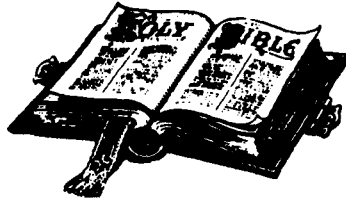


THE INSTRUCTOR



"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." 2 Timothy 3:16

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PRAYER — SOME QUESTIONS!

A consideration of the following questions about prayer in light of the teaching of the Scriptures should be beneficial to each of us.

I. WHAT IS PRAYER? Webster's Dictionary defines "pray" to mean, "to address God with adoration, confession, supplication or thanksgiving." Prayer involves man speaking to God. In prayer man expresses the desires of his heart to god. Prayer may consist of praise, thanks, confession, petition and intercession. (Cf. Isaiah 25:1; 2 Chron. 6:14; 1 Peter 4:11; 1 Thess. 5:18; Psalms 32:5; 51:1-19; 1 John 1:8; 5:14-15; 1 Tim. 2:1-2).

II. WHEN SHOULD CHRISTIANS PRAY? Daniel went into his house (with the windows of his chamber opened toward Jerusalem) and kneeled and prayed three times a day. (Daniel 6:10). The Psalmist declared: "As for me, I will call upon God, and the Lord shall save me. Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice." (Psalms 55:16-17).

Luke 6:12 records the fact that Jesus prayed at night. In fact on

this occasion He prayed all night. (NOTE: This does not mean that all of His prayers were at night.) We learn from Acts 10:9 that Peter went upon the house-top to pray about the sixth hour. (This would be about noon.) Paul prayed on different occasions when he was about to depart from brethren on a journey. (cf. Acts 20:36; 21:3-6). He prayed day and night.

Negatively speaking, Christians should not pray only during "prayer day," "prayer meeting" or a "week of prayer," etc. Neither should they pray only in time of trouble, affliction or distress.

Positively speaking, Christians should pray "without ceasing," "always," "steadfastly." They should "continue in prayer." They should continue "instant in prayer." (See 1 Thess. 5:17; Eph. 6:18; Acts 2:42; Col. 4:2; Rom. 12:12).

Without question, Christians should pray often and pray with regularity. They should pray in times of joy and happiness as well as in times of sorrow, sadness, affliction, trouble and distress. Christians may pray any hour of the day or night and on any occasion.

(Continued on page 3)

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Editorial . . .

BENEFITS OF BELIEVERS

John 3:16 declares: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." No doubt, this is one of the most familiar verses in the Scriptures. Thousands can say it from memory. However, relatively speaking, only a few people understand it. This passage is one of the most misused, abused and perverted passages in the Bible.

Let us consider a number of passages and see some of the **benefits** (or blessings) of the believer.

1. THE BELIEVER HAS ACCESS INTO GOD'S GRACE! Paul said: "By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God."

2. THE BELIEVER HAS A PURIFIED HEART! Peter declared: "And put no difference between us (the Jews — CRS) and them, (the Gentiles — CRS) purifying their hearts by faith." (Acts 15:9).

3. THE BELIEVER HAS REMISSION OF SINS! At the house of Cornelius the apostle Peter said: "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." (Acts 10:43)

4. THE BELIEVER IS JUSTIFIED! Romans 5:1 says: "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

5. THE BELIEVER IS BORN OF GOD! John declared: "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: . . ." (1 John 5:1).

6. THE BELIEVER HAS PEACE WITH GOD! Paul said: "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Romans 5:1).

7. THE BELIEVER SHALL NOT PERISH! John 3:16 declares ". . . that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, . . ."

8. THE BELIEVER IS SAVED! The jailor at Philippi was told to "Believe on the lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." (Acts 16:31). The following verses show that faith is a condition of salvation and therefore only believers can receive salvation.

(1) 1 Cor. 1:21- ". . . It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."

(2) Romans 10:9- "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."

(3) 1 Tim. 4:10- ". . . Because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe."

(4) Also see John 3:15-18.

9. THE BELIEVER HAS ETERNAL LIFE! The following verses show that one must believe in order to receive eternal life.

(1) John 3:36- "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: . . ."

(2) Also see John 5:24; 3:16; 6:40.

SUMMARY: The believer has access into grace, has his heart purified, has remission of sins, is justified, is born of God, has peace with God, shall not perish, is saved from past sins and will be saved eternally!

(Continued on page 4)

PRAYER — SOME QUESTIONS!

(Continued from page 1)

III HOW LONG SHOULD A PRAYER BE? Some people seem to be of the opinion that unless prayers are a certain length (or within a certain length of time) they are not acceptable to God. However, the Word of God does **not** teach that prayers must be a certain, definite period of time in order for God to accept them.

There isn't much said in the Scriptures about how long people prayed. However, we can read the accounts of some prayers and learn something about their length. We have a recorded prayer of David in 2 Sam. 7:18-29 which would take about **two or three minutes** to pray. In 2 Kings 18:36-37 the prayer of Elijah probably lasted **less than 30 seconds**. The prayer of Solomon at the dedication of the temple was probably **five to eight minutes** long. (cf. 1 Kings 8:22-61).

The prophets of Baal called on Baal from morning till noon (probably about six hours), but Baal did **not** answer. In contrast, Elijah's prayer consisted of **60 to 70 words** but God in heaven heard and answered his prayer. (cf. 1 Kings 18:27, 36-38).

We learn from Luke 6:12 that Jesus **“ . . . went out into a mountain to pray, and continued ALL NIGHT in prayer to God.”** However, the recorded prayer of Jesus in John 17 consisted of about 500 words and probably would have lasted **three to five minutes** in length.

The prayer of the disciples in Acts 1:24-25 consisted of **only about 41 words** and probably lasted **about 15 to 20 seconds**. The recorded words that the disciples prayed in Acts 4:23-31 seems to indicate that their prayer didn't last more than **two or three minutes**. It seems that the prayer of Jesus on the cross consisted of **only ten words**, probably lasting **only four or five seconds**. (cf. Luke 23:34). The model prayer that Jesus gave to His disciples (in Mt. 6:9-13; Lk. 11:2-4) can be prayed in **30 seconds or less**.

In the first century hypocrites would **“devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: . . .”** (cf. Mt. 23:14). Jesus said that hypocrites **“ . . . think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.”** (cf. Mt. 6:7).

It is obvious from the evidence that a Christian may pray **a few words** (about ten or less) as Jesus did in Luke 23:34 or pray **all night** as Jesus did in Luke 6:12. No doubt, the occasion, circumstances, etc. would be determining factors as to how long a person prays at any given time.

IV. IS IT WRONG TO USE REPETITIONS IN PRAYER? Since Jesus said, **“But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking,”** some people have erroneously concluded that it is wrong to use repetitions in prayer at all. NOTE: The Lord said **“VAIN repetitions!”** He did NOT say, **“repetitions.”** There is no evidence in the Scriptures that it is wrong to **use repetitions** in prayer as long as hearts are right and motives are pure. Please observe the following examples of **repetitions** in prayer.

1. In his prayer to God in 1 Kings 8:23-53 Solomon used the expression **“Lord God”** at least four times. He used pronouns referring to God more than 50 times. He used the expression, **“thy servant David”** at least three times; **“thy people Israel”** at least six times and **“hear thou in heaven”** at least six times.

2. In his prayer to God in 2 Kings 19:15-19 Hezekiah used the expression, **“Lord”** two times and included it in three other expressions.

3. In His prayer to God in John 17 Jesus said **“Father”** three times: **“Holy Father”** two times and **“O righteous Father”** one time. He used the expression, **“thou has sent me,”**

(Continued on page 4)

four times and stated the same fact in other words two times. He prayed at least five times that disciples “**may be one.**” Twice He prayed that the Father would “glorify” Him (the Son). We learn from Mt. 26:36-44 that on the night of His betrayal that Jesus prayed three times, “**saying the same words.**” NOTE: This expression **may** modify only what he said the second time **not** what he said the first time as recorded in v. 39.

Obviously, it is **not** wrong for Christians to **use repetitions in prayer** as long as their motives are proper. However, repetitions become “**vain**” when they have no meaning or are prompted by improper motives.

V. IS IT WRONG TO QUOTE SCRIPTURE IN PRAYER? Some people criticize and joke about those who quote portions of Scriptures when they pray. Some say: “There is no use in telling God what He already knows.” Of course, God already knows

everything we tell Him in prayer. But this fact does **not** mean that it is sinful to pray to God.

In his prayer in 1 Kings 8:23-53 Solomon cited what had been taught in the Scriptures. In verse 29 he said: “. . . **of which thou has said, My name shall be there.** . . .” NOTE: This truth had been taught in Dt. 12:11 and 14:23.

In Acts 4:24-30 the church (with the apostles present) prayed. In their prayer they quoted from Psalms 2:1-2. Of course, God knew what had been said by David in the second Psalm.

The evidence is clear! It is **not** wrong to tell God something in prayer that He already knows! It is **not** wrong to quote Scripture in prayer when appropriate and motives are proper.

BENEFITS OF BELIEVERS

(Continued from page 2)

It is obvious from the information in other passages that the believer that will receive the above blessings is the **OBEDIENT believer!**

— SENTENCE SERMONS —

Giving free advice is not always a sign of generosity.

* * * * *

Marriages must be properly maintained to be permanent.

* * * * *

When it comes to spotting the faults of others, we all seem to have 20-20 vision.

* * * * *

Experience may not be worth what it costs, but we can't seem to get it for less.

* * * * *

Rumor is one thing that gets thicker as you spread it.

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