

Prayer

Jim Downing

I. Introduction.

- A. Prayer is a universal gift.
- B. “Satan trembles when he sees the weakest saint upon his knees.”

II. Four aspects of prayer.

A. Worship and adoration

1. Worship and adoration is the occupation of heart with God Himself.
2. Worship is giving unto the Lord the glory due His name and worship Him.
 - a. Giving glory to God is talking to Him about His Person and work. (Psalm 29:1-3, 45:8-9, 104:1)
 - b. There is thanks for salvation, then for sustenance, and finally for enjoyment of one another, which is the most important part.
 - c. One can borrow the words of Scripture to praise God. (Psalm 104:1, Revelation 4:11)

B. Praise. (Psalm 100:4)

1. Praise is the occupation of the heart with blessings.
2. There are more commands for praising than for prayer. God is more concerned that one talks about the things He has done than ask Him about the things He will do.
3. The example of “Praying Hyde,” who was adamant about praying for people to come to Christ. When he failed to worship God, his prayers were not answered.
4. God provides the victory when we praise. This is important because it allows us to put God into proper perspective. We are laying hold of God’s willingness not His reluctance. (2 Chronicles 20)
5. We are to honor God with the magnitude of our requests.

C. Petition. (James 4:2)

1. Petition is occupation of the heart with needs.
2. God has purposed and therefore He has promised certain things to His people. Prayer is not the office to change God’s plans or purposes. Prayer is the office by which we lay hold of God in harmony with His promises.

- a. God never does anything except in answer to prayer - John Wesley.
 - b. It has pleased God to voluntarily limit Himself to our praying.
 - c. The deliverance of the Israelites was dependent upon prayer. (Genesis 15:13, Exodus 12:40, Deuteronomy 20:6-7)
4. We do not need a lot of words to ask appropriately. Petition is like a trigger that only takes a small touch for a big reaction. (Malachi 3:10, James 3:3-4)
 5. One should have a prayer list primarily focused on people.

D. Intercession.

1. Intercession is the occupation of the heart with the battle.
2. The enemy is constantly constructing road blocks to one's salvation, but the believer can pray away any objections they have to Christ with the exception of their own sovereign will.
3. In intercessory prayer we also counteract Satan for the one we are praying for often at the moment they need it the most.
 - a. It is more by prayer than by counsel that your children are kept close to God.
 - b. In certain things it appears that God has limited Himself to our praying.
 - c. In intercession we are required to stick with it unlike petition. It may be that then the Devil sees we mean business, he will depart for a season.

III. Conclusion.

- A. There is nothing that we can do without God. God has determined that through human effort a man will not do anything that has eternal significance. (John 15:5)
- B. If God has limited Himself to prayer, then any area that is lagging must be due to our lagging in prayer.

Application questions.

1. Summarize the four areas of prayer. Choose which one you find to be most important and explain.

2. What does intercession look like? Why is it so essential?

3. What is the nature of God's interaction in the world through prayer? How should this properly affect your own prayer life?
