

Principles of Prayer

Definition & Introduction.

Definition.

1. Prayer is communication with God.
2. Prayer is an expression and an extension of Bible truth resident in our souls.
3. Prayer is thought. Therefore, it requires vocabulary and thinking from Bible Truth, and concentration.
4. Prayer is a measure of spiritual growth. The spiritual adult prays succinctly and in concentration, and in line with the will of God.
5. Prayer is used for the following things in the Christian life.
 - a. Application.
 - b. Confession.
 - c. Worship.
 - d. Petition (for self).
 - e. Intercession (for others).

The purpose of prayer.

1. The primary purpose of prayer is to display God's greatness to believers through His wise and timely answers to their supplications. Jer 33:3, "Call upon Me and I will show you great and mighty things which you have not discovered."
 - a. Life is full of situations in which the believer is totally helpless, and totally dependent on God.
 - b. When the believer relies on God in these situations through prayer, he gets to see God's essence and capabilities and attributes in action.

- c. In this way, prayer becomes a fantastic way in which to see God in action.
 - d. You will only recognize God's activity in answered prayer if you are oriented to Bible Truth and know Him well.
 - e. Believers who are ignorant of God's character will often misinterpret His answers, and come to erroneous conclusions about Him.
2. The secondary purpose of prayer is application. The believer has a chance in prayer to express the doctrine that he has learned to God.
 - a. Especially pertinent is the believer's expression of his reliance on the essence, capabilities, and attributes of God.
 - b. When you rely on Him in some way as a part of application, it is important to express that reliance. The Psalm remain a testimony to this very thing!
 2. The tertiary purpose of prayer is the delegation of responsibility to believers in remembering others in their time of need. > Eph 1:17-19, "I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe."
 - a. Remembering others gives us an appreciation of those who remember us.
 - b. Remembering others reminds us that we ourselves rely on the grace of God. Seeing the neediness of others should always remind us of our essential helplessness.

Prayer should always be characterized by its quality, not its quantity.

Prayer is very closely related to the essence, capabilities, and attributes of God. 2. Four principles of prayer:

The principle of grace.

1. Prayer is not the means by which you can God, by cutting some blasphemous deal with Him.
2. You do not use prayer to hire God to do what you want done.
3. You do not use it to try to get your own way, and not God's way.
4. Prayer is not designed to manipulate God.
5. Prayer was never designed to fulfill your lusts and desires.
6. Prayer is not a Christmas list.
7. Prayer does not depend on human good, or our own manufactured righteousness.
8. All too often, people try to cut bargains with God, giving Him unrealistic promises in order to gain a favorable reply in a desperate situations.
9. These prayers impugn the integrity of God, and are blasphemous.
10. Prayer depends on God at every turn, except the turn of human volition.

The quality of your prayers depend on how well you know the will of God. The will of God is revealed in Scripture, and learned through faith perception. Faith perception is a grace provision of God, a system of perception that depends on a simple trust in the truth.

The power in your prayers depend on the omnipotence of the Spirit.

The answers to your prayers depend on the capabilities and attributes of God.

Your appreciation of the answers to your prayers depend on your orientation to the character of God.

2. Therefore, prayer is not based on human power, human merit, or human thinking.

3. Instead, the effectiveness of your prayer life is directly related to your appropriation of God's grace provision in Divine power, Divine merit, and Divine thinking.
4. This means that there is never a prayer that is answered on the merit system.
5. Since grace is the principle of prayer, no believer can petition for himself or make intercession on the basis of human merit, ability, morality, production, service, or spiritual gift.
6. Every believer approaches the throne of grace on the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ who is our great High Priest.
7. God does not answer prayer because the believer is "good," moral, sincere, benevolent, religious, concerned, altruistic, talented, or possesses a pleasing personality.
8. Answer to prayer is a Divine decision, based on God's sovereignty and His approach to problem solving, which never relies on human merit.

The principle of protocol.

In order to be effective, prayer requires precisely correct procedure. An understanding of protocol brings confidence to the throne of grace.

1. The addressee of all prayer is God the Father.
 - a. Mat 6:9, "This , then, is how you should pray:"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,"
 - b. Eph 3:14, "For this reason I kneel before the Father,"
 - c. 1 Pet 1:17, "*Since you call on a Father who judges each man's work impartially, live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear.*"
2. The enabling power of all prayer comes from the omnipotence of the Spirit in the filling ministry.
 - a. Eph 6:18, "And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints." Note: Prayer

can only be in line with the will of God if it is done under the recall ministry of God the Holy Spirit.

- b. Rom 8:26, "In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express."
2. The name in which we pray is Jesus Christ. > John 14:13-14, "And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it."

In the church age, every believer is a priest unto God.

1 Pet 2:5, "you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."

1 Pet 2:9, "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light."

This priesthood gives you unlimited access to the throne of grace for the purpose of worship, confession, application, petition, and intercession.

Jesus Christ is the great high priest for all church age believers, and all prayer must be channeled through Him, > Heb 2:17, "For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people."

Because Jesus Christ is the perfect mediator, He is able to sympathize with our weaknesses, and represent our prayers to God with maximum effectiveness. > Heb 4:14-15, "Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses,

but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin."

Jesus Christ, during the incarnation, went through everything that we as humans go through, and more.

Jesus Christ is the perfect God-man, and therefore the perfect mediator between God and man.

Jesus Christ as High Priest died as a substitute for our sins on the cross.

Therefore, Jesus Christ is eminently qualified to present our prayers to God the Father.

Because of His indwelling ministry, we all have access to His High Priesthood, and ultimately to God the Father. He is the

Shekinah glory who formerly dwelt between the cherubs over the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies. This same presence now dwells in us.

1 Cor 3:16, "Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you?"

1 Cor 6:19, "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own;"

Col 1:27, "To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory."

Because of His mediatorship, His presentation is perfectly effective.

Our priesthood and the High Priesthood of Jesus Christ do not give us license to be sloppy in the presentation of our prayers.

We must pray according to His will, 1Jn 5:14.

Scripture is the will of God, > Rom 12:2, "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will."

All prayer must have right content in order to be even taken into consideration by God. You must have the truth in your soul for God the Holy Spirit to use. This can only be done through the consistent faith perception of the truth.

This means that the more Bible Truth that you have in your right lobe, the more effective your

prayer life is going to be. The real prayer warriors are doctrine warriors.

The proper mental attitude in all prayer must be simple belief in God's ability to answer according to His will, Mat 21:22, "*If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer.*"

The Law of Legitimate Need.

The Law of Legitimate Need says that petitional and intercessory Prayer is only in line with the will of God if the request is for a legitimate need.

There are three categories of legitimate need in this life.

1. Logistical, including food, air, water, clothing shelter, and possibly medical needs and transportation. Luke 11:3, "*Give us each day our daily bread.*"
2. Spiritual, including the truth, the means to perceive and use the truth, and the life circumstances that are best conducive to spiritual growth and orientation to the truth. > James 1:5, "If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him."

Eph 1:18-19, "I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength,"

2. Divine Guidance, including the means for divine guidance, which is Bible Truth, and an understanding of all the details pertinent to the situation.

The law of legitimate need applies to many, many situations.

- a. Prayer for the sick.
- b. Prayer for national leadership.

- c. Prayer for unbelievers.
- d. Prayer for believers in the cosmic system.

You pray for legitimate need, but you allow God full freedom to bless you as He sees fit. > James 5:13, "Is any one of you in trouble? He should pray. Is anyone blessed? Let him sing songs of praise."

The law of legitimate need dictates what we cannot pray for.

Relief from undeserved suffering for blessing, > 2 Cor 12:7-9, "To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me."

1. Why the believer's prayers are not answered.
 - a. Involvement in the cosmic system during prayer (exception: confession). > ps 66:18, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." > Job 35:12-13, "They cry out, but He [God] does not answer because of the arrogance of evil men. Surely God will not listen to a phony [empty] prayer [cry], nor will the Almighty regard it."
 - b. Rejection of Bible truth as the final authority for thought, motive, decision, and action, 1 Jn 3:22, "Furthermore, whatever we have asked, we receive from Him, because we continue to execute His mandates, and we keep on doing what is pleasing in His sight."
 - c. Malfunction in marriage or lack of domestic tranquility (which is a sign of cosmic involvement). > 1 Pet 3:7, "Likewise you husbands, live with your wives on the basis of knowledge as with a weaker vessel, since she is a woman, and show her respect as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered."
 - d. Prayer is not answered because of lust, criminality, jealousy, and false motivation, which neutralize prayer. Jas 4:2-3 is addressed to believers: "_You lust and do not have [what you want], so you commit murder. Also, you are jealous and cannot obtain, so you fight

and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask. You ask [in prayer] and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on pleasures.”

- e. Malfunction of faith function means the malfunction of effective prayer.

Mk 11:24, “I say to you, all things for which you ask and pray, believe that you shall receive them, and you shall be given them.”

James 5:15, “The prayer offered in faith will deliver the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up.”

The principle of relationship.

1. All relationships depend on communication for their efficient function.
2. Without communication, relationships die. Communication is the oxygen, the lifeblood of all relationships.
3. When you became a believer in Jesus Christ, you began your relationship with God. From that moment forward, your relationship with Him has depended on communication.
4. The maintenance and growth of your relationship with God depends very much on your communication with Him.
5. Prayer is communication with God. It is the maintenance of the relationship from our side.
6. Through prayer, we communicate many things to God.
 - a. Our appreciation of Him, through praise and worship.
 - b. Our reliance on Him, in His essence, capabilities, and attributes.
 - c. Our legitimate needs, both physical and spiritual.
 - d. Our concern for the legitimate needs of others.
 - e. Everything else that comes under His will.
2. God communicates His sovereign will to us through His answers to our prayers.
3. The two aspects of prayer related to application.
 - a. The veracity of God.
 1. God always keeps His word.

1 Ki 8:56, “Praise be to the LORD, who has given rest to his people Israel just as he promised. Not one word has failed of all the good promises he gave through his servant Moses.”

Isa 40:8, “The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands forever.””
2. Whenever a believer expresses faith in His word, then God responds in veracity.
3. So, the mechanics are as follows.
 - a. God communicates his message in the form of Bible Truth.
 - b. Believers get the truth into their souls via faith perception.
 - c. God the Spirit recalls the appropriate portion of truth at the time of need.
 - d. Believers respond by applying the truth and expressing that application in the form of prayer.
 - e. God responds by upholding His Word.
 - f. The two kinds of application:
 1. Application in reliance on God. > Phil 4:6-7, “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. {7} And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”
 2. Application in putting the attributes of God into action.
 3. In the first type of application, it is absolutely necessary for you to express your application to God in prayer, so that He can respond in veracity.

4. In the second type, it is not necessary for you to express the application, but it is important to thank Him later for the test, and for the way of thinking that He has provided.
5. In both types, there is not always time for formal prayer.
6. Often application situations occur in a place where prayer is inappropriate, i.e., on the job, etc.
7. Often application situations occur at a time when your concentration must be on something else.
8. In these situations application remains an exercise in thinking, no matter what kind of application is required.

Two types of application prayer:

Preparatory prayer.

- a. Definition: *Preparatory prayer is that category of prayer which believers pray in order to prepare themselves for an application situation which they are likely to encounter.*
- b. The ongoing tests of spiritual adulthood are an example of these situations.
- c. There are several legitimate things to pray for in these situations.
 1. Prayer and thanksgiving for spiritual mechanics, such as the recall ministry of God the Holy Spirit.
 2. Prayer for the ability to concentrate on the right things in the midst of pressure.
 3. Pre-orientation to the essence, capabilities, and attributes of God.
 4. Preparatory prayer gets the believer into the right mindset going into a test.
 5. Preparatory prayer serves as a vehicle for inculcation before the test.
 6. Preparatory prayer gives the believer momentum going into the prayer.

Reflective prayer.

- a. Definition: This is the category of Prayer that believers pray after a test.
- b. Whenever any test is encountered where formal prayer is not appropriate, reflective prayer is necessary to express the appropriate doctrines to God.
- c. Whenever a test is failed, reflective prayer helps to put the pieces back together.
- d. Whenever a test is passed, reflective prayer should go into the thanksgiving mode, worshipping God for His faithfulness.

The Principle of Revelation.

Answered prayer is a revelation of the essence, capabilities, and attributes of God.

Revelation during this dispensation occurs in one of three ways:

Revelation through the Word of Truth, the completed canon of Scripture.

Rom 1:17, "For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."

Rom 16:25-26, "Now to him who is able to establish you by my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, {26} but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all nations might believe and obey him—"

Revelation through the transformation of our minds by means of Bible Truth. Gal 1:16, "to reveal his Son in me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not consult any man,"

Revelation through the five cycles of discipline, as they are administered to the nations of the world. Rom 1:18, "The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness,"

Revelation through answered prayer.

Characteristics of answered prayer.

- a. The capabilities of God are all intimately involved in prayer.
 1. Omnipresence, which means that God understands all of the complexities of each of our requests.
 2. Omniscience, which means that God knows the right answer, and when to provide it.
 3. Omnipotence, which means that God has the power to answer any prayer that is within His will, no matter the difficulty.
- b. The character of God is intimately involved in prayer.
 1. God's will is righteous, and therefore He wants justice. God's answers are always just.
 2. God's will is immutable, and therefore He desires faithfulness. God's answers are always faithful.
 3. God's will is loving, and therefore He desires mercy. God's answers are always merciful.
 4. God's will is gracious, and He desires flexible proficiency. God's answers are always the best.
 5. God's will is orderly, and He desires organization and right timing. God's answers always come at the best time.
 6. God's will is sovereign, and He wants goodness. God's answers are always intrinsic and lasting good. God's answers are not mysterious. They are communicated honestly, clearly, forthrightly, and He keeps His word.
 7. God's will is Truth, and He desires veracity.
- c. To sum it up, God's answers are always an expression of His perfect and eternal will.
- d. So, when you pray according to His will, and He answers that prayer according to His will, then you see graphic evidence of His existence, and of His character.

- e. This is dramatic! This is fantastic! This is one of the greatest parts of the Christian life. This is one of the most amazing aspects of eternal life.
- f. Answered prayer becomes a great basis for worship and thanksgiving, although thanksgiving should be given on the basis of what we know from Scripture apart from answered prayer.

Principles of Revelation:

1. The will of God is His desires expressed through His character.
2. The effectiveness of prayer depends on its orientation to the will of God.
3. The more you know about the will of God, the more effective your prayers will be.
4. The more effective your prayers are, the more answers you will receive.
5. The answers to prayer are always in line with the will of God.
6. The more you know about the will of God, the better you will be able to recognize His answers to your prayers.

Motivation, thought, and the will of God.

Introduction.

1. Most petitional and intercessory prayers have two parts: What is expressed to God, and the desire, or motivation that lies behind that expression.
2. With immature believers, both the content and the motive are often at odds with the will of God.
3. With believers who know a little Truth, sometimes the motive is wrong and the content is right, while at other times the content is wrong and the motive is right.
4. With believers in spiritual adulthood, both the motive and the content begin to line up more and more with God's will.

5. God considers both the motive and the content in answering your prayers.

The answers.

1. Positive - Negative. Your petition is answered yes, but your desire behind it is answered no. Often God gets to express his sense of humor in this case.

- a. In 1 Sam 8:5-9, 19-20; the Jews wanted to have a human king they could see (petition), so they could be like other nations (desire to be happy). God answered their petition yes, and permitted them to pick out their own king. They wanted someone who was taller, stronger and more handsome than the kings of the nations around them; by this criterion they picked Saul. Their desire to be happy with a human king was answered no; Saul turned out terrible and the Jews suffered miserably as a result.

- b. In Ps 106:13-15, the Jews were tired of the great divine provision of manna, the greatest health food ever. They longed for the Egyptian meat and food they used to eat. God answered their petition yes; He sent them quail. But the desire for satisfaction or “food happiness” was not answered; instead, they suffered terribly from it and thousands died.

2. Negative - Positive. The answer to the petition is no; the desire behind the petition is answered yes.

- a. In Gen 17:18, Abraham prayed that Ishmael, the son of Hagar, might be his heir. God said no to

Ishmael becoming his heir but yes to the desire behind it—to have an heir; for he eventually had Isaac.

- b. In Gen 18:23-33, Abraham prayed that God would spare Sodom. After bargaining with God, Abraham settled with asking God to spare Sodom if there were ten believers; he was sure there were at least ten believers in that large city of perhaps 200,000 people. He was wrong; there were only three believers. The petition to spare Sodom was answered no; the desire that Lot and his two daughters be preserved was answered yes.

- c. In 2 Cor 12:7-10 Paul prayed three times that God would remove his thorn in the flesh. God answered no to the petition, because his suffering was the blessing of providential preventative suffering, designed to strengthen his spiritual self-esteem so that he might advance to spiritual autonomy, the more stable stage where one is less prone to arrogance. Hence his desire, to continue to grow in grace and so glorify God was answered yes.

3. Positive - Positive. Both the petition and desire are answered yes.

- a. In Judges 16:28, Samson was blinded and tied up in the temple of Dagon. “_“Then Samson called to the Lord and prayed saying, ‘O Lord Jehovah, please remember me and please strengthen me just one time, O God, that with one blow I may get revenge on the Philistines for my two eyes.’_” Both his petition, to strike the Philistines, and his desire, revenge, were answered yes. Why? Not because God approves of revenge, but because of the degeneracy of the Philistines. Samson was the instrument that God used. He got his strength back, wrapped his arms around two pillars of the temple, and pulled the whole thing down on all of them.

- b. In 1 Kg 18, Elijah built an altar, dug a trench around it, and prepared a sacrifice for the Lord. Then he instructed that water be poured on the offering and on the wood three times. So much water was poured that it filled the trench. Elijah then prayed that God would light his offering on the altar with fire. God answered yes. 1 Kg 18:38, “_“Then the fire of God fell down and consumed the burnt offering, the wood, the stones, the dust, and also licked up the water in the trench.” His desire was expressed in 1 Kg 18:36, “O Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, today let it be known that You are the God of Israel and that I am your servant, and I have done all these things at Your Word._” This was answered yes.

- c. In Lk 23:42-43 is the petition of the dying thief. “_“Then he kept saying, ‘Jesus, remember me when You come into your kingdom.’” This petition was answered yes. His desire was for salvation, and Jesus answered this affirmatively in verse 43: “Jesus replied to him,

‘I tell you the truth, today you will be with Me in paradise.’_”

- d. In Jn 11:41-45, the petition was for the resuscitation of Lazarus, the desire was that the bystanders who witnessed this might be saved. Both petition and desire were answered yes. Verse 45, “Therefore, many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary saw what He had done, and they believed in Him.”

4. Negative - Negative. The answer is no to both the petition and the desire; in other words, God doesn’t answer either.

Prov 28:9 “If anyone turns a deaf ear to the law, even his prayers are detestable.”

Isa 1:2-17 Hear, O heavens! Listen, O earth! For the LORD has spoken: “I reared children and brought them up, but they have rebelled against me. {3} The ox knows his master, the donkey his owner’s manger, but Israel does not know, my people do not understand.” {4} Ah, sinful nation, a people loaded with guilt, a brood of evildoers, children given to corruption! They have forsaken the LORD; they have spurned the Holy One of Israel and turned their backs on him. {5} Why should you be beaten anymore? Why do you persist in rebellion? Your whole head is injured, your whole heart afflicted. {6} From the sole of your foot to the top of your head there is no soundness—only wounds and welts and open sores, not cleansed or bandaged or soothed with oil. {7} Your country is desolate, your cities burned with fire; your fields are being stripped by foreigners right before you, laid waste as when overthrown by strangers. {8} The Daughter of Zion is left like a shelter in a vineyard, like a hut in a field of melons, like a city under siege. {9} Unless the LORD Almighty had left us some survivors, we would have become like Sodom, we would have been like Gomorrah. {10} Hear the word of the LORD, you rulers of Sodom; listen to the law of our God, you people of Gomorrah! {11} “The multitude of your

sacrifices— what are they to me?” says the LORD. “I have more than enough of burnt offerings, of rams and the fat of fattened animals; I have no pleasure in the blood of bulls and lambs and goats. {12} When you come to appear before me, who has asked this of you, this trampling of my courts? {13} Stop bringing meaningless offerings! Your incense is detestable to me. New Moons, Sabbaths and convocations— I cannot bear your evil assemblies. {14} Your New Moon festivals and your appointed feasts my soul hates. They have become a burden to me; I am weary of bearing them. {15} When you spread out your hands in prayer, I will hide my eyes from you; even if you offer many prayers, I will not listen. Your hands are full of blood; {16} wash and make yourselves clean. Take your evil deeds out of my sight! Stop doing wrong, {17} learn to do right! Seek justice, encourage the oppressed. Defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow.

Some Miscellaneous Principles Related to Prayer.

1. An agenda for private prayer.

A. Confession if necessary.

B. Worship and thanksgiving, Phil 4:6, “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.” 1 Th 5:18, “give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.”

1. This means worshipping the essence, capabilities, and attributes of God.
2. This means relating answered prayers to His essence, capabilities, and attributes.
3. This means coming to Him with a thankful and grace-oriented attitude.

C. Reliance on the Essence, Capabilities, and Attributes of God.

D. Preparatory and reflective application.

1. These categories should also be related to His essence, capabilities, and attributes.
2. In this case, application becomes worship.

E. Supplication and petition.

Prayer and the foreknowledge of God.

Isa 65:24, “Before they call I will answer; while they are still speaking, I will hear.” God hears the prayer twice: in eternity past, and at the time of the prayer. Prayers and their answers were entered into the divine decrees, so that answers, rejections, petitions, interjections, and desires are all a part of the decrees in the foreknowledge of God. God knew and answered all your prayers in eternity past.

A. This should not discourage you from praying.

B. Although God knew your prayer in eternity past and provided for it, it is still beneficial for us to pray, because we do not know the outcome.

C. When we see the outcome, we see God’s essence, capabilities, and attributes revealed, and thus come to know that He is living and active in our lives.

D. From God’s perspective:

1. He considers all of the possibilities of human history.
2. He knows when we might pray, and for what, and considers how to answer.
3. He does this for all possible prayers and answers, and then decides on the right course in every case.
4. He sets forth His Divine Decree, which contains every answer to prayer.
5. He knows our prayers and His answers, even before they occur.

E. From our perspective:

1. We pray.
2. He answers.
3. There are special prayers.

A. The sanctification of food or saying “grace” before meals, 1 Tim 4:4-5. “For everything created by God is good for food, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with gratitude. For it is sanctified by means of the Word of God and prayer.”

B. There is prayer for those in authority over us. As citizens of a client nation to God, this is a very important function for believers. > 1 Tim 2:1-2, “First of all, therefore, I request that petitions, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings be made on behalf of all mankind; on behalf of kings [rulers] and all who are in authority, that we may lead an undisturbed and tranquil life in all godliness and integrity.”

C. There is prayer for the sick, Jas 5:15.

D. There is prayer for the unsaved, Rom 10:1.

1. In this verse, Paul prayed for the salvation of unbelieving Jews.
2. Although you cannot pray that their volition will be coerced, you can pray that they will be exposed to the Gospel and have the opportunity to believe in Jesus Christ.

E. There is prayer for your enemies. > Mt 5:44, “But I say to you, virtue-love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you.”

1. Your enemy may become your ally through becoming a Christian and getting into the plan of God.
2. By praying for your enemy, you give him a chance at the greatest thing anyone could ever have: a relationship with God.

F. There is prayer for spiritual adulthood.

1. Phil 1:9, “And this I pray, that your virtue-love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment.”
2. Col 1:9, “For this reason, we also [Timothy, Titus, Luke, and Paul], from the day we heard [the Epaphras report–pastor at Colossi], we have not ceased to pray for you, and to ask that you might be filled with all metabolized doctrine of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.”

G. There is prayer for the communication and communicators of Bible Truth; for pastor-teachers, missionaries, evangelists, > 2 Th 3:1, “Finally, brothers, pray for us that the message of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honored, just as it was with you.” Heb 13:18, “Pray for us. We are sure that we have a clear conscience and desire to live honorably in every way.” Col 4:2-3, “Devote yourselves to prayer; in it, keeping alert with an attitude of thanksgiving, praying at the same time for us [teachers of Bible doctrine] as well, that God may open up to us a door for the teaching of the Word [doctrine], so that we may teach the mystery from Christ.”

H. There is the prayer of widows, that is, ladies who become single either by the death, divorce, or abandonment of their husbands. > 1 Tim 5:5, “Now she who is a widow and has been left alone, and has fixed her confidence on God, she also continues in petitions and prayers [intercession] night and day.”

Summary.

1. Prayer is communication with God.
2. Prayer is an expression and an extension of Bible truth resident in our souls.
3. Prayer is thought. Therefore, it requires vocabulary and thinking from Bible Truth, and concentration.
4. Prayer is a measure of spiritual growth. The spiritual adult prays succinctly and in concentration, and in line with the will of God.
5. Prayer is used for the following things in the Christian life.
 - a. Application.
 - b. Confession.
 - c. Worship.
 - d. Petition (for self).
 - e. Intercession (for others).
6. The purpose of prayer.
 - a. The primary purpose of prayer is to display God’s greatness to believers through His wise and timely answers to their supplications. >

Jer 33:3, “Call upon Me and I will show you great and mighty things which you have not discovered.”

1. Life is full of situations in which the believer is totally helpless, and totally dependent on God.
2. When the believer relies on God in these situations through prayer, he gets to see God’s essence and capabilities and attributes in action.
3. In this way, prayer becomes a fantastic way in which to see God in action.
4. You will only recognize God’s activity in answered prayer if you are oriented to Bible Truth and know Him well.
5. Believers who are ignorant of God’s character will often misinterpret His answers, and come to erroneous conclusions about Him.
 - b. The secondary purpose of prayer is application. The believer has a chance in prayer to express the doctrine that he has learned to God.
 1. Especially pertinent is the believer’s expression of his reliance on the essence, capabilities, and attributes of God.
 2. When you rely on Him in some way as a part of application, it is important to express that reliance. The Psalm remain a testimony to this very thing!
 - c. The tertiary purpose of prayer is the delegation of responsibility to believers in remembering others in their time of need. > Eph 1:17-19, “I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe.”
 1. Remembering others gives us an appreciation of those who remember us.
 2. Remembering others reminds us that we ourselves rely on the grace of God. Seeing the neediness of others should always remind us of our essential helplessness.

3. Prayer should always be characterized by its quality, not its quantity.
4. Prayer is very closely related to the essence, capabilities, and attributes of God.
5. There are four principles in prayer:
 - a. The principle of grace.
 - b. The principle of protocol.
 - c. The principle of relationship.
 - d. The principle of revelation.