

August 14, 2011
(NKJV)

I. EXAMINE THE PRAYERS IN THE BIBLE

A. **Positive in focus** - Our praying is not problem centered. Rather, it is focused on faith, hope, love, and releasing God's grace, mercy, peace and victory instead of focusing on negative realities like sin, division, the Devil or demons.

B. **God-centered.** Directed to God –We do not pray to satan about demons. We often focus too much on the problems. We give the time and glory to another. Oh me, me, me. My problem, her problem, our church's problem, our nation. But the prayers in the Bible are more God, God, God. What is God doing?

1 Cor. 14:2 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.

C. Always in line with **God's will**. When we pray God's Word, we can't go wrong. It originated in God's heart.

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

II. PRAY FOR THEM TO KNOW GOD TRULY

Ephesians 1:17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him.

A. Our greatest need is to know God as He truly is. This is almost always the greatest need of your loved ones, ministries, cities, nations, or governments that you pray for.

B. People need this vital ministry of the Holy Spirit. 7 is a number of completeness, perfection.

Isaiah 11:2 The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, The Spirit of counsel and might, The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD (c.f. Rev. 4:5).

C. People often have inaccurate and false beliefs about God. Satan's main strategy is to "blind the eyes of our heart" with darkness (depression, despair, addiction, condemnation, confusion, boredom, hopelessness, and aimlessness, etc.). If this is Satan's strategy, Eph. 1:17-19 is a powerful prayer!

2 Corinthians 4:4-6 whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.⁵ For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake.⁶ For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of

darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

1. Some see God as a demanding father who is never satisfied with our performance. So people rebel.
2. Some see God as a harsh task-master who doesn't let them do whatever they want to. They do not understand that God has designed life to work a certain way and He wants us to live life to its fullest.
3. Some people see God as distant and not directly involved in the affairs of mankind. Why would God be interested in me?
4. We must see the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

III. TO EMBRACE THE HOPE OF GOD'S CALLING

Ephesians 1:18 the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.

- A. One of the most fundamental longings of the human heart is to participate in that which has deep and lasting significance and relevance. If we have nothing to die for (to give everything for) then we have nothing to live for, therefore, we live bored. We must have a clear sense of destiny knowing that what we are to do in our partnership with God is valuable to Him.

1 Corinthians 1:27-29 But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; ²⁸ and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, ²⁹ that no flesh should glory in His presence.

- B. Hope is not based on our circumstances.
1. It is easy to despise the day of small beginnings or to be discontent with our measure of gifting, opportunities.
 2. Greatness in God's Kingdom is measured differently than the standards of this age.
Mark 9:35 And He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, "If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all." NKJV

- C. It takes supernatural insight to see what God calls important (how He evaluates our life) and to see God's calling in our life.

Matthew 25:21 His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'

IV. TO ACCEPT HOW GOD FEELS ABOUT THEM

Ephesians 1:18 the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.

- A. The next specific request relates to who we are to God and thus, how God feels about us. By choosing us as His inheritance, God has revealed His passion for us. We are what He most desires.

Song of Solomon 4:9 You have ravished my heart, My sister, my spouse; You have ravished my heart With one look of your eyes, With one link of your necklace.

Song of Solomon 1:5 I am dark, but lovely, O daughters of Jerusalem, Like the tents of Kedar, Like the curtains of Solomon.

- B. Jesus came to die for us. He redeemed us, paid the price for our sins so that we now belong to God. Once we understand what has happened to us, we begin to live differently.
- C. The fact that God loves them is one of the most difficult things for people to comprehend.
1. God loves me if I _____. No, God loves you because of what Jesus Christ did for you in redeeming you.

V. TO EXPERIENCE GOD'S POWER

- A. Paul now emphasizes how we are to live out our life: our calling and identity in God: We must not be content with powerless Christianity. Rather, we contend for NT Christianity that experiences the power of the resurrection for our heart, ministry, our direction, protection and provision in life. We will live spiritually bored and depressed if we do not experience God's power in a growing measure.

1 Corinthians 2:4-5 And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, ⁵ that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

- B. We must believe God for the "greater works."

John 14:12 "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father.

CONCLUSION:

- A. You are called to invite and invoke God's Kingdom in the lives of those around you. Believe God to break in with His grace and power over marriages, families, businesses, governments.

Matthew 6:10 Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven.

James 4:2 You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask.

John 16:24 Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.

- B. Continue earnestly in prayer. The parable of the persistent widow who sought for justice from a judge who did not fear God nor regard man.

Luke 18:1 Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart. [NIV: that they should always pray and not give up].

Colossians 4:2-3 Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving;³
meanwhile praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains.