

How Do You Pray? (3)
The Power of Petition in Faith
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Introduction: Prayer is an expression of our thoughts and motives to God.

- A. Prayer has no value at all unless our entire being is committed to God with the goal of making His thoughts our thoughts.
 - 1. Jesus well demonstrated this truth in His prayers. **(Mt 26:39)**
 - 2. What God has to offer really does not appeal to the worldly!
 - 3. When you enter into prayer with God you need to know what He offers and what He does not offer. **(1 Tim 6:6-8)**
- B. When God answers prayer it is always for our ultimate good.
 - 1. What does God want me to become? **(Rom 8:28-29)**
 - 2. What things will make us more like Jesus?
 - 3. Sadly some view God as “the great vending machine.” They will receive nothing from God because they do not understand the very purpose of faith. **(James 1:6-8)**
 - 4. Imagine having the power of God behind our prayers! **(Eph 1:18-19)**
 - 5. So far we have discussed praise and confession in our series.

I. Prayer must be offered within the will of God

- A. Look at the great potential that we have in prayer. **(1 Jn 5:14-15)**
 - 1. Did you read this passage? Do you want the will of God?
 - 2. Immediately we see something we should not pray for. **(1 Jn 5:16)**
 - 3. Should we be bothered by this limitation? Only if we do not know God and in that case you are not a son of God and have no rights to pray.
- B. Consider the components of the will of God, His purpose, His desire and His permission!
 - 1. There are some things God has willed to do and man cannot prevent it. **(Isa 14:27; Acts 2:23)**
 - 2. Most often “the will of God” refers to God’s desire and man’s decision. Man must choose to yield to God for His blessings. **(2 Pt 3:9; 1 Tim 2:4)**
 - 3. It can also refer to man’s decision and God’s permission. **(Acts 18:21)**
- C. It is very comforting to know that God is in control.
 - 1. Do we have enough faith to really mean “as you will?”
 - 2. Do we have enough faith to truly wait on the Lord?
 - 3. Jesus responded to one request by saying “you know not what you ask.” I am so glad that God does not give us what we want but what we really need. **(Mt 20:21-22)**

II. Prayer must be offered with the right motive

- A. Our motive is crucial in an acceptable prayer. **(James 4:1-3)**

1. Two people pray for the same thing and only one receives what they ask.
 2. Consider two people who ask for a job. What is the real reason you ask?
 3. Our prayers can well reveal our hearts. Are we carnal or spiritual?
- B. If you were to draw a pie chart of the components of your prayers what would it look like?
1. Imagine being in a relationship where the only time you hear from another is to ask for something for themselves. "Give me. Give me!"
 2. The teacher asked the class "Do you pray ever day?" One little boy said: "NO. Some days I can not think of anything I want."
 3. Are you the most fervent and diligent in prayer only when petitioning God?
- C. We have to get out of ourselves and into becoming a servant to be blessed by prayer.
1. Many treat God as a servant boy to be called on only in time of need.
 2. "All we have left is prayer" is said to show how desperate a situation has become. This is not the attitude of a Christian.
 3. Those who approach God like this will have a rude awakening.
(Prov 1:28-31)
 3. What might you be praying if the end of your life was at hand?

III. Jesus teaches us how to pray

- A. We pray to God as a son. **(Gal 4:6-7)**
1. There is a real sense of the love and care of the Father.
 2. There is also a sense of privilege. Whose son are you?
 3. There is also a great need of the provisions of the Father.
- B. A true son will want the same things as the Father.
1. Jesus' purpose in life was only to please the Father. **(Jn 8:29)**
 2. What if this prayer was offered for you and I? What would it really mean, drop dead or stronger health? **(3 Jn 2)**
- C. Have you ever noticed the events that followed lengthy prayers of Jesus?
1. After one all night prayer He selected His apostles.
 2. On another occasion Peter was tested to walk on the water.
 3. Jesus always looked to the needs of others. Consider John 17.
- D. What should we pray for? **(Luke 11:9-13)**
1. Dating.
 2. Child raising.
 3. Wisdom.
 4. Daily needs.
 5. The lost.
 6. Other Christians.
 7. Deliverance from our enemies. **(Psa 7:1; 27:11-12; Psa 31:1-5)**

Conclusion: What a privilege we have to pray to God!