



What is prayer? This is not as easy a question to answer as some might think. It has become, in the English language a word of varying ideas and relative meanings. It is our purpose in this study to work out all the Biblical concepts and examples of prayer used throughout the Scriptures in their meanings, usage and context. Does prayer change things? What do we ask for when we pray? How should we pray and when should we pray? Do we need to pray? If we do not what will or will not happen? All these and more we will study out and reach a definitive answer for each in the process.

I. What Is Prayer? - How the concept of prayer was used throughout Scripture

A. Prayer in its most basic parts - by example

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|------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| That God Is | 1. Prayer is <u>speaking</u> to/with God (as if talking to another) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. As with Gideon in Jud. 6:39 b. As with Paul in II Cor. 12:8-9 |
| That God Hears | 2. Prayer is <u>crying</u> out to God in desperation/help <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. As with Moses in Ex. 15:25 b. As with Hannah in I Sam. 1:13 |
| That God Gives | 3. Prayer is <u>asking</u> or seeking something of God <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. As with our Lord's instruction in Mt. 7:7 b. As with Solomon in II Chron. 6:19-21 |
| That God Feels | 4. Prayer is expressing <u>grief</u> and gratefulness to God <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. As with the Psalmist in Psalm 138:1-3 b. As with the Psalmist in Psalm 6 |
| That God Is Omnipotent | 5. Prayer is speaking to God on <u>behalf</u> of another or others <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. As with Paul in Col. 1:9 b. As with our Lord in Lu. 22:31-32 for Peter |
| That God Is Good | 6. Prayer is worshipping God (praise and glory) as speaking it to Him <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. As with David in his prayer in II Sam. 7:18-29 b. As with Jeremiah in Jer. 10:6 |
| That God Is Sovereign | 7. Prayer is agreeing with God on what is happening, will or could happen <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. As our Lord in Lu. 22:42 b. As Paul's submission in II Cor. 12:9 |

B. What we know prayer is not

1. Prayer is not a means to get what WE want

But we must be focused upon the Hearer of our prayer and approach Him in accordance with reverence due Him

- a. We may ask for something but do not get what we ask because it is motivated by selfishness - James 4:3
 - (1). Not the "genie in the lamp" scenario
 - (2). Not to be motivated to "spend on my pleasure"
- b. This would be top place our perspective before God's
- c. This does not mean, though, that we are not to express our desires before God; we should and will

“Speaking according to the ordinary course of the disease. His being spared fifteen years was not a change in God’s mind, but an illustration of God’s dealings being unchangeably regulated by the state of man in relation to Him.” JFB

2. Prayer is not changing the mind of God
 - a. This would be to assume that God did not see the “whole picture”
 - b. This would contradict Mal. 3:6 - “... I change not”
 - The Prayer of Hezekiah in Isa. 38 does not indicate a “change” in God’s mind because of the prayer
 - c. Our frame of reference is limited so if we receive what we ask for, exactly as we asked it, it was because it was in accordance with His will (as we are to seek to “form” our prayers)
 - d. Though, as we learn in James 5:2 that we do not “have” because we do not “ask” or we ask selfishly
3. Prayer is not “filling God in” on what He does not already know
4. Prayer is not an “incantation” that if the right words and structures are used we will produce, as it were, magical results
 - a. This mentality has often led to “produced” prayers that could be distributed to “better one’s chances” at a desired result
 - b. Many believers have mimicked the ideas of “witchcraft” and superstition by looking on wording and methodology as being the “trick”
5. Prayer is not “ganging-up” on God (using numbers) to get what we desire
 - a. As Christ mentioned in Mt. 6:7 - “vain repetitions”
 - b. Though thousands request, it does not improve the “request” to God
 - c. This would “limit” God to the same values we would place on the number or people as defining legitimacy
6. Prayer is not a “tradition” to be done, just to do it
 - As if when we do not do it things will go bad or if we do it every thing will turn out as we had desired
7. Prayer is not a means to put on a false front with God
 - a. As with people, we may often speak in such a way as to give an impression that we are something that we are not
 - b. We do not “earn points” with God by following the ritual of praying or by presenting ourselves in a pious manner
8. Prayer is not coming before God in our “perfection” (e.g. of faith)
 - a. There are some that believe we must pray in perfect faith
 - b. There are some that believe we must come before God in our “perfect integrity” to receive what we seek

II Cor. 10:5 - Casting down imaginations...

“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.” Gal. 6:7

Mk. 9:24

II. The Example Prayer - Luke 11:1-13

A. Look at the background that led to this example being given

1. The disciples had seen the Lord praying
 - a. The Lord prayed frequently and it would have been known
 - b. Luke 3:21 - at His baptism; 6:12 - before choosing the 12 disciples; 9:18, 28-29 - while alone with the disciples
2. The disciples asked Him, “Lord teach us to pray”
 - Something about this time prompted them to ask - either something about that particular time of prayer or the numerous times He prayed

B. When you pray, say... - compared with Mt. 6:9-13

1. This is a “model” prayer” - as a template to follow
2. It should not be viewed as a “script” to be followed verbatim

C. Preliminary ideas with prayer as presented in Mt. 6:5-7

1. Do not pray “to be seen by men” - these are hypocrites whose purpose in praying is to be seen a pious, seeking only the admiration of men and what “man” can provide in contrast to what God provides
 - These have their “reward in full”
2. Truest prayer is done in secret, free from the distraction of other hearers
3. Do not use “meaningless repetitions” - sensing that with the saying of “much words” our prayers will carry more weight with God

In any conversation, if we seek to lengthen it for times sake, the content becomes of little or no value

- a. Do not measure prayer by its length
- b. Do not measure prayer by just its words - the heart should precede the mouth when we pray!
- c. God is not swayed by our persistence; He acts in accordance with His perfect will in all things
- d. Do not use “scripted” prayers - words without true meaning to us - these are also “vain”, empty of genuine content
- e. “To repeat a form of prayer a very large number of times has always seemed to the ignorantly religious to be a praiseworthy thing; but assuredly it is not so. It is a mere exercise of memory, and of the organs of noise-making: and it is absurd to imagine that such a parrot exercise can be pleasing to the living God.”

C. H. Spurgeon —

4. Our Father knows what we need before we ask Him - so our repetition or “bombardment” of Him does not lend to prayer’s power
 - a. We pray because we are instructed to do so
 - b. We pray because this is the “means” by which God has deemed we receive much of what we have or are to have
 - c. We pray to keep our daily dependence upon God
 - d. We pray because we will want to bring these things to our Father, not supposing that He does not know, but simply because He is our Father and will be our supplier and the giver of wisdom (true answers)
5. As our conversations on earth take many forms and are full of varying purposes, so will our prayer be to our Father

There will no doubt be times where we lack because we have not asked for what God has provided ahead of time to meet our needs

D. The model of our prayers - a general guide of coming before our Father

1. “Our Father who art in heaven” - as over all
 - a. This is not to limit His presence, but to place His position
 - b. He is our Father, and we are able to call Him this because of His work for us in Christ - He adopted us - Rom. 8:15
 - c. And He is our Father Who is over all - remember we are bringing our words before the creator of and Lord of the universe!
 - d. This is key so we do not seek to “limited the Holy One...”
 - Psalm 78:40-42 - through their disbelief they grieved Him
2. “Hallowed be they name” - “let your name be venerated” - Wuest
 - a. The initial request that His name be held up as holy - set apart as being sacred and above (morally) all others
 - b. That His name (presence) be revered and held in highest respect
 - c. This aspect of prayer is more for our benefit than God’s - we begin by directing our focus appropriately
 - d. Woe to us when we approach God lacking true reverence

So respectfully consider who we are addressing when we pray

Our prayers would be “vain” if presented without the proper respect towards the Lord

3. "Thy kingdom come" - the rule and reign of God
 - a. An agreement that God's agenda be predominant
 - b. This is our seeking (agreeing) that God must rule and that the present rule (ours or the world's system) is not ideal
 - c. Our confidence and longing are on His ruling and absolute oversight
 - d. "Let it come means by its own inherent power, and the aorist is effective: let it come actually and completely." - Lenski
4. "Thy will be done" - not our will being the deciding factor
 - a. This is a submissive statement - this is to be our "posturing" throughout our prayer - always!
 - b. We admit the need for His will over ours - in this model prayer it comes before anything is asked
 - c. His frame of reference is flawless while ours is limited
 - d. It is the same example our Lord set in His prayer - Lu. 22:42
 - e. Our expressed desire is to see it done on earth in the same it always has been in the "realm of God" - Heaven
 - f. We should also be seeking (praying) that God's moral will be followed in the same degree it is in Heaven
5. "Give us this day our daily bread"
 - a. Give us today the "bread" needed for the day
 - b. The keying on "daily" is more clarified in vs. 25-34
 - Do not be anxious for the coming days - "each day has enough trouble of its own."
 - c. This is met by "seeking first" the "kingdom of God" and His righteousness
 - So, our praying for His kingdom and will is in conjunction with all these others things that we would pray being added to us
 - d. Overall, though, we ask for what we desire and need - this is God's method, God's design, and clearly in God's will
 - e. This aspect of the prayer is key to..
 - (1). Remind us to seek/pray for what is enough, not being driven to place our security in the "more than enough for today"
 - (2). Remind us the source, daily, of our needs being met. The danger of plenty is the daily forgetting of acknowledging where it came from and will continue to come from
 - f. One of the keys to prayer is to keep us dependent - as a true beggar I have not but for what I beg and receive - all I ever have is borrowed of God
6. "Forgive our debts as we forgive our debtors"
 - a. A key aspect in our conversing with God is our own self-admission of our overwhelming debt to Him
 - b. This is how we are with people with whom we feel a great debt and an obligation of gratefulness when they do not hold it against us but "let it go" as proof of their love of us
 - c. In Luke 11 this is compared to sin instead of debt - sin as in the offenses we committed against God
 - d. This also points out the difficult aspect in our prayers that should be our admission of our obligation to be gracious to others as He has been with us

This point is key in how we view "answers" to prayers. In light of this we are grateful either way that God's pre-determined will is at work and will not be deterred

- e. It is like saying, “Lord do unto me as I have unto others”
- f. Prayer is also an acknowledging before God my need for obedience
- g. We have forgiven those indebted to us (with offenses/sins) especially in light of how much God has forgiven us and our total inability to “pay it off”

7. And “lead us not into temptation” - vs. 13

Part of “going on the offensive” with temptation and trials is found in our initial prayers

- a. As if to say, and “do not allow us to be lead into temptation”
- b. Many fall prey to temptation never having asked to be led from it
 - We have not because we ask not!
- c. It is an open admission that we are prone to failure and straying
 - So much of our prayers will address and admit weaknesses
- d. “There is a way out (1Co 10:13), but it is a terrible risk.” RWP
- e. Mt. 26:41 - this was a prayer instructed by our Lord - pray that they enter not into temptation - the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak

8. But deliver us from the evil

This is our “siding” with God - the opposite would be our affection/sympathy for what is wrong

- a. The ultimate idea is deliverance from evil entirely
- b. This is to be an expression of our longing for release (freedom) from all evil influences and affects
- c. It is an acknowledgment of His control and our desire in light of it

9. The doxology - this is strongly believed to have not been in the original manuscripts but was later added as a church practice

- a. Either way, the content can be supported by the rest of Scripture
- b. It all points back to the control of God
- c. We want and acknowledge God’s Kingdom and power
- d. All belongs for the intended purpose of His glory! - we agree
- e. And He supersedes/surpasses all limits of time - forever!

E. What then is a good overall content of our prayers?

1. Acknowledge Who we are talking with - Our Father in Heaven
2. Express desire for His name to be revered - hallowed be Thy name
3. Request that His agenda be accomplished on earth to the same degree it is seen and known to be accomplished in Heaven
4. Submit before or after asking to His will to be accomplished
5. Ask for daily needs - requests and supplication for others - daily needs
6. Request in light of our need for personal responsibility - if inconsistent, admit it to be so with a purpose for change
7. Request to be led away from our natural desires to do what is wrong
 - Deliverance from evil is ultimately seen in submission for good
8. Glorify God and His authority and power

F. Do our prayers carry more weight if we ask more as seemingly illustrated in Luke 11?

1. Our Lord gives an example of lending to need between friends - vs. 5-8
 - a. The friend has company and needs bread for food to share
 - b. The lateness of the hour makes the initial response refusal
 - c. Persistence makes the neighbor get up and meet the need
2. Our Lord (God the Father) has no limits and hindrances
 - a. The key is the conclusion in verse 13
 - b. If a human can get what they need and ask for from corrupt, flawed people, how much the more will our need be met by our Father?

III. The Heart of Our Prayers - what it is and should be

A. Remember the differing concepts (NT) of prayer

- προσευχη 1. Prayer - literally speaking (orating) before and to God
δεησις 2. Supplication - making a petition/request for yourself or others

B. One of the key words used for prayer is the word προσευχομαι

1. The core idea of this term is to express ones wish toward someone else, and in its usage in the NT it is in reference to directing our wishes to God
2. Our longings, troubles and desires to be rid of them, aspirations and goals should be brought before God

C. So, in light of this, when our prayer life seems struggling or frustrating it is more likely that the root cause of the frustrations is not with God but with our desires

1. Wrong desires stem from a wrong perspective of God and Who He is
 - a. If I see Him as being primarily “there for me” I will feel let down and forsaken when He does not answer in my timing or in my way
 - b. If I see Him as sadistic I will be reluctant to express my genuine desires, if I pray at all
2. Wrong desires stem from my limited frame of reference of my situations
 - a. My outlook on what would be a “solution” may, in reality, be disastrous
 - b. This is why asking for wisdom or insight would be a good request

D. The heart of our prayers is driven by faith

- Mk. 11:24
1. “And therefore I say to you 'Have faith that whatever you ask for in prayer is already granted you, and you will find that it will be.’” (TCNT)
 2. Faith, though, must not be taken as belief or trust in and of myself
 3. Our faith is not baseless, it is founded in the Word of God
 4. Mt. 21:18-22 - Our “asking” (begging) is associated with believing
 - “and all--as much as ye may ask in the prayer, believing, ye shall receive.” (YLT) - vs. 22
 5. So, just because I desire something does not mean when I ask for it that I will receive it. Asking must be based in faith (believing God and Who He is) and asking in the name of Christ (His authority and His purposes)
 6. It is not the amount of faith, though, that makes prayer effective
 - a. We should be encouraged to remember that the very act of praying and asking something of God is based in faith
 - b. Faith based praying is asking based on asking in accordance with His will, and when knowing this, we are assured it will be done
 - c. This faith does not place time restrictions nor procedural guidelines on God Who is the mover of the “mountains” we ask to be moved
 7. Our faith, as directed by the Truth, governs and motivates true prayer
 - a. So, desire precedes, comes with, and follows our prayers
 - b. Desire, fostered and grown by faith as seen in God’s Word will then ultimately dictate how and when we pray
 - c. As George Mueller understood, when we pray for what we know God has promised to provide, and we ask in accordance with His will, we can expect with full assurance it will be granted!
 8. Prayer is our exercise of dependence on God while our lack of prayer and praying is our exercise of independence from God
 - This is practical atheism (living as though God does not exist)

E. Heart probing questions about prayer

1. “Why am I praying”? - why am I approaching God?
 - a. Can I envision myself bringing this issue before Him “in person”?
 - b. Avoid a ritualistic approach
2. “What do I hope will happen as a result of my praying or avoid happening and to what righteous end”?
3. “Who am I really praying for and why”?
 - a. Is it truly in their best interest before God and their growth or am I praying for an other for my own personal comfort? - and am I open to being part of meeting the need?
 - b. We must sincerely be seeking their best
4. “Am I truly submissive to God in my will in my prayer”?
5. “Is my prayer, in any form, an ultimatum”?
 - a. Is it a demand or more a request/wish/desire?
 - b. Are there any time limits placed on God in my expectations? - remember, many of our expectations will never be voiced, and at times we are unaware of them

Many times we pray and hope to not be a required part of the solution - laziness often lurks its head in the hearts of our prayers

IV. Seven Causes of “Unanswered” Prayer

A. Not being “In Christ” - John 9:31; Prov. 15:29

1. No doubt, many pray to God but there is no indication that God hears or regards these prayers as no man comes to the Father but through Christ
2. Our right (entrance) unto God is only through Christ
3. Though, prayers not being answered as I think cannot and should nor be used to bring doubt about salvation

B. A Selfish Focus - James 4:3

1. The idea of this passage is a person asking for a self-serving purpose with the intent to “expend” it on themselves
2. It is a praying with the heart of greed versus a heart of genuine need
3. It is asking “amiss” or to use it for personal pleasure (this goes beyond just expressing a wish, it is a wish for what I should not have

C. A Sinful/Vain Focus - Psalm 66:17-19; Prov. 15:29; 28:9

1. “Had I an evil thought in my mind, the LORD would not have listened”
2. The idea of iniquity, at its core is “worthlessness”, with the idea of placing a false comfort or confidence in something
3. To regard something is to respect it by giving your focus to it - it is placing our “gaze” on what does not merit it
4. So, if I set my focus on what is worthless or of lesser value with eternity in view, the LORD will not give attention to it

D. Hypocritical Motives - Prov. 15:8; Isa. 1:15

1. This is more when we pray lacking integrity - we put on a “front”
 - a. The “sacrifices” of the wicked are hated by God
 - b. The prayers of the “upright” (equitable, even, straight) He delights
2. One of the most assured ways we can guarantee our prayers will be disregarded is to approach God in dishonesty (motives)
 - Confession is key, not for the forgiveness of sins but for the maintaining of integrity before God and others!

E. Ignoring God's Truth/Word - Pro. 28:9

1. "Many suppose, if they do not know their duty, they shall not be accountable for their transgressions; and therefore avoid every thing that is calculated to enlighten them. They will not read the Bible, lest they should know the will of God; and they will not attend Divine ordinances for the same reason." Clarke
2. As in I John 1:6, if we say we are in fellowship with Him and "walk in darkness" we are lying and not doing the Truth
3. If we "turn our ears away" from hearing God's Law/Word/Truth even our prayers will be as hated by God
4. The idea of turning away the ear is to "turn off" - this is even a term used today when something is disagreeable that it is a "turn off" as declaring the Truth has come to be even in churches
5. If we are not regularly "listening" to His words that He has already provided, why would our words hold weight?
 - So often the answers to our prayers are already spelled out if we would but look for them!
6. Again, the core idea of prayer is conversing with God and much, if the majority of true conversing, is listening

F. Broken relationships undealt with - Mt. 5:23

1. "The covetous Pharisees taught that God was appeased by the sacrifices appointed in the law, which they themselves devoured. But Christ on the contrary side denies that God accepts any man's offering, unless he makes satisfaction to his brother whom he has offended.." GBN
2. Our worship and prayer are to be heart based not simply surface - if I cannot love the "brother" whom I can see, how can I love God, his creator, Who I cannot see? - I John 4:20
3. This extends to the whole aspect of obedience and accountability to God in general; how can I expect to be heard and answered accordingly when I am acting in malice, pride, envy or bitterness?
4. We strive to "get along" not because of what it will profit us nor because of the other's cooperation, but because it is the will of our Father

G. Disregard for the needs of others - Pro. 21:13

1. "He who shuts his ear to the cry of the poor..."
 - a. Those who know of the need of another and avoid it
 - b. The need is of the "poor" - those weak/ without stability - the root idea of something "dangling" barely hanging on
 - c. It is not one who does not see or know of the need, but the one who sees and tries to avoid it
2. This is one of the reasons God allows us to see or discover needs
 - a. God brings them our way so that we are privileged with the opportunity to participate in the answer/solution
 - Pr. 17:5 — b. Our disregard for others is in reality our disregard for their creator
3. This person will also be one who will "cry" and not be heard
4. Our hearts (true selves) are revealed in our responses to the burdens others bear as God sends them our way

V. Prayer as Being One Way God Designed that “Things” Get Done

A. God is sovereign over all in His all-powerfulness He has decreed prayer as one means to get His will accomplished

1. This by no means contradicts God’s overall control - things may or may not happen because we pray or we do not but this cannot be taken to make us believe that things can be ultimately altered wrongly because of us

This is the first usage of this word in the Bible

2. Gen. 20:1-20 - God in His control stopped Abimelech from sinning (held him back) and yet clarified that he would be healed as Abraham “prayed” (palal - interceded) for him

3. Yet, in James 4 James mentions they “have not” because they “ask not”

a. Literally you “do not hold it” because you do not beg/ask for it

b. The idea behind “ask” is a great desire needing to be expressed

c. Many times we will not “have” because we do not truly desire it enough to bring it before God

sensual/carnal delights

d. Or as clarified in verse 3 our asking contradicts God’s plan and caters to our desires solely (lust to obtain and consume)

4. No doubt, much of our prompting to pray is from God and not of us

B. Prayer is a constant reminder of our dependance upon Him

1. In I Samuel 1 Hannah had a desire for a child which became more intense every year and with taunting from a “rival”

2. All this led her to begging God for a son and to offering a vow

3. The vow was, no doubt, her expression of her willingness to sacrifice

what she would cherish from God’s granting this request - it carried more “weight” with God only in that it was in accordance with His will as clearly He had led her (in her desperation) to this point

Samuel means “heard of God”

4. God had pre-ordained Samuel but Samuel would come as a result of Hannah’s desperate request before God

5. Desperation does not dictate that prayer will be answered as we expect or want as illustrated with Paul’s request

6. It is again in our benefit to bring our discouragements, fears, and longings before God, not with the purpose of perfect agreement with our will but in a needed “act” of bringing them before the throne of God, trusting His perfect perception of them and His perfect dealing with them!

7. God “marked” Hannah for the plan to bring about Samuel - when it states that the “LORD remembered her” it literally means to be “marked to be recognized” for an intended purpose

8. Jonah was brought to a point of prayer when trapped and his circumstances were horrific - Jonah 2:1 - “Then Jonah prayed”!

9. As when in great grief, fear or excitement we need to tell someone or talk with someone, so it is with prayer - circumstances being used to direct our attention to God in need or gratefulness

C. When we do not pray (or refuse to) there will be consequences

1. Asa in II Chron. 16:12 was faced with a disease in his feet and it was stated that he did not “seek the LORD” but only sought the doctors

2. We do not know why he did not seek the Lord but only that he died as a result of his disease

3. Would the prayer have saved him? - the point was his misdirected focus

*The significance
and responsibility
of public prayer*

- D. Prayer together with others directs all to a unified focus/dependence
1. It can and does collectively _____ **calm** _____ the fears/anxieties
 2. Fear is a controlling factor and prayer to God redirects the fear in light of Who God is (if we are rightly taught Who He is)
 - a. Fear (proper and improper) is _____ **dominating** _____
 - b. This is why what/who we “fear” is important to determine
 - c. Mt. 10:28-31 - The fear of God rightly intimidates and comforts
 3. We must seek, though, to avoid the “ritualistic” prayer with each other
 - a. Express _____ **honestly** _____ what is on the heart
 - b. Talk _____ **respectfully** _____ but in verbiage you normally use
 - c. Strive to openly demonstrate faith and submission - do not mislead others listening and develop misdirected expectations
 - d. God receives much criticism by those who believe they can “lock Him in” by their requests, and others can be discouraged when they do not see God acting in accordance with their expectations
 4. Overall, though, praying with someone is one of the most gracious and effective means to encouragement
 5. Prayer can also be a tool to redirecting the reverence of a group remembering the presence and watchful eyes of God - Pr. 15:3
 6. Even just praying privately and others seeing can be intimidating to those who do not revere God for Who He is - this may be one of the key reasons public prayer is being “attacked” by our society - even prayers where no words are spoken audibly!
- E. Praying together, bearing grief together was illustrated by our Lord - Mt. 26:36-41
1. At the pinnacle of grief and beginning of suffering the Lord took His disciples with Him to “watch” with Him while he prayed (be with Him)
 2. His prayer was an expression of desire and a submission to God’s will - this was true preparation for the trial to come
 3. He returned to find the disciples sleeping - “could you not watch one hour?” was His question - our Lord did not need this fellowship of prayer but _____ **desired** _____ it nevertheless
 4. The instruction: watch and pray that you do not enter into temptation - the idea being that you do not fall in it; it was coming but they were not preparing with _____ **alertness** _____ and directing their desires to God
 5. The reason: the spirit in us is willing (by work of God’s Spirit) but our flesh is “weak” as if sick by the affects of sin’s influence
 - “The spirit is eager enough to endure and to overcome the temptation, but the flesh in us is “weak”, utterly helpless in temptation, a drag and terrible handicap to the spirit in us.” Lenski
 6. We will often see things get done and accomplish more as we pray together, and the act of prayer itself will be a challenging influence to strengthen the spirit of those around us and rightfully direct our focus where it belongs
- F. Prayer, to get things done, does not require _____ **perfect** _____ faith - Acts 12:1-17
1. Peter had been imprisoned and was supernaturally released
 2. A group of believers were gather to pray in Mary the mother of John Mark’s house - we are unsure the content of their prayers

3. When Peter was released he came to the house and knocked until Rhoda answered. In her excitement, she did not open the door (knowing Peter's voice) and told the others who did not believe or the pessimists thought it must be his ghost
 4. God still worked though they had little faith even while praying
- F. In the process of getting things done, there will be challenges to the working of God in the fulfilling of it
1. The example of the prayer of Daniel in Daniel 9:20-23; 10:10-14
 - a. From the moment he prayed, the answer (response/command) was issued from God to Gabriel
 - b. "At the beginning of your supplication the command was issued"
 - c. Time will also be a part of the answering and fulfilling of a request and need in prayer - patience is waiting on God in faith
 2. We cannot discount that God will prove His rightness and power to not just humanity but to all the spiritual realm as well!
 - a. Satan and his cohorts are constantly at work to hinder God's working
 - b. The greatness of God is worked out in the realm of time with the spiritual beings as it is with us
 - c. Who knows what a stir may be caused with our feeble prayers?
 3. Another angel, Michael, was sent to the aid of Gabriel
 4. The answer, as ordered by God, came 21 days after it was requested
 5. In Jude 1:9 we read of the spiritual battle for the body of Moses
 6. So, we must be alert that even when our prayers are hindered by what we see and possibly by what we do not see, our focus must not be upon these hindrances, but upon the God Who is the giver of the answer and limitless in His fulfillment
 7. The greater the challenge to the God of our prayers the greater the glory in His conquering answer and action!
 8. Part of the objective of God in the working through our prayers is His making, as it were, a public display of His conquering of the enemies
- G. Even when the situation is realistically hopeless, we still bring our requests to God, leaving it fully in His hands as David in II Sam. 12:15-23
1. It was after the confrontation of Nathan with David that the child was sick
 2. After the death of the child, David explained that prayer and fasting were no not needed as the answer was done - self-pity, unending grieving or bitterness are of no profit and will not sway God
 3. It can and will bring us assurance in a final answer that it was in God's hands and we can better accept a answer against our will knowing that He knows best
- H. Prayer is our expression and practice of the "fear of the Lord"
1. It is our looking to Him to get things done
 2. It is our seeking His approval as we seek to get things done
 3. It is our admission of our failing to seek His working/will and acting in independence from Him in or own thinking and strength
 4. Our lack of praying to get things done demonstrates our self-reliance, either in our own perspective and frame of reference or in our strength

VI. The Lord's Prayer - John 17 (for the disciples and for us)

A. The prayer for "glory" in the coming time of trial - vs.1

1. He speaks to the "Father" (as to one fully involved in the family dealings)
 - a. This is an honored privilege "bought" for us by Christ - Mt. 23:9 (call no man "father" - this attacked a custom of the Jews who called their rabbis, "father" GBN)
 - b. The Lord was demonstrating, openly, the new relationship they would have with the Father
 - As pictured in the tearing of the Temple veil at His death
2. The "hour is come" - God's timing was precise
 - a. He did not run from it (He was submitted to its necessity)
 - b. He was ready always for God's hour

3. Glorify Me so as to glorify You

"Even by his sufferings; when he was crucified, he was magnified, he was glorified, John 13:31. It was in his cross that he conquered Satan and death; his thorns were a crown, and Pilate in the inscription over his head wrote more than he thought." MH

- a. This is the key purpose of glory on this earth - use it for God's promotion before men
- b. Was this prayer "answered" - clearly, yes, so it identifies the truest glory
 - (1). His submissive response in light of false accusations glorified God
 - (2). His innocence in the face of hateful lies glorified God
 - God need not be glorified by the agreement of all men!
 - (3). Sacrifice of some sort (on many levels) is needed to truly bring glory to God
- c. The best "glory" is to be used to demonstrate the grace and purposes of God in events or circumstances that appear (to the human eye) as failure or "bad"

B. Acknowledging pre-ordained ability (authority) - vs. 2-4

1. He has power (mastery, jurisdiction) over all "flesh" (no thing is out of His control)
 - It is an acknowledging that all will take place as He planned (His mastery would be initially evidenced in humility before it would be seen as glory)
2. That all "given to Him" He would give eternal life (no fleshly thing can prevent this)
3. He provides "life eternal" - how to obtain it and what it is
 - a. Eternal life is to know the true God (more than a perception but intimately)
 - b. Eternal life is to know Jesus Christ (as the lit. "Anointed Savior")
 - c. Thus, eternal life is only (strictly) obtained (and maintained) through Christ alone!
4. God was glorified by "finished work" - vs. 4
 - a. "I glorified You" in finishing (perfect example for us) - do not wait to complete a work God has given (the goal is to finish facing death with readiness) - II Tim. 4:7-8
 - b. Glory to God comes in the work He gives us (not the work we "conjure up" to give God)

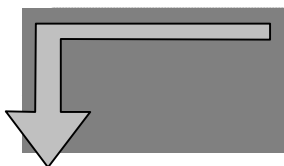
C. The "perfect prayer" - vs. 5-10

1. "Glorify Me with Thyself" - let the glory seen in me be what directs others to God's glory
 - a. That all I do evidences God's active working and control
 - Do we seek to evidence God in our works? (are they simply opportunities to self-honor or proof that God is "performing the work" in me?)
 - b. This is to be our drive - I want God seen in me (as not master of myself)

- c. The idea is literally, “bring glory next to you...”
 - (1). With Christ, this was positional glory (as God Himself)
 - (a). He was before the world was (pre-existence)
 - (b). He had the same glory as God beforehand
 - (2). With us, it is glory from (by) association (as we are, by nature, to glory on this earth with the associations we seek to identify ourselves with)
2. The supreme example of God’s calling - vs. 6-8
- a. Making “manifest” the name of God
 - (1). Openly declare the name of God - share and speak (confident/no shame)
 - (2). To make apparent - others aware of His working (giving credit)
 - (3). Availing self of opportunities to express/show the character of God
 - b. Faithful to those whom God sends (as those belonging to God) (also vs. 9)
 - He sends others to us (or places us with those we are “called to”)
 - c. The goal is to have it clear that what comes from us is of God - vs. 7
 - (1). As the disciples, we want to be known as “keeping” His word (protecting)
 - (2). The words we speak carry weight when they can be shown to be of God
 - d. Speak the words given to speak (as taught by God) - no self-agenda
 - (1). The goal is to be a conduit (channels only!)
 - (2). The Lord was solely focused on the will (objective) of God at any moment
 - John 8:28; 12:49
 - e. To God be all glory!! (all else is misdirected)
3. A Special calling - vs. 9-10
- a. The Lord openly distinguished between the “world” and those that are His
 - b. The request concerned only those that are His
 - (1). We were “given” to Him (to glory in Him and live for His work)
 - (2). We are His as those purchased at a “price” - I Cor. 6:20; 7:23
 - Thus, we are to glorify God in our body and spirit which are His and are not to view ourselves primarily as the servants of man
 - c. We are to view ourselves as purchased slaves who were originally condemned to death
 - It then becomes a true “rags to riches” story (those who seem most “worthy” in the earth see themselves as giving themselves to God so as to earn merit. Those who are truly His see themselves as having been given to God not based on any personal merit.
 - d. We, in turn, have a master Who can claim all that God has as His own
 - Trust in His resources, not what is “earthly” - I Tim. 6:17 - we can then be assured, that as we do His work, we will never lack needed provision to do it!
- D. A Privileged calling - vs. 11-16 (remaining representatives of the Lord)
- 1. He clearly stated He was leaving and that they were remaining
 - Compare it to finishing an incomplete project of a deceased loved-one only on a higher scale
 - 2. He prayed for “oneness” as He exemplified with the Father (Eph. 4)
 - Unified goals are the best method to avoid competition and pride (He gets the credit)
 - 3. Key points of our calling to keep us on-track
 - a. It is His work (we are unqualified on our own)
 - b. “He does not pray that they might be rich and great in the world, that they might raise estates and get preferments, but that they might be kept from sin, and furnished for their duty, and brought safely to heaven. Note, The prosperity of the soul is the best prosperity; for what relates to this Christ came to purchase and bestow, and so teaches us to seek, in the first place, both for others and for ourselves.” MH
 - c. As we set goals, they must be “in-check” with the Lord’s and subject to change at His beckoning call
 - d. Lead, work with, and follow others as they lead, work for and follow the Lord!
 - This requires a studious seeking to know the Lord foremost!

4. His complete work involved “keeping them” in His name - vs. 12
 - a. To preserve them from apostasy - total betrayal (as Judas)
 - b. Two words for “kept” - an example to mimic
 - (1). The first “kept” - to watch (keep focused on) - Alert
 - (2). The second “kept” - to guard (beware), protection - Brave (sacrifice)
 - c. None was “lost” - destroyed fully
 - Except Judas - yet his betrayal fulfilled a plan (he was not one of the “given”)
5. His complete work involved their participation in (fulfilling) His joy - vs. 13
 - a. As he left, he was stating the reality of things to clarify where their joy would lie
 - b. His joy would find fulfillment in them (His joy in victory over evil, in bring glory to the name of the Father, and His joy in the presentation of redemption)
 - (1). Our joy is then to be defined (found) in what brought our Lord joy - seeing as this is our calling in His prayer (that what God instructed was done)
 - (2). This reveals the ultimate source of discontentment - living for what (in my limited frame of reference) I see as joy not what He stated and demonstrated as bringing fulfillment
 - c. Paul’s joy was seeing the believers remain “stationary” in the Lord - Php. 4:1
6. We are real “aliens” in the world as the apostles - vs. 14-16
 - a. They were given the Truth (not as the world could conjure) - it stands in contradiction
 - b. As those who cannot (must not) fit in, the world hates their non-conformity
 - (1). “They are “in the world” (εν τῷ κοσμῷ, verse Joh 17:13) still and Christ sends them “into the world” (εις τὸν κόσμον, verse Joh 17:18), but they must not be like the world nor get their spirit, standards, and message “out of the world,” else they can do the world no good.” RWP
 - (2). The world hates them because they are not “of” the world
 - (a). To be “of the world” one must agree to its priorities
 - (b). To be “of the world” one must change (conform) with it
 - (c). To be “of the world” one must respect/honor its gods
 - (d). To be “of the world” one must live for the world as if it is permanent
 - (3). The world will think us “strange” - I Pet. 4:1-5
 - We do not go to their extremes so we will be called “extreme”
 - c. The goal is not a quick entry into Heaven (the safe haven) - vs. 15-16
 - (1). We are not called to safety from harm or challenge - actually, we must be harmed, challenged and hated in the proving of this Truth and fulfillment of the joy of Christ
 - (2). We are not called to seclusion but to the “front lines” - a soldier who hides may live, but has failed in his fundamental purpose and calling
 - (3). The goal is protection from contamination, conformity, and collusion
 - (4). As noted before, we glory in as much as we associated with the object of our glory - if we glory in the Lord, we will not strive to conform to the world, yet will take pleasure in not fitting-in in the manner and degree that He did not fit in (we are not of the world as He was not)

**Society at Large
will Press for
These**



E. A calling of Separation- vs. 17-19

1. “Sanctify them...” - Consecrate, separate to something and from something
 - a. Set them as yours! - as God’s possessions
 - b. This being set apart is to be in contrast to the external appearance

On constant “call”! ————— (1). The heart, mind and will need to be set aside for God’s purposes

- Conquering Distractions* — (a). The heart directed to God and His desires
- (b). The mind is disciplined to focus on God’s Truth
- (c). The will is bent (through force/pressure) to God’s will (agreement)
- (2). This is the process of preserving (guarding) from “the evil” just mentioned
 - c. God is asked to do the sanctifying - Apostles are not instructed to work this out

2. By Means of Truth - "...through thy truth, thy word is truth."
 - a. The reality of how things are (and must be)
 - b. It is not just the mental knowledge (knowing of the Truth)
 - (1). It is reaching the inescapable conclusion that all is answerable to God
 - (2). It is the submissive attitude to the will of God at work at all times
 - That this is being done in me
 - (3). It is the acceptance that God is always right
 - Also, acknowledging that am most apt to be wrong, thus a state of focused dependence on God becomes my life outlook!
 - c. This is what Christ *IS* doing with the Church - Eph. 5:26
 - (1). "Bathing" us in the Word of Truth - either by our searching it out or our being led to it by need
 - (2). The "washing" here pictured the preparing for the marriage (possibly like that of the preparing of the bride for a king) - Esther 2:12 - "six months"
 - It was an ongoing process for "fitness" (preparation for the meeting)
3. It is a process - I Thes. 5:23
 - a. Progressive sanctification! - vs. 23 "...sanctify you..."
 - (1). "The sanctification is not wrought in one instant, as many perfectionists imagine, but is a steady development." - *R.C.H. Lenski*
 - II Pet. 3:18; Eph. 4:15
 - (2). When one is sanctified they are made...
 - (a). Holy - set apart (from worldly dominations)
 - (b). Consecrated - set aside for God's purpose
 - (c). Pure - without any blemish
 - (3). It is the day by day removal of "wrong" replacing it with righteousness
 - (a). It starts at the "surface" - outward flaws (evidences)
 - (b). It drives to the heart - mental / character flaws
 - The inward "reasons" I crave carnality - James 1:13-14
 - (c). Sanctification at work can be identified, not in the lessening of known sin, but in the greater awareness of previously unknown sin! - Rom. 7; Psa. 51:17
 - b. Complete sanctification!?! - "...wholly..."
 - (1). The goal is to be holy "through and through"
 - (a). This word "sanctify" is in the rare Greek optitive mood
 - (b). The optitive communicates a wish (as if an impossible wish)
 - (2). It is the "God of peace" Who will do this in us!
 - (a). The ultimate responsibility for my growth rests with Him (relief!!)
 - (b). This peace keeps us from despair over our flaws
 - God "graces" us with the ability (opportunity) for the next step
 - Frustration sets in when I expect to move too fast
 - Frustration sets in when I assume I am farther than I am
 - I am to expect & plan for present failure to be future victory!
 - c. God is faithful - vs. 24 (we can fully depend on Him)
 - (1). Why would He call us to what cannot be achieved?
 - He will do the achieving!
 - (2). "Peace is that inner tranquility resulting from divine acceptance and growing assimilation to the divine image which is wrought by God and sustained by His Holy Spirit." - *John Eadie*

Though, the surface is not changed, truly, till the inner man is changed

4. We are infiltrators not conformists - vs. 18
 - a. As the Lord was sent into the world so we are sent
 - b. Not as one who fits-in (strangers, pilgrims, aliens)
 - Though, not a calling to just visit, but to contradict - Mt. 5:13
 - c. Ambassadors for Christ - II Cor. 5:20
 - Representing the interests of the one Who sent us (not ours)
 - d. To affect change in the world, not the world in us
 5. Our Lord set apart Himself to enable others to be set apart - vs. 19
 - a. His purpose was not defined by the world - John 18:36 (kingdom)
 - We, in turn, must not seek it here either
 - b. He had to be totally “sanctified” to make them way for our sanctification
 - c. That others would be sanctified
 - (1). We not only sacrifice and fight off sin for self’s sake but for others
 - (2). Our sacrifices (battles) can ease the growth in others
 - (3). Our compromises can also hinder the growth in others
 - d. That they would be sanctified in Truth
 - (1). Thus, there is a false form of sanctification (attempted through the law)
 - (2). The true sanctification was done for them and to them through Christ
- F. The prayer includes us! - vs. 20-21
1. All that would believe on Him
 - All that would stake their earthly lives and eternal souls on His word and work
 2. That there would be oneness - vs. 21
 - a. They would be one as He and the Father were one
 - (1). One in purpose - the glory and work of God
 - (2). One was pictured as obedient, the other as all powerful and loving
 - b. That they would be one in the Lord - for His purposes
 3. For unity, there needs to be...
 - a. A focused purpose - the will of God usurping personal wills
 - b. Eph. 4 - prerequisites and definition - vs. 1-6
 - (1). “lowliness” - modesty of mind (modest self estimate)
 - (2). “meekness” - gentleness; mildness (controlled responses)
 - (3). “longsuffering” - patience
 - (4). “forbearing” - fortitude (able to put up with much) (idiosyncrasies)
 - “in love” - in genuine concern for their best
 - (5). Effort - actually trying to maintain unity (watch it as guarding it)
 - (a). Unity of the Spirit (not just of love but of truth, not how I see love or truth, but how He clarifies it really is!)
 - (b). Drawn by the “bond of peace” - what holds them together (this is a basic fact in life; I associate and fellowship with those with whom I am at peace. It is a bond)
 - (6). Remember the reality of how things are established by the Lord
 - (a). There is ONE body (we are individual parts of the whole)
 - (b). There is ONE Spirit (we will change He will not)
 - (c). There is ONE Hope - only found in the Lord, not man (or any)
 - (d). There is ONE Lord - Christ, whom all believers serve
 - (e). There is ONE faith - one belief (truth) and object of faith
 - (f). There is ONE baptism - only one true identification with the Lord
 - (g). There is ONE God - “...who is over all, and through all, and in all.”
 - c. We are to be endeavoring (trying) - conflict is not our initial attempt

**WE NEED THESE
TO CONTINUALLY
REMEMBER THESE!**

G. The honor of union and identity with Christ - vs. 22-23

1. As Christ was glorified in His union with the Father
 - So we are honored in our association with the Son
2. His sanctifying work wrought for us what would have been an inconceivable status change
 - Being sanctified He is not "... ashamed to call them brethren." - Heb. 2:11
3. It is where we seek our honor which will bring us oneness and completeness
 - a. Self glory, or honor with respect of persons brings improper divisions
 - b. "He knew the imperfections of even the best of men. He saw how prone they would be to passion and ambition; how ready to mistake love of sect or party for zeal for pure religion; how selfish and worldly men in the church might divide his followers, and produce unholy feeling and contention; and he saw, also, how much this would do to dishonour religion." Barnes
4. The constant focus of "Christ in me and the Father in Him"
 - This sets (defines) and maintains purpose - work in harmony with Him
5. This leads to outward "proof" of the authenticity of the ministry of Christ - "world may know"
 - a. This partly explains the enemies focus on "divisions" in the "body"
 - Satan will seek to exploit divisions to discredit the message and authority
 - b. Choose battles properly - fight for what the "Union" fights
 - The battles of the Lord were for the glory and obedience to the Father
 - The battle of the believer is for the "cause" not for the "self"

True honor is not found in "Me" standing out, but in the glory stemming from known association with the Son

H. Final words - vs. 24-26

1. "I will" - the desire of all - be in Heaven, but what is Heaven?
 - a. That they may be "with me"
 - (1). Heaven is the personal meeting with the One we owe all
 - (2). Heaven is the full realization of love and security found in our Savior
 - b. That they may be with me "where I am"
 - (1). In Heaven as the final abode (no more wondering or change)
 - (2). In Heaven as the "dwelling place" of God
 - c. That they may behold "my glory"
 - (1). The proof of His limitless power
 - (2). That all that was said was true and worth it
 - (3). The eternal exploration of His limitless creation
2. In the meantime, they are in a world that has not known Him
 - a. But He knew and declared the Father (and continues) in the Spirit and followers
 - b. That the love of the Father would be in them
 - This would be in stark contrast to the despising of this world which knows not Christ not Him that sent Him
 - c. It is this love and hope that will sustain - hopelessness is that lack of focus on what is guaranteed to come (already our possession)
 - d. Knowing this, I need not...

These are the general enemies to the cause of Christ!

- (1). The security of the world
- (2). The love and adoration of the world
- (3). The glory of the world
- (4). The hopes the world clings to and offers