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All words spoken by Jesus Christ are in **red text**.

Introduction

God designed humans with an ability to communicate that transcends all other living organisms. For example, we are designed with an ability to communicate our thoughts, emotions, complex conceptual ideas, desires and dislikes, successes and failures, expectations and plans, and even what we'd like to eat for breakfast. We also have the ability to communicate non-verbally. For example, many of us can remember that "look" we'd get from our parents when we did something wrong as a child.

To realize the importance of communication and why God designed us with this ability, take a few moments and imagine what human life would be like if we were only able to communicate at the same level as animals.

But there is another reason for our ability to communicate that transcends the physical realm. God designed us with an ability to communicate with Him via the spiritual realm through prayer.

What is prayer?

Prayer may be simply defined as talking to God. Prayer may be audible or via thoughts; it may occur alone or with others; and may be comprised of the same type of conversation we may have with a trusted friend.

Prayer should not consist of the same repetitive words. Jesus said, **"When you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words."** Matthew 6:7 But rather, our prayers should freely flow from the depths of our heart and soul.

In addition, prayer may occur anywhere. Although it is important to pray in church, it is more beneficial for the Christian to maintain a subconscious position of prayer throughout the day. Paul said in 1 Thessalonians 5:17 to **"Pray without ceasing."**

The Lord's Prayer

Jesus gave us the Lord's Prayer as an example of how to pray. He did not give us the Lord's Prayer to repetitively recite word for word. Similar to eating the same food over and over again, repetitive prayer quickly loses its "flavor," purpose, and ability for us to express what's going on "inside." God is more interested in the words we speak from our heart, than words spoken from our memory. As such, it is important to understand the meaning and relevance of the example of prayer Jesus gave us in Matthew 6:9-13.

"In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen."

Let's expound on each component of His example of how to pray.

"In this manner, therefore, pray:"

Jesus began by instructing us to pray in this manner (or way). Jesus did not say we must pray these exact words. But rather, these are the types of words we should use when we pray, and types of requests we should make when we pray.

“Our Father in heaven,”

Jesus taught our prayers should begin by declaring to whom we are praying. When Jesus prayed, He began by addressing His Father. Note in each example below Jesus did not begin His prayer by saying “Our Father in heaven.” He addressed God conversationally as if He is in His presence, listening and intimately aware of what Jesus is praying.

- “Father, the hour has come.” John 17:1
- “Father, I thank You that You have heard Me.” John 11:41
- “I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and revealed them to babes.” Luke 10:21
- “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.” Luke 23:34
- “O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.” Matthew 26:39
- “O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done.” Matthew 26:42

“Hallowed be Your name.”

Hallowed is defined as sacred, praised, revered, and of great importance. Names are important to God—especially His name.

- “You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.” Exodus 20:7
- “And you shall not swear by My name falsely, nor shall you profane the name of your God: I am the Lord.” Leviticus 19:12

It is also ok to begin prayer by addressing the Father as “God.” For example, at times I will begin my prayer by slowly saying “Holy God...holy God...holy God.” Each time I say “Holy God” I pause, recognize, reverence, and worship who He is and His character.

Plus, there are additional names of God that reflect the different aspects of His character that may be used as a means of respect and worship when praying. This link provides a list of His names, supportive scripture, and a video: <https://www.gotquestions.org/names-of-God.html>

“Your kingdom come; your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”

These words recognize all that has, is and will occur according to God’s will and purpose; and promised future eternal kingdom in which we will live for eternity. For the present earth and heaven will pass away (no longer exist), and will be replaced by a new heaven and earth. But what’s more, because of His overwhelming presence and agape love, we will no longer remember nor consider all of the difficult things we experienced in this life.

- Jesus declared, “Heaven and earth will pass away.” Mark 13:31
- “For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered or come to mind.” Isaiah 65:17
- “Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, ‘Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.’ Revelation 21:1-4
- “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.” 1 Corinthians 2:9

“Give us this day our daily bread.”

These words declare we are dependent upon God for everything. As such, it is prudent to ask God (and be thankful for) our sustenance (food, nutrition, etc.).

However, we have needs that transcend the physical. We have spiritual needs. The Holy Spirit provides the food that fills our spiritual hunger—which like physical food, we need every day to stay spiritually strong.

“And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.”

We are indebted to God because His Son, Jesus Christ, paid the price for our sins. We are forgiven for our sins—past, present and future. As such, when we come into His presence in prayer, it is important to confess our sins. In addition, because we are forgiven, we must forgive those who have sinned against us.

Jesus said, **“And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses.”** Mark 11:25

In truth, we are unable to fully comprehend the transforming power of forgiveness. God’s grace continually cleanses us of unrighteousness. In addition, when we truly forgive someone for what they have done to us...it “unlocks” the spiritual shackles and removes the debilitating “weights” of unforgiveness. As such, it is important to realize it is for our benefit when we forgive someone.

“And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.”

God does not tempt us. **“Let no one say when he is tempted, ‘I am tempted by God’; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed.”** James 1:13-14

Satan is the tempter and the source of temptation. **“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world. But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you.”** 1 Peter 5:8-10

However, God allows us to experience temptations as a means to strengthen our faith and to cleanse us of unrighteousness. For example, God allowed Satan to test Job (Job 1:6-12). But what’s more, God is in control over the tempter while we are tempted; He will not permit Satan to tempt us beyond what we are able to withstand; and He will provide a means of escape from Satan’s lies (or delivery from the evil one—if we are willing and obey).

“No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.” 1 Corinthians 10:13

When we look back in time and consider the temptations and spiritual warfare we have experienced, each victory was based upon hating the sin, its lies, and the consequences; desiring to please God more than fulfilling the demands of our flesh; and obeying the Holy Spirit. In addition, each victory resulted in us becoming more like Jesus and less like ourselves.

“In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of your souls.” 1 Peter 1:6-9

“And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.” Romans 8:28

“For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.”

These words declare the truth of God:

- His kingdom was, is and shall ever be greater than any attempt by man or spirit to reign.
- His power was, is and shall ever be greater than any attempt by man or spirit to gain.
- His glory was, is and shall ever be greater than any attempt by man or spirit to obtain.

Satan desired to be greater than God and attempted to overthrow Him via an insurrection. One third of the angels joined Satan in a rebellion; but were defeated, thrown out of heaven, and cast down to earth as punishment.

Satan’s desire to be greater than God remains—including his absolute hatred and anger—as he seeks to influence and destroy anyone who will listen to his delusional lies. “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world.” 1 Peter 5:8-9

History is littered with man’s failed delusional attempts to build kingdoms, obtain power, and receive glory. Each human attempt resulted in devastating consequences because they believed the lies of Satan—and these truths are self-evident today. For more information on this topic read “Satan’s Lies” and “Satan’s Prison” on UniqueBibleStudies.com.

God’s will vs. our will

Jesus said, “Whoever does the will of God is My brother and My sister and mother.” Mark 3:35

Knowing God’s will in our lives can sometimes be difficult to identify—especially when we are faced with life decisions that include multiple variables and diverse possible outcomes. However, what is most important to understand about God’s will for our lives is very simple, and should be a “foundational” aspect of our daily Christian walk: seek Him and His righteousness.

Jesus explained, “Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.” Matthew 6:31-34

When we fully comprehend and embrace the eternal importance of first seeking God and His righteousness, the perceptive magnitude of our challenges and difficulties in life will diminish, and will have less detrimental influence. Too often we get caught up into the lies and “worries of the world,” and fail to fully focus upon what is truly important: to become less like ourselves and more like Jesus. For Jesus was a living example of the righteousness of God—who adhered to the will of the Father—even to His death on the cross.

“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” Romans 12:2

“Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.” 1 John 5:14-15

How to prepare the attitude of the heart before praying

Prior to praying, it is important for us to use our God designed attributes of self-awareness and analytical abilities to evaluate the status of our spiritual heart and soul before we pray—including identification of the true intent of our prayer. Because of our sinful nature, there are times when our prayers are based upon fulfilling the desires of our flesh, and are not aligned with the will of God.

- “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it? I, the Lord, search the heart, I test the mind, even to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings.” Jeremiah 17:9-10
- “Serve Him with a loyal heart and with a willing mind; for the Lord searches all hearts and understands all the intent of the thoughts.” 1 Chronicles 28:9
- “The Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.” 1 Samuel 16:7

In addition, when we pray, we may be overwhelmed by the pressures, demands and responsibilities we experience throughout our day. When this occurs, we may find it difficult to focus on praying because our minds are filled with distracting thoughts. To calm down on the inside I will often seek a quiet place and play praise and worship music prior to praying. As an example, click on the links below, or Google “praise and worship music.”

- <https://player.listenlive.co/28541>
- https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC_0S4QJ0sVS_HEuBYPsdJJw
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GOp889W0u9A&ab_channel=MusicPraise

Here are additional hindrances to effective prayer that we should consider as we prepare to pray:

Unbelief: Jesus said, “Have faith in God. For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be removed and be cast into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says. Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them.” Mark 11:22-24

Unconfessed Sin: “If I regard iniquity in my heart, The Lord will not hear.” Psalms 66:18 “But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear.” Isaiah 59:2

Unforgiveness: Jesus said, “And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses.” Mark 11:25-26

Praying for something not in God’s will: “Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.” 1 John 5:14-15 “You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures.” James 4:3

Mistreatment of spouse: “Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.” 1 Peter 3:7

Unsubmitted will: Jesus said, “I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.” John 15:5-7

Different types of prayer

Confession of sin

All of us has a sinful nature, and we need to be forgiven for our sins. “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” Romans 3:23

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” 1 John 1:9

Every one of us has a free will choice to confess our sins to God, seek Him, and turn away from our transgressions.

“Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit. When I kept silent, my bones grew old through my groaning all the day long. For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; my vitality was turned into the drought of summer. I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, ‘I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,’ and You forgave the iniquity of my sin.” Psalms 32:1-5

Spiritual Truth: When we truly confess our sins to God, our heart should feel the pain of regret, remorse and sadness for what we did. This internal “pain” is the result of God’s grace and love for us, and our love for Him. But what’s more, we know the pain of sinning comprise the working of the Holy Spirit—as we are transformed into the righteousness of Jesus Christ—and as we repent and turn away from our sins.

Prayer of confession example: *Heavenly Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, forgive me for my sin. I am responsible for what I did, and I am sorry for what I have done. Thank You Jesus for dying for my sins. Thank You God for Your grace, for Your love, for Your truth, and for the pain I experienced when I transgressed against Your will.*

Petition

Petition is defined as a formal request. Every one of us has spiritual and physical needs. As such, as His children, we can ask God to fulfill our needs for:

- Guidance as to why, what, where, how, and when to do something.
- Help in overcoming our fears, doubts and despair.
- Protection from those who seek to harm us, or when we are in a dangerous situation.
- Spiritual wisdom, discernment, faith, contentment, and peace.

Jesus said, “Your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him.” Matthew 6:8

Jesus said, “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!” Matthew 7:7-11

“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Philippians 4:6-7

“Trust in the Lord, and do good; dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness. Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart.” Psalms 37:3-4

“Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was

in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” Hebrews 4:14-16

Prayer of petition example: *Lord, I come before you in the name of Jesus Christ, my Savior and Lord. I am experiencing deep anxiety and overwhelming fear because of my present medical condition. I do not understand why I am going through all of this, nor do I understand what will happen in the future. Everything seems out of control and it does not make any sense to me. But your word says to trust in You. Therefore, I trust in you...I trust in you...I TRUST IN YOU! Holy Spirit I ask that you fill me with Your peace that passes all understanding. Help me to persevere, and cause me to grow spiritually during this experience.*

Worship, praise and thanksgiving

Worship does not occur from our flesh. When we enter into true spiritual worship of God, our praises, our thanksgiving, and our emotions will uncontrollably rise and overflow from the depths of our heart and soul. And, at times, inexplainable tears of joy will also flow.

God alone is worthy of worship, glory, honor, and thanksgiving. In Revelation, John gave us a glimpse of the type of worship that occurs in heaven—and the type of worship we will experience when we are in His presence.

“Before the throne there was a sea of glass, like crystal. And in the midst of the throne, and around the throne, were four living creatures full of eyes in front and in back. The first living creature was like a lion, the second living creature like a calf, the third living creature had a face like a man, and the fourth living creature was like a flying eagle. The four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest day or night, saying: ‘Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!’ Whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying: ‘You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created.’” Revelation 4:9-11

Jesus said, “But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.” John 4:23-24

Prayer of worship, praise and thanksgiving example: *Thank You God for Your truth. Thank You God for sacrificing Your Son on the cross so that I may be forgiven for who I am and what I do. Thank You God for saving me from the darkness and control of Satan. Thank You God for Your Holy Spirit—who is transforming me from within. I humbly and raise my heart to you in worship and praise—for You alone are worthy to receive glory and honor for what You are doing in my life.*

Intercession

Intersensory prayer is praying on behalf of others. Daniel interceded for the sinful condition of Jerusalem and requested God to turn away His wrath. (Daniel 9:1-27) Paul (below) interceded for the Colossians by asking God to fill them with His wisdom and spiritual understanding; that their walk and fruitful good works are pleasing to Him; and they grow in increased knowledge, strength, patience, longsuffering, and joy according to His glory and power.

“For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy; giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.” Colossians 1:9-14

Prayer of intercession example: *Holy Father, in the name of Jesus Christ I lift up my friend Bob who is addicted to alcohol. He is lost, living in darkness, under the control of demonic forces, and needs Your intervention. Lord, your word says in 2 Peter 3:9 that you are not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. As such, I know You do not want Bob to perish, but want him to repent, and to transition his dependence upon alcohol to dependence upon You. Therefore, I ask Lord that You cause Bob to realize his condition; create a desire within his heart to turn towards You; and give him the spiritual strength to overcome the binding shackles of alcoholism. In the name of my Savior and Lord I pray—according to Your will.*

Corporate

Corporate prayer is when we pray together as a group. Fellow believers comprise one of the three components to effective spiritual warfare: the Holy Spirit, the armor of God, and the church. For more information on this topic read “Spiritual Warfare” on UniqueBibleStudies.com

We need one another for collaborative support. Each of us can provide support, and each of us needs support at various times in our lives.

“And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.” Hebrews 10:24-25

“Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed.” James 5:16

Jesus said, “I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.” Matthew 18:19-20

The effectiveness of corporate prayer is described in Acts chapter 12. Peter was put into prison by King Herod. Thereafter, the church earnestly prayed for God to free Peter. An angel of the Lord removed Peter’s chains and led him out of prison.

During corporate prayer it is beneficial for someone to lead the group. For example, the “leader” may be comprised of the church pastor, a church elder, a church deacon, lesson teacher, or mature Christian. The leader may do one or more of the following (if appropriate):

- Ask if there are any prayer requests. If someone has a prayer request it is important for the leader to obtain the name(s) of who the group should pray for. This way the prayer may be more specific by speaking the name of the individual(s) when praying. In addition, the leader may ask someone in the group to pray for this request. Sometimes persons are shy or feel uncomfortable praying out loud (and this is ok). The intent here is to make sure someone in the group prays for the request. There have been times when I have asked more than one person to pray for multiple requests.
- Ask the group to hold hands. This helps to unify the group as they agree with others as they pray.



- Ask members to lay hands upon someone who needs prayer. There have been many times I have felt the power of the Holy Spirit flow through my body when I laid my hands on someone as I prayed, and when someone laid their hands upon me as they prayed. “Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.” 2 Timothy 1:6

Should we bow our heads, close our eyes, and fold our hands when we pray?

It is interesting to note Jesus lifted up His head and His eyes to heaven when He prayed to God (John 11:41; 17:1). He also prayed with His face to the ground in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matthew 26:36-39).

The Bible does not specify if our head should be lowered, nor if our eyes should be closed when we pray. However, when appropriate, bowing our heads is a physical sign of respect and submission. In addition, when appropriate, closing our eyes restricts visual stimuli from distracting our prayerful thoughts. Remember, prayer is comprised of a conversation with God—in the same way we would converse with a trusted friend. As such, it would seem odd if we held our head down and kept our eyes closed when we talk with someone else. Nor would it be prudent if we pray with our head down and our eyes closed as we walk.

In truth, it is ok if our eyes are open and our head is looking forward when we pray. And it is ok if we bow our heads and close our eyes when we pray. We can also pray with our hands in a prayerful position, or our hands separated and raised, or on our lap. God is more interested in our heart-felt prayers than the position of our body or eyelids.

Should we pray on our knees, sitting, or standing?

Praying on our knees is a physical representation of humility and submission. However, it is ok to pray when sitting down, standing, while we are walking, while we are washing the dishes, and while we are driving. In fact, it is best for us to maintain a subconscious attitude of prayer and communication with God from the moment we wake up until the last thoughts before we fall asleep.

The Holy Spirit

As we grow in Christ; as we are transformed; as we realize all our weaknesses; as we realize the futility of self-control; and as we comprehend our complete dependence upon God for everything—is when we become less of a constraint for the Holy Spirit to influence what we do, what we say, and what we pray. For this is when we “mentally step out of the way” when we pray, and witness powerful spiritual words emanate from the depths of our heart, soul and spirit.

But there is more. The Holy Spirit not only influences us unto righteousness, He also makes intercessory prayer for us. [“Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.” Romans 8:26-28](#)

Unanswered prayer

There will be times when the fulfillment of our prayerful requests will be delayed or not answered. For example, I know of a husband and wife who prayed over their son and daughter-in-law to have a child. Their son and daughter-in-law had been trying to conceive a child for many years with no success. They were even seeking the assistance of a fertility doctor for a few years, but to no avail. So the husband and wife earnestly prayed with their son and daughter-in-law that they would conceive a child. About 18 months later she became pregnant. I know this story is true because my grandson will turn one year old on September 1, 2023.

Delays in the fulfillment of a prayer tests our faith—especially when we are in the midst of a crisis. This is when we need to hold onto God’s promises.

“Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.” Hebrews 10:23

“The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit.” James 5:16-18

However, there may be times when prayer is not answered. This could be due to unbelief, unconfessed sin, harboring unforgiveness towards someone, not praying within the will of God, mistreatment of a spouse, an unsundered will, and possibly because God has a different plan.

I believe God allowed Satan to destroy Job’s family and fortune as an example of a worst-case scenario for anyone who seeks after the righteousness of God. In the midst of his misery, Job cried out and questioned God’s sovereign will and ways, and reasoning for his unfair and unjust treatment. But instead of answering Job, God asked Job numerous questions (Job chapters 38-40). Each question revealed God’s infinite knowledge and eternal wisdom; and each question revealed the finite nature of man. These truths were exemplified when God asked Job His first question: “Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth?” Job 38:4

Unanswered prayer requires more than hope, more than belief, and more than faith. Unanswered prayer requires a free will decision to trust in God. It is important to note God restored Job with twice as much as he had before.

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.” Proverbs 3:5-6

Praying in tongues

As a writer and teacher I deliberately attempt to stay away from content that may conflict with different Christian denominations. However, given the topic of prayer, it is important for me to discuss praying in tongues. Be assured, my intent is to not raise any concerns or “red flags” amongst my brethren in Christ. But rather, provide simple insight into this type of prayer. Besides, Paul wrote to not forbid speaking in tongues. “Therefore, brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak with tongues.” 1 Corinthians 14:39

Praying in tongues may be defined as when a person speaks an incomprehensible language as they pray. Some consider it a “prayer language” between the believer and God—because it is not decipherable.

“For he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God, for no one understands him; however, in the spirit he speaks mysteries.” 1 Corinthians 14:2

“For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful.” 1 Corinthians 14:14

Personally, there have been occasions when I have privately prayed in tongues. I cannot explain why or what caused my transformation from words that I understand, to words that make no sense to me. But in faith and wonder I continued to pray in my unknown language. For some it is unreasonable. For others it is a blessing. As such, it is up to each believer to decide what is acceptable and what is not. Besides, praying in tongues is not a requirement to get into heaven, nor a requirement for salvation, nor an indicator of the indwelling Holy Spirit. It is simply a different form of prayer.



In summary, I thought it would be beneficial to conclude this lesson with words of Jesus regarding prayer.

“And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who *is* in the secret *place*; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.” Matthew 6:5-6

“Your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him.” Matthew 6:8

“So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if *he asks* for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will *your* heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!” Luke 11:9-13

“Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you. Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.” John 16:23-24

“And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses.” Mark 11:25-26

“I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you.” Matthew 5:44

“You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.” John 15:16

May God Bless You in Every Aspect of Your Prayer Life!
Harold D. Thomas