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# Prayer - Focused



# Key Aspects of Prayer

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- What is it?
    - A command 1 Thes. 5:17
    - Important Luke 18:1 (in contrast with fainting)
  - Who is it for?
    - Faithful, repentant Christians 1 John 3:22
  - Who is it to?
    - God the Father (not Jesus or H.S., not Mary)
  - When is it?
    - Routinely talking to God, not just a “911” call 1 Thes. 5:17
  - How?
- A learned skill Luke 11:1
  - Not to be seen of men Matt. 6:5
  - In faith James 1:6-7
  - Knowing God cares Matt. 7:11; 1 Pet. 5:7
  - In Jesus’ name/by His authority John 14:13-14
  - Not selfishly James 4:3
  - No vain repetitions Matt. 6:7-8
  - “Thy will be done” 1 John 5:14

And What is it for? —> Today’s focus (esp. private prayers per Matt. 6:6)

# Notable Examples

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- Old Testament
  - Abraham (Gen. 18:16-33 for Sodom); Moses (Ex. 32:9-14 for Israel), David (Psm. 51, 139), Daniel (Dan. 9:1-19 for Israel)
- Paul
  - Rom. 1:8-10 unceasing, always: Make mention and request ...
  - 1 Cor. 1:4 Always: For the grace of God which was given you ...
  - Eph. 1:16-19 cease not: God may give you a spirit of wisdom ...
  - Phil 1:4 always in every prayer ...
  - Col. 1:3 Praying always for you ...
- Jesus
  - *“Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed.”*  
Mark 1:35
  - *“It was at this time that He went off to the mountain to pray, and He spent the whole night in prayer to God.”* Luke 6:12
  - In the garden Luke 22:39-46

# Goals and Challenges of Focused Prayer

- Goals
  - Achieving deeper, longer, more meaningful “conversations” with God
  - Strength Psm. 138:1-3
  - Peace Phil. 4:6-7
  - Forgiveness 1 John 1:9-2:2
- Challenges
  - What to pray about
  - Avoid superficial, routine, in-a-rut prayers
  - Minimize distractions



# Need Focus in Your Prayers - Prayer List?

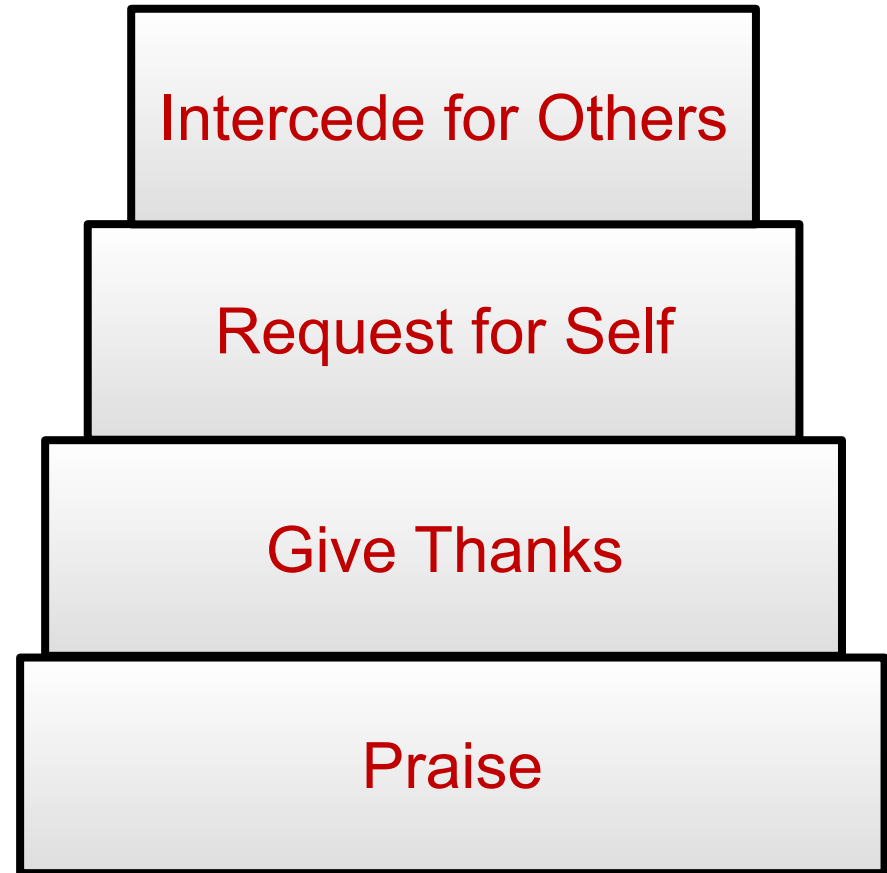
- Challenge of lecture-style teaching
  - Visual aids helps
  - Taking notes helps
  - Making specific personal application really helps
- Today's goal
  - To have you leave with a detailed, written list of specific, personalized topics to pray about
  - Can use your personal notebook or blank paper
  - Time slots reserved for quiet reflection



# Major Topical Categories

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- “Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men,” 1 Tim. 2:1
- “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;” Phil. 4:6
- “When you pray, say: “Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name...” Luke 11:1-2



Examine each with verses & subcategories  
Pause to write down personal applications

# Praise - From Observing His Creation

- “O Jehovah, our Lord, how excellent is your name in all the earth, who have set your glory above the heavens!” ... When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained, What is man that You are mindful of him, and the son of man that You visit him?” Ps 8:1-4
- “Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and outstretched arm. There is nothing too hard for You.” Jer. 32:17
- “For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.” Rom. 1:20-21

# Praise - From Observing His Creation

- How many things do you routinely see in nature and take for granted when you could be praising God's power & glory for them?
  - Beautiful sunrises and sunsets
  - The majesty of the high mountains and crashing waves
  - The awesome power of lightening and thunder (Job 37:1-6)
  - The incomprehensible power of the sun, stars, supernovas, and galaxies
  - The amazing abundance and diversity of life on this planet
  - What you've seen on vacation, on TV, in your own backyard
- For more
  - Job 38-41
  - The aspects of nature often cited as evidence for God's existence
  - "Topics > C" for "Christian Evidences"





# Praise - From His Revealed Word

- “O Lord GOD, You have begun to show Your servant Your greatness and Your mighty hand, for what god is there in heaven or on earth who can do anything like Your works and Your mighty deeds?” Deut 3:24
- “... Then Moses rose early in the morning and went up Mount Sinai, ... And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, “The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children’s children to the third and the fourth generation.” Ex. 34:4-7
- “This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.” 1 John 1:5
- “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.” John 3:16-17

# Praise - From His Revealed Word

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- Do we take God's power and glory for granted when we read His actions in His Word?
  - The Creation
  - The Global Flood
  - The Exodus plagues and crossing the Red Sea
  - Joshua's long day (Josh. 10:11–13) and Hezekiah's sundial reversal (2 Kings 20:8-11; Isa. 38:7-8)
  - "Children's" Bible stories (Daniel & lions, Jonah & big fish)
  - Jesus' miracles and resurrections from the dead
- For more
  - "N" for "Nature of God", "C" for "Creation", "F" for "Flood", "M" for "Miracles", "R" for "Resurrection"



# Give Thanks

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- “Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits: Who forgives all your iniquities, who heals all your diseases, Who redeems your life from destruction, who crowns you with loving kindness and tender mercies, Who satisfies your mouth with good things, so that your youth is renewed like the eagle’s.” Ps 103:1-5
- “giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,” Eph 5:20
- “Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.” Heb 13:15
- “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.” James 1:17
- “For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God, or give thanks; but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.” Rom 1:21

“Count your blessings”

# Give Thanks - For Physical Blessings

- *“Beware that you do not forget the Lord your God by not keeping His commandments, His judgments, and His statutes which I command you today, lest — when you have eaten and are full, and have built beautiful houses and dwell in them; and when your herds and your flocks multiply, and your silver and your gold are multiplied, and all that you have is multiplied; when your heart is lifted up, and you forget the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage; ... then you say in your heart, ‘My power and the might of my hand have gained me this wealth.’ And you shall remember the Lord your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth...” Deut 8:11-19*

# Give Thanks - For Physical Blessings

- Especially for things easily taken for granted
  - Spouse, family
  - Food, clothing, shelter
  - Job/income, rain/fruitful seasons (Acts 14:17)
  - Electricity, electronics, car, plumbing, etc.
  - Health, vision/taste/etc., ability to walk/talk
  - Medicines, diagnostics, doctors & nurses
  - Relative economic/political stability
  - Government, law enforcement, fire protection



# Give Thanks - For Spiritual Blessings

- *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,” Eph 1:3*
- *“Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!” Phil. 4:4*
- *“My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience.” James 1:2-3*



# Give Thanks - For Spiritual Blessings

- Especially for things easily taken for granted
  - Jesus' sacrifice for our sins, forgiveness
  - Preserved Bible, study aids
  - Freedom of assembly / freedom of worship
  - Local congregation & fellow Christians
  - Prayer
- Or things that are difficult (1 Pet. 4:13)
  - Hard economic times, sickness, trials/persecution, loss of a loved one, etc.
- For more
  - "T" for "Thankfulness"



# Make Requests for Ourselves

- “Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? ... But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.”  
Matt. 6:25-34
- “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!” Matt. 7:11
- “Be anxious for nothing ... let your requests be made known to God”  
Phil. 4:6
- “And the tax collector... ‘God, be merciful to me a sinner!’” Luke 18:13





# Make Requests for Ourselves

- Anything you can thank God for (to continue or be restored)
  - Physical - “Daily bread” Matt. 6:11; healing 2 Cor. 12:8; etc.
  - Spiritual
    - Peace when anxious, concerned, worried 1 Pet. 5:6-7; Phil. 4:4-6
    - Deliverance from evil Luke 11:4; strength to resist temptation and endure trials Matt 6:13; Matt. 26:41
    - Forgiveness Ps. 51: 1-3; Matt. 6:12; Luke 18:13; 1 John 1:9
      - Specific sins, tendency to sin, humility/unworthiness
    - Wisdom James 1:5
    - Boldness Acts 4:29
- For more
  - “R” for “Repentance”, “F” for “Forgiveness”



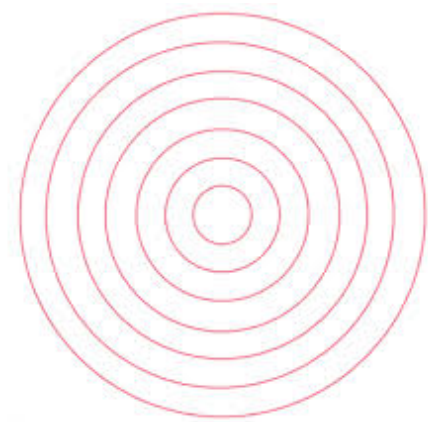
# Intercede for Others

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- *“Now I beg you, brethren, ... that you strive together with me in prayers to God for me...” Rom. 15:30-31*
- *“praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints” Eph, 6:18*
- *“And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment,...” Phil. 1:9-11*
- *“Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, [and] giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence.” 1Tim. 2:1-2*
- *“If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin which does not lead to death, he will ask, and He will give him life for those who commit sin not leading to death.” 1 John 5:16*



# Intercede for Others - Who



- Especially for people easily taken for granted or overlooked
  - Immediate/extended physical family by name
  - Immediate spiritual family at Holly Street plus supported preachers by name
  - Preachers/teachers in general Eph. 6:19; Col. 4:2-3; 2 Thess. 3:1-2
  - Christians around the country and world
  - Friends, co-workers, neighbors
  - Those in positions of authority, country 1 Tim. 2:2
- Or people that are difficult to pray for
  - Sinners Rom. 10:1, enemies/persecutors Matt. 5:43-45



# Intercede for Others - What

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- Everything/anything you just asked God for personally
  - Physical
    - *“I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers.”* 3 John 2
    - Intervene in sickness, conflict
  - Spiritual
    - Forgiveness Acts 8:22
    - Growth of fellow Christians Phil. 1:9; Col. 1:9
    - Persecuted Christians
    - Govt. - lead quiet and peaceable life
    - Lost - opportunities for personal evangelism Rom. 10:1



# Conclusion

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- Hopefully, you've got a good list to leverage during your personal prayers

**Prayer requires:**

great spiritual and mental effort.  
a great deal of time and faith.  
introspection.  
keeping ones life clean at all times  
humility.  
a thankful heart.  
an organized life.  
unselfish concern for the needs of others.  
a communion with our God.

**Prayer offers in return:**

special gifts from God.  
a close and living relationship with God.  
wisdom and spiritual growth.  
A home in heaven.

In Prayer we walk with God.  
In Prayer we thank God  
In Prayer we confess our sins  
Prayer is faith in action.

- For more, see [www.biblequestions.org](http://www.biblequestions.org)
  - “Lessons > Prayer”, “Self-Assessment”
  - “Topics > P” for “Prayer”, “T” for “Thankfulness”