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Lord Teach Us to Pray

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by Harold L. Willmington

BIBLE STUDY

Lord Teach Us to Pray

I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men" (1 Tim. 2:1).

"Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit" (Eph. 6:18).

"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God" (Phil. 4:6).

No sinner is saved without prayer, and no believer is sanctified (to grow in grace) apart from prayer. The prayer may be like Solomon's prayer (one of the longest in the Bible, with 30 verses, see 1 Kings 8:23-53) or like Peter's prayer (one of the shortest, with one verse containing three words, see Matt. 14:30), but in any case prayer must be exercised.

Prayer may be best defined as "having fellowship with God." It is more than simply talking to God, but rather talking with God. A two-way give-and-take is implied.

According to the model prayer of Jesus, which was given to us at the request of the disciples (see Luke 11:1; Matt. 6:9-13), prayer includes the following 10 elements:

A personal relationship with God: "Our Father." The word *our* signifies the believer's brotherly relationship between himself and all other Christians. While the Bible nowhere presents the universal fatherhood of God, it does declare the universal brotherhood of believers. The word *Father* signifies the relationship between God and the believer.

Faith: "which art in heaven." Paul declares that without this element our prayers are useless (see Heb. 11:6).

Worship: "Hallowed be thy name." David felt this part of prayer to be so important that he appointed a select group of men who did nothing else in the temple but praise and worship God (see 1 Chron. 23:5; 25:1,7). In the Book of Revelation, John sees four special angels who exist solely to worship God and who "rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come" (Rev. 4:8). See also Christ's statement to the Samaritan woman (John 4:23-24).

Expectation: "Thy kingdom come." This kingdom is that blessed millennial kingdom spoken of so much in the Old

Testament (see Isa. 2:2-4; 25:8; 35:1,8,10; 65:20,25) and later previewed by John in the New Testament (Rev. 20:1-6).

Submission: "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." Jesus would later give the finest example of this element in Gethsemane (Matt. 26:39).

Petition: "Give us this day our daily bread." This suggests that our praying should be as our eating—daily.

Confession: "And forgive us our debts." The blood of Christ will forgive us of every sin, but not one excuse. Only confessed sin can be forgiven (see 1 John 1:9).

Compassion: "as we forgive our debtors" (see Matt. 18:21-35 and 1 John 4:20).

Dependence: "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." While God has never promised to keep us from temptation, He has promised to preserve us in and through temptation (1 Cor. 10:13).

Acknowledgment: "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever" (see David's great prayer in 1 Chron. 29:10-19, where he actually anticipates the final part of Jesus' model prayer).

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