better serve Him, then the answer is "Yes."

The key is to realize that when we begin to think the way God does, what comes out of our mouths in prayer will be His will for our lives and not our own. Then, we will pray *according to His will*. This begins to answer the question, "How can my prayers affect what God does?" It's not that we tell God what to do; it's that we begin to think like Him and in turn we begin to ask what He already wants to do in our lives.

Thus, the mechanics of prayer are: address it to the Father, ask for His will, ask for your needs, confess your sins, ask for protection from Satan, don't pray to get attention or empty repetitive phrases, pray in Jesus' name, pray without doubting, pray with a thankful attitude, pray according to God's will, and pray with confidence.

III. CONCLUSION

There is a right way and a wrong way to pray. Our prayers must be addressed to God the Father and be done in Jesus' name. They must also be done in accordance with His will, which means that we must find out how God thinks, what He thinks and wants for our lives. This is when we begin to understand prayer in a deeper sense.