

Sanctuary Praying

The purpose of this newsletter is to help people pray in a practical and biblical way. We are told:

“Prayer is heaven’s ordained means of success in the conflict with sin and the development of Christian character. Divine influences that come in answer to the prayer of faith will accomplish in the soul of the suppliant all for which he pleads. For the pardon of sin, for the Holy Spirit, for a Christlike temper, for wisdom and strength to do His work, for any gift He has promised, we may ask; and the promise is, ‘Ye shall receive.’”—*Acts of the Apostles, 564.1.*

The key to abiding in Christ is found in the Sanctuary. Coupled with a few practical Scriptural pointers, your prayers can be transformed into something powerful.

The First Principle

Do not pray a spiritless prayer. Seems simple! But what does it mean? Jesus tells us in John 6:63:

“It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.”—John 6:63.

A spiritless prayer is prayed without the Word of God. The Bible is filled with “exceeding great and precious promises” (2 Peter 1:4).

These promises were given that we may claim them in prayer. A prayer with no promises is a spiritless prayer.

God has given us a promise for every difficulty. It’s fair to say that He has given more than one promise for every situation. We have to seek these promises; and, when we find them, we should incorporate them into our prayers.

“God’s promises are conditional. In order to make it possible for Him to bless us, we must do our part. We cannot expect that all His blessings will come to us naturally, if we fold our hands in inactivity. We are to be laborers together with God. It is our privilege and duty to labor for souls ready to perish.”—*2 Sermons and Talks, 195.*

Let us look at a few promises; they will be underlined and the conditions will be in bold.

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”—1 John 1:9.

“Good and upright is the Lord; therefore will He teach sinners in the way.”—Psalm 25:8.

“For Thy name’s sake, O Lord, pardon mine iniquity; for it is great.”—Psalm 25:11.

“Preserve me, O God: for in Thee do I put my

trust.”—Psalm 16:1.

“I have set the Lord always before me: because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.”—Psalm 16:8.

“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth [severely criticizes or scolds someone] not; and it shall be given him.”—James 1:5.

“If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?”—Luke 11:13.

As we can see, some of these promises are given because of the character of God. Psalm 25:8 is an excellent example of this. Because the Lord is good and upright, He teaches sinners the way of life. When we claim this promise, we would pray something like:

“I praise you because you are good and upright, please lead me in the way of life for Your namesake.”

This prayer gives evidence that we have faith in who God is. These promises were not given so we can lecture the Lord about what He has said. They were given so our faith can find a resting place.

Another example of claiming promises using 1 John 1:9. We trust in the faithfulness of God to forgive us. The only requirement is that we confess our sins if we want to claim this promise. Salvation hinges upon what God can do for us and not upon what we can do for Him. We should not confess sins we have already confessed, but we can always ask for strength to keep us from falling into a sin again. If we continue to ask Him for forgiveness for a sin we have already confessed this shows that we do not believe that God is faithful. Every sin we commit should be confessed, but it only needs to be confessed once. Not dwelt upon and continually confessed. We will not remember all our sins, but we can pray Psalm 19:12. Our duty is to confess and trust. We cannot of ourselves repent; it is Christ that cleanses us of unrighteousness: it is Christ that implants new motives and desires in our hearts:

“The Bible does not teach that the sinner must repent before he can heed the invitation of Christ: ‘Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.’—Matthew 11:28. It is the virtue that goes forth from Christ, that leads to genuine repentance. Peter made the matter clear in his statement to the Israelites when he said, ‘Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.’ Acts

2 5:31. We can no more repent without the Spirit of Christ to awaken the conscience than we can be pardoned without Christ.”—*Steps to Christ*, 26.2.

Promises help us pray prayers of faith. We do not pray them in order to remind God of what He has said, but to remind ourselves and strengthen our faith.

“Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.”—Romans 10:17.

The Second Principle

Pray prayers of faith. What does this mean? Part of it is certainly about claiming promises in prayer, but Mark 11:24 helps us understand more about prayers of faith:

“Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.”

A faithless prayer is a repetitive prayer. We ask again and again because we do not believe we have been heard. But what about the parable of the persistent widow? The judge finally gave her what she wanted because she continually asked. This parable was a contrast. If this unjust judge would give the widow what she asked, how much more will your loving heavenly Father answer your prayer? There is nothing wrong with renewing your request daily; after all, the mercy of God is renewed morning by morning. In fact, we should daily renew our prayers. But our prayers should not be long and repetitive as if we were begging God to give us something.

An alternative to repeating a faithless prayer is thanking God for hearing our previous prayer. Instead of repeating every hour, “Please provide my needs according to Your riches in glory,” instead thank God that He will provide your needs.

“God is not a man, that He should lie; neither the son of man, that He should repent: hath He said, and shall He not do it? or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?”—Numbers 23:19.

Claim His promises and believe that God has answered them. Renew our requests once daily; but, after that, thank God for the work He is doing or thank Him for hearing you.

“There are two kinds of prayer—the prayer of form and the prayer of faith. The repetition of set, customary phrases when the heart feels no need of God, is formal prayer.... We should be extremely careful in all our prayers to speak the wants of the heart and to say only what we mean. All the flowery words at our command are not equivalent to one holy desire. The most eloquent prayers are but vain repetitions if they do not express the true sentiments of the heart. But the prayer that comes from an earnest heart, when the simple wants of the soul are expressed just as we would ask an earthly friend for a favor, expecting that it would be granted—this is the prayer of faith.”—*Prayer*, 265.

Trust and patience are important parts of prayer, we are to expect God will grant our petitions.

“Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in

Him; and He shall bring it to pass.”—Psalm 37:5.

We need to fully rely on God and hand over our concerns and desires to Him. We are commanded:

“Be careful (anxious) for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”—Philippians 4:6-7.

It is our duty to trust God instead of having anxiety about our problems. When we obey this command we will have the peace that passes understanding because we know the God who upholds unnumbered worlds will solve all our problems. We will not feel the need to spend time begging him as if He did not love us, or care for us.

There is an exception to this rule; in trial or temptation, we may claim promises (especially 1 Corinthians 10:13) many times throughout the day. We are to be vigilant (alert and watchful for danger) and sober, running to hide in the Rock, Christ Jesus, whenever we see danger approaching.

If we have asked for the Holy Spirit we should ask for more of the Holy spirit throughout the day. We should trust that God has sent His Spirit already. This is a subtle difference in prayer that serves to remind us we are abiding in Christ and receiving of the living Spirit. Once we are connected we need not ask to be reconnected. When we read the Bible, we should ask for the Holy Spirit to guide us into all truth as He has promised. If we are mindful of the presence of the Holy Spirit, He will remind us that we are abiding in Christ. He will also remind us that God is always there to help us in times of trouble.

Every morning, we establish communication with God through Sanctuary prayer; and, throughout the day, we maintain it by acknowledging our morning prayers and God’s faithfulness in the previously mentioned ways.

The Third Principle

Respect for God is greatly lacking in our time. It is almost as if the greatness of God has been forgotten. We ought to be extremely careful in our prayers to show God the respect He is worthy of.

“Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few.”—Ecclesiastes 5:2.

We often repeat ourselves in prayer for a variety of reasons. Sometimes it is to gain time to think, sometimes it is to ensure that God heard us, in case he wasn’t listening, sometimes it is to make our prayers long because we think prayer is supposed to be long. The Bible teaches that long, repetitive, tedious prayers are faithless and offensive to God.

“The prayer of Christ was in marked contrast to these long prayers with their many repetitions. The Pharisees thought that they would be heard for their much speaking, and they made long, tedious, drawn-out prayers. They lifted up their hearts in pride, and cultivated a sense of their

own superiority; but this made them appear very foolish in the sight of God, who knew their motives, and understood the selfishness and arrogance of their hearts.”—*Review and Herald, May 28, 1895.*

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There is nothing wrong with pausing in our prayers or thanking God for what comes to our mind a second time. We need to have faith that God hears us, find a more respectful way to gain time to think, and remember “All the flowery words at our command are not equivalent to one holy desire.”

The greatness of the name of God is but little understood. It does not need to be repeated in prayer. Some people punctuate their prayers with that holy name. Some people use it as a transitional phrase, or to buy themselves time to think about what they are going to say next. If we treated friends half as bad as we treat God, they would never speak to us again. Imagine someone saying your name every time they complete a sentence. Of course, your name is not holy; but the third commandment expressly forbids this kind of irreverent use. Will God hear a prayer in which someone broke the third commandment several times while praying? We should break every sinful, disrespectful habit instead.

It is also imperative in prayer that we submit every request to the will of God. He alone is of infinite understanding discerning the end from the beginning. He alone has wisdom to know what things will benefit us, and He only gives good gifts.

One might say that the way we pray is irrelevant because Christ purifies our prayers, but this is presumptuous. It's true that our prayers are presented, by Jesus Christ, faultless to our heavenly Father. But this is no excuse to not learn to pray better. If we were invited to visit an earthly monarch, we would be taught how to properly interact before we came into his presence. Prayer is designed to lift us into the presence of God. Should we not make every effort to pray properly??

Entering the Sanctuary

“Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise: be thankful unto Him, and bless His name.”—Psalms 100:4.

To begin a Sanctuary prayer, we must enter in through the gates by acknowledging God. We are to thank Him for what He has done on our behalf. Bless His name by praising His character and who He is. Many promises are given based upon His holy name; we should acknowledge this. Recall His power, His wisdom, His mercy. Jesus began the Lord's prayer in just such a way: “Hallowed be Thy name.”

This is not the only time we that we should offer praise and thanksgiving. Paul tells us that thanksgiving is a crucial part of prayer.

“Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.”—Philippians 4:6.

We should offer thanksgiving throughout our prayers. This is where thanking God for things we have already asked for is helpful. If we pray for something specific that is physical, we can thank Him that He will answer that request in accordance with His will. If we

have prayed for forgiveness, we can praise and thank God for forgiving us. If we have asked for the Holy Spirit, we can thank God for sending the Holy Spirit. More often than not there are ample answers to prayer for us to praise God for.

God deserves heartfelt praise, our praise should not be dry and formal, but specific and grateful. All who have truly seen God for who He is, will delight to praise Him and approach him in the right spirit.

“God does not desire our ceremonial compliments, but the unspoken cry of the heart broken and subdued with a sense of its sin and utter weakness finds its way to the Father of all mercy.”—*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing, 86.*

At the Altar of Burnt Offering

After we have entered the court, we come to the altar of burnt offering. Here we confess our faults; we confess our sins; we empty ourselves of self. We surrender our will to God, asking for His kingdom to be placed within our hearts. We humble ourselves, admitting our great need for God, that without Him we can do nothing. We offer the sacrifice of Romans 12:1:

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.”

We focus this portion of prayer on humble confession and surrender. Here we are to recognize our need. We pray that God will give us a love for righteousness and a hatred of evil so we can keep His Holy Law.

The Basin

Here is where we are washed and renewed into the image of God. We are born again through the water of the promises of God's Word. We pray that God will renew us after His image. We pray that God will make us what He wants us to be, that we may reflect Christ. We ask for His will to be done in our lives as it is done in heaven.

This portion of prayer is focused on specific traits of character that we want Jesus to wash out of our hearts through the promises of His Word. It is entirely possible to combine the basin and altar into one portion of prayer, since they are so closely related. Once we have prayed these things, we are ready to enter the Holy Place.

The Candlesticks

The candlesticks represent the church, and its power to witness, the light. The oil in the lamps represents the Holy Spirit that each of us has the privilege of having in us, to guide us and renew us into His image, giving us power to shine. We pray for the Holy Spirit at this time. We also pray for leaders in the church; we pray for the corporate sins of the church to be forgiven and repented of; and power for revival, reformation, and for more laborers to enter the harvest field. This portion of prayer is focused upon receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit, the power to witness that we so desperately need to be the light of the world. It is also focused on the church and it's leaders.

The Table of Showbread

4 Here is where our daily provisions may be found. Here we claim the exceeding precious promises of God on our own behalf. We present our personal requests for needed provisions and for wants. This is also the time we ask for a much deeper understanding of the Bread of Life - the Bible.

In this portion of prayer, we focus on the promises of God and claim the ones we need for that day. We lay all our burdens for self at His feet. Whatever our cares, desires, or concerns we submit them to God, asking for His will to be done.

“It is a part of God’s plan to grant us, in answer to the prayer of faith, that which He would not bestow did we not thus ask.”—*Great Controversy*, 525.2.

The Altar of Incense

Here we pray for others. This is the closest we can get in prayer to Christ; we truly come in contact with Him when we pray on behalf of others. This portion of prayer is also for our benefit, remember, when Job prayed for his friends he was healed. Prayer is not to be selfishly spent upon ourselves. We should not spend time bemoaning our condition, whether spiritual or physical, when we can pray for others more needy than ourselves.

“When men take themselves out of social life, away from the sphere of Christian duty and cross bearing; when they cease to work earnestly for the Master, who worked earnestly for them, they lose the subject matter of prayer, and have no incentive to devotion. Their prayers become personal and selfish. They cannot pray in regard to the wants of humanity or the upbuilding of Christ’s kingdom, pleading for strength wherewith to work.”—*Steps to Christ*, 101.

There are many promises that we can claim on behalf of others. We should press our petitions to the throne of God, especially for the salvation of our friends and families.

This portion of prayer focuses upon others. We should make it a habit to seek promises that we can claim on behalf of others.

What About the Most Holy Place?

The Most Holy Place contains the Ark of the Covenant. We enter under the mercy of God when we have thus prayed, and this portion of prayer is lived throughout the day. We are to trust in God’s provision, remain surrendered by constantly obeying the promptings of the Holy Spirit, and love the Lord with all our hearts and our neighbors as ourselves. Should anything of concern unexpectedly arise, we should continue singing praises and be instant in prayer for

ourselves and others. This portion of prayer is about keeping the channel of communication open, being mindful that we are in the very presence of God. When we do these things as we listen to His voice, we learn to abide in Him.

This portion of prayer is an experience. Under His wings of mercy we find our feet firmly planted upon the rock of His commandments and as long as we abide in the Spirit we will walk in His ways. Jesus will lead us in His paths and provide us with hidden manna.

“While engaged in our daily work, we should lift the soul to heaven in prayer. These silent petitions rise like incense before the throne of grace; and the enemy is baffled [extremely confused]. The Christian whose heart is thus stayed upon God cannot be overcome. No evil arts can destroy his peace. All the promises of God’s Word, all the power of divine grace, all the resources of Jehovah, are pledged to secure his deliverance. It was thus that Enoch walked with God. And God was with him, a present help in every time of need.”—*Messages to Young People*, 249.

There is a powerful promise that we would do well to meet the requirements for and claim:

“Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them.”—Matthew 18:19-20.

Find a prayer partner or two. This will greatly help our prayers, and God has promised to answer them and be with those who are praying. These are beautiful promises! God will do great things for those who exercise the privilege of prayer. My wife and I are in a prayer group of four. We pray early every morning, originally it was supposed to be for an hour but now it is consistently an hour and a half. God has been working powerfully in our lives and in the lives of those we pray for. Our faith has been increased and we trust more securely in God. It is my desire and prayer that this will be your experience too.

For a finished work



Jonathan Taylor

Wisdom is justified of all her children. -Luke 7:35

More Food for the Little Flock —