

INTRODUCTION:

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

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

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

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.

- B. Examine the Prayers in the Bible: pristine jewels of insight into the heart of God for us and for those we care about. If God will send angels in response to your prayers and displace demonic powers, it would be good to know how to pray with power and conviction.

1. **Positive in focus** - Our praying is not problem centered (prayer worrier). It should be focused on faith, hope, love, and releasing God's grace, mercy, peace and victory instead of focusing on negative realities like sin, division, all of the things that are wrong in the world.

2. **God-centered** & directed to God –We do not pray to satan about demons. We give the time and glory to another. 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.

3. Always in line with **God's will**. When we pray God's Word, we can't go wrong.

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.

Philippians 1:9-11 And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment,¹⁰ that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ,¹¹ being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

Prayer for God's love to abound in our heart resulting in discernment and righteousness.

I. PRAY THAT THE LOVE OF GOD WOULD ABOUND IN KNOWLEDGE

A. Love is the first and greatest commandment.

Matt. 22:37-38 Jesus said to him, “ ‘You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’³⁸ This is the first and great commandment.

1. God is after your heart's response of love. This is what you are able to give to Him.

B. Religion or legalism (simple definition) is engaging in spiritual activities to earn favor from God. Legalism puts us on a spiritual rollercoaster of never-ending ups and downs that leaves us exhausted. Legalism is a heavy yoke that we are not meant to carry.

1. How can you tell if you are living under legalism?

a. Flesh pride when you are doing well. “I'm doing well! Yahoo! How can *you still* be so weak? I'm better than you.”

b. Beating yourself up when you fail. “I failed! God hates me!”

2. People in our culture think that religion and legalism is the Gospel of Jesus Christ, so they do not open to the love of God. The Gospel is that no one can live well enough. When you think you are doing well, it's not good enough! Jesus redeems us by His work on the cross. We are forgiven of our sins.

3. Religion is the counterfeit of true love for God. Both love and religion look similar on the outside. Both will pray, fast, give, serve, and “live for God.” But, at the core (the heart), they are completely different.

a. One is living out of guilt shame, and condemnation or the other extreme of pride and arrogance and false security.

b. The other is living out of love. Love becomes the motivator. Fear, guilt, shame, are motivators. But love is the greatest motivator. People may come to Christ if they are afraid to go to hell, but that is a secondary motivator. It's the kindness of God that draws us to repentance (Rom. 2:4).

C. It all starts from knowing God. Knowledge results in love. The more we get to know how good, merciful, patient God is, the more we open to His love.

II. PRAY THAT THEY WOULD HAVE DISCERNMENT

A. To have discernment is to have perception, understanding, and judgment. Knowing what is right and wrong, what is healthy and dangerous to the soul.

B. Discernment results from the heart of love – “That you may approve the things that are excellent.” Once we perceive and experience the love of God, it “defines” for us what is good and evil.

Psa 34:8 Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good; Blessed is the man who trusts in Him!

C. God’s laws are for our blessing. People don’t like rules and laws because they feel judged. If God judges me, why would I want to go to Him?

1. People don’t draw near to God because they feel that their lives are inconsistent with what the Bible says. “I don’t want to go to church because the Bible says don’t do this, don’t do that and I do those things!”

2. e.g. if someone loves the game of basketball, they would know the rules. If someone doesn’t follow the rules, the game is not enjoyable. Not bounce the ball, don’t respect others and have full contact to the face when going to the basket.

3. God’s laws are for our benefit and enjoyment. God designed life to work a certain way. People try to break those laws thinking that they will find pleasure and contentment, yet they are more empty than before.

4. Realize that even God’s laws and rules are out of love for you.

D. With discernment, one can approve the things that are excellent.

1. When our taste buds are “shot” we can’t perceive the true nature of something.

2. This results in a life of sincerity (pure, uncontaminated, sincere) without offense (blame). Literally: judged by sunlight, unalloyed, pure. It’s free from hypocrisy, deceit, and wickedness.

3. You want to grow in sincerity, don’t just try harder and go for discipline in your life. This is needed, but knowing God and loving Him comes first if you want it to endure.

E. Discernment allows one to be filled with the fruit of righteousness. They can choose a life that prospers and blesses others around them.

1. Do you want your life to “count?” What will be said of you when your life is done? Will your life be one of “significance?”

2. A true life of significance does not come from your education or relative success in relationships, business, and society. The fruit of righteousness comes through Jesus Christ and brings glory and praise to God.

CONCLUSION

- A. Commit to pray the prayers in the New Testament over the people that you care about.
- B. Open your heart to grow in the love of God abounding in knowledge and discernment. Meditate on the beauty of God, the attributes of God, and the actions of God.
- C. Become a follower of Jesus Christ or rededicate your life to Him.