

Setting Our Biblical Foundation On THE Rock

Part 5

BASIC PRAYER: HOW WE TALK TO GOD

We have learned why we can trust and believe the Holy Bible, why we need Belief, Faith, Repentance and Baptism. We have learned the God Family consists of God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ and that the Holy Spirit is how God accomplishes His work and expresses His will. God grants us the gift of the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands at Baptism. It is through the Holy Spirit we grow in grace and knowledge.

So, after progressing to this point, how do we proceed? Does God have an extended plan after we have repented of our sins and have been forgiven? Yes, He does.

We have all been called by God to this place. We have come from different religious backgrounds and have been taught how to pray – or have we?

In this study we will learn how we are to communicate with God, how we are to grow in Grace and knowledge and how we should pray.

During His ministry Jesus explained we are not to do things in a public, in the sight of men in order to be seen by them. If we do He tells us we have received our reward, the praise of men and have no reward with the Father.

Beware that you do not bestow your alms in the sight of men in order to be seen by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father Who is in heaven. Therefore, when you give your alms, do not sound the trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and

in the streets, so they may have the glory from men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward.”

(Matthew 6:1-2)

He relates this same guide in relation to prayer a few verses later.

“And when you pray, you shall not be as the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, in order that they may be seen by men. Truly, I say to you, they have their reward.”

(Matthew 6:5)

We are to do these things in private, not looking for earthly reward but only the reward of the Father. Keep His word and live your life accordingly and it will show. Others will notice the change in you.

The apostle Peter in his last epistle before he was killed warned the members of the true church of God to hold fast to that which they had learned, the true facts of the faith, from those who had witnessed it firsthand. Peter was realizing, as were the other apostles and as had been told to them by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 24:4-5), men had and would come into the church to spread falsehoods and change the Word of God. Peter explained this heresy could only take hold if the followers fell into a state of complacency.

“Therefore, beloved, since you know this in advance, be on guard against such practices, lest you be led astray with the error of the lawless ones, and you fall from your own steadfastness; Rather, be growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be glory both now and into the day of eternity. Amen.”

(2 Peter 3:17-18; also Mark 13:22-23; Ephesians 4:14-15;

1 Peter 2:2)

This verse in 2 Peter tells not only those in the scattered and persecuted church to grow, but it also applies to us now, those who are baptized, have received the Holy Spirit and are sanctified. We need to, "...Be growing in grace and knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." This is our duty as believers.

"Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the elect strangers scattered in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia; Who have been chosen according to the predetermined knowledge of God the Father, by sanctification through the Spirit, unto obedience and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ."

(1 Peter 1:1-2)

To accomplish this we need to diligently study the written inspired word of God, His Holy Bible, and pray.

HOW DO WE PRAY

Prayer, simply stated, is talking to God. As baptized members of the church of God it should be easy, right? Many of us were brought up in other churches and while there, we prayed. I was brought up Catholic and was taught to pray to God, to Jesus, to the Virgin Mary and the Saints, pray the rosary and to statues. Whew!

I was listening to a Christian radio station a few weeks ago and heard a priest say the only way the world is going to get out of the trouble it is in is for all of us to fervently pray to Mary, the mother of God. She is the only one that can get us out of this trouble. Is that what we are told in the Bible? Did Jesus instruct us to pray to His earthly mother or His apostles or the saints? No, He did not.

First, we want quiet, one on one time with God. Do not rush out into the living room and shout out you are going to pray. Do

not head to the street corner to pray in public in front of men. We saw that will be their reward. Instead, Jesus has guided us in how we are to pray.

“But you, when you pray, enter into a private room; and after shutting the door, pray to your Father Who is in secret; and your Father Who sees in secret shall reward you openly.”

(Matthew 6:6)

Jesus goes on to tell them not to use *vain repetitions*, there is no need because the Father knows what you have need of.

Jesus had been praying. When He finished one of His disciples asked if He would teach them to pray as John (the Baptist) had taught his disciples. Jesus said to them,

“When you pray, say, ‘Our Father Who is in heaven, hallowed be Your name; Your kingdom come; Your will be done, as in heaven, so also upon the earth. Give us our bread as needed day by day; And forgive us our sins, as we ourselves also forgive everyone who is indebted to us; and lead us not into temptation, but rescue us from the evil one.’”

(Luke 11:2-4; also Matthew 6:9-13)

This has been called “The Lord’s Prayer”. It is more accurately called the model prayer asked for by the apostles, and given to them by Jesus.

Notice, He told them to pray to the Father. Our relationship is to be with God the Father and His son, Jesus Christ, not anyone or everyone who may be named in the Bible or a statue of anyone. He tells us to pray to God the Father. He gives us the model prayer and tells us, “When you pray, say...” Notice, what He is implying is that you are to pray. Not if you pray but, when you pray. Our prayers are to be done privately between us and God the Father.

In the model prayer we should notice a pattern. God the Father is acknowledged as *Our Father Who is in heaven*. We call

out to God the Father, we hallow or make holy His name. He is the creator God of the entire universe and we are to acknowledge this and show Him proper respect. We praise Him and all His glory. We are to approach our prayer session with a humble spirit. *Your kingdom come; Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.* We acknowledge Him as the most powerful being in the universe.

We must remember these two points. Jesus said,

“I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me.”
(John 14:6)

“No one can come to Me unless the Father, Who sent Me, draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day,”
(John 6:44; also, John 6:65)

We are drawn in, called, by the Father to be part of the God Family. As we have previously studied, we are to believe that He is and that His begotten Son Jesus Christ died as a sacrifice for our sins, we are to have faith that all we learn in His word is truth, to understand we are sinners, truly repent of our sins and be baptized and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands. We are to pray to Him through His Son, Jesus Christ who is our intercessor and High Priest.

“He has the power throughout all time to save those who come to God through Him because He is ever living to intercede for them. For it is fitting that we should have such a High Priest Who is holy, blameless, undefiled, set apart from sinners and made higher than the heavens.”

(Hebrews 7:25-26; also, 1 John 2:1; Romans 8:34;

Hebrews 4:14-16; 1 Timothy 2:5)

Eternal life is knowing God the Father and Jesus Christ.

“For this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God,
and Jesus Christ, Whom You did send.”

(John 17:3)

Our true faith and spirituality hinges on our relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ. When we pray we have direct access to God the Father. Prayer is our means of establishing and maintaining communication with the Creator God.

The more we pray to God and study His word the better chance we have of becoming more like Him. He wants us to love, honor and obey him unconditionally. He wants us to have a giving attitude and character as He does. He wants our prayers to reflect the change in our lives. We can pray nonstop forever and if we do not change our lives and conform to Gods way of life, we *worship in vain*.

We need to have and maintain strong faith. Will we stumble from time to time? Of course we will, but the Spirit itself makes intercession for us.

“Now in the same way also, the Spirit is conjointly helping our weakness because we do not fully understand what we should pray for, according as it is necessary, but the Spirit itself makes intercession for us with groanings that cannot be expressed by us. And the One Who searches the hearts comprehends what the strivings of the Spirit are because it makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.”

(Romans 8:26-27; also, Acts 1:24; Ephesians 6:18
1 John 5:14)

“According to the will of God”. What is it? In our case it is the work of perfecting the holiness of our heart. He is reproducing Himself in us. For the remainder of our life we must be

overcoming our earthly way of life and submitting to and perfecting a godly way of life. As we have seen, our reward is not from the accolades of men, nor should we want it to be, but from our God Who promises eternal life. We need to be holy as He is holy.

Since we were born we have had the spirit and carnal nature of the ruler of this world, Satan. We have been called by the Father and now need to work to be separate from the world. We began the journey when we decided to acknowledge we are sinners and repent. We are now to grow in the grace and knowledge of God and transform our sinful old self into a new creation.

“However, if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, then we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, His own Son, cleanses us from all sin.”

(1 John 1:7; also 1 Peter 1:19; Ephesians 1:7; Hebrews 9:14; Revelation 1:5)

Prayer is our means to speak to and communicate with the Father. We must always begin with a humble and repentant attitude. He is the Creator of all things and we have been granted access to Him.

He wants us to do His will in all that we do. That includes our prayers to Him. When we do His will we are actually showing Him that we are beginning to think like Him. He is being imparted to us through the Holy Spirit.

Prayer is sometimes referred to as a one sided conversation. Is it? We pray to God regularly. His will gets imparted to us. We begin to think more like Him. When we do make a mistake, what happens? Some may call it conscience but is it really? Could it be that as we turn our life around and pray and study and grow in grace and knowledge it is God speaking to us as that “Little Voice” letting us know we are beginning to stray from His word or path? Based on my experience, I would say it is. He talks to all of us in different ways. He will remind us we have entered a

covenant relationship with Him and He does not want us to fall or fail. That "Little Voice" reminds us of that.

As our faith grows we will find ourselves wanting to talk to God, to pray, more and more. Remember, faith is very important.

"Now without faith it is impossible to please God. For it is mandatory for the one who comes to God to believe that He exists, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him."

(Hebrews 11:6)

Now, as new believers we must develop a habit of praying. As we read above, find a quiet room away from everyone and everything. Get on your knees and with a humble and repentant attitude, acknowledge our heavenly Father and have a heartfelt conversation. He knows our hearts. We can hide nothing from Him. An old saying goes, "Thirty days does a habit make." Make it a habit. Talk to and walk with God daily and it will become a great habit. Some days I get side tracked and do not pray at my "usual" time. I get a feeling I have missed or forgotten something. I stop what I am doing and get right – I get back on the path. If I do not, my day seems ruined.

A closing note; many people will not pray when they stumble or fall. It is almost as if they are embarrassed to appear before God. Please think of this, He knows everything. Why would He not know you stumbled? This is when it is important you go to pray. Show God you are repentant. Ask for forgiveness. It is all part of growing and maturing in the faith. It also shows you are developing that godly attitude and character He so much wants us to have.

