

## Prayer

God communicates with mankind today through the Bible. Christians speak to God through prayer. Further, prayer is an expression of the heart to God and may include praise, requests and thanksgiving. However, not all prayers are acceptable to God.

God requires that prayers be sincerely offered for the right reasons. "And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward" (Matthew 6:5).

Jesus spoke a parable in which he taught that acceptable prayers are offered with true humility (Luke 18:9-14). Prayers are not to be offered thoughtlessly but should be offered with great desire; the apostle Paul felt strongly about the subject of his prayers. "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved" (Romans 10:1).

Christians are urged in the New Testament to pray frequently; "Pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17). However, only righteous souls who practice good Christian living can offer acceptable prayers. "The Lord is far from the wicked: but he heareth the prayer of the righteous" (Proverbs 15:29). "And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight" (1 John 3:22).

Jesus prayed "Thy will be done" (Matthew 6:10) and the children of God must also pray according to the will of God. "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us" (1 John 5:14). Further, acceptable prayers are offered through or in the name of Jesus Christ. "And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son" (John 14:13). "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him" (Colossians 3:17).

Additionally, prayers must be prayed with the confidence that God hears and answers prayers. "And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive" (Matthew 21:22). Christians should not underestimate the usefulness of prayer. ". . . The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16).

Yet, one cannot word an acceptable prayer to God while living in rebellion to God. Only baptized believers who are faithfully practicing Christianity are able to offer prayers which God will accept. Dear Friend, are your prayers acceptable to God?

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