

# THE CONDITIONS OF PRAYER

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All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the *1901 American Standard Version* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1994). However, the archaic language has been changed with one exception, the archaic *ye* has been retained in order to distinguish the second person plural from the singular *you*.

# THE CONDITIONS OF PRAYER

We are beginning a two-part study on “The Conditions of Prayer.” In this manuscript, we will deal with the first part, “The Subjective Conditions of Prayer.” The second part, “The Objective Condition of Prayer,” will be covered in Radio Manuscript 149 under the title, “The Components and Content of Prayer.”

## INTRODUCTION

By way of introduction, there is no such thing as an unconditional prayer. All biblical prayers are conditional either explicitly or implicitly. In fact, *Yeshua* (Jesus) Himself taught at least three conditions for individual prayer: the necessity of faith; the necessity of abiding; and, the necessity of praying in His name. Thus, there is no such thing as unconditional prayer. In His own prayer life, Jesus prayed according to the will of the Father.

## I. THE SUBJECTIVE CONDITIONS OF PRAYER

### A. Personal Prerequisites

In Scripture, there are thirteen personal prerequisites to prayer.

#### 1. Sincerity

The first personal prerequisite is sincerity. This is clearly taught by Scripture.

For example, in Job 16:17, Job says: *And my prayer is pure.* It was sincere.

Psalms 145:18:

*Jehovah is nigh unto all them that call upon him.  
To all that call upon him in truth.*

Matthew 6:5 states: *And when ye pray, ye shall not be as the hypocrites: [who pray only to] be seen of men.* This is a mark of insincerity.

Mark 12:40: *for a pretence make long prayers.* Praying pretentiously is insincere. Praying in sincerity is one important prerequisite to prayer.

#### 2. Reverence

A second personal prerequisite is reverence.

Ecclesiastes 5:2 states: *Be not rash with your mouth.* Rashness is a sign of irreverence.

Matthew 6:9 teaches that we are to approach God the Father and say: *Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be your name.* When we approach God on that basis, there is a sense of reverence.

Hebrews 12:28-29 speaks about: [coming] *to God with reverence and awe: for our God is a consuming fire.*

### **3. Humility**

The third personal prerequisite is humility.

Psalms 10:17 states that: *Jehovah heard the desire of the meek.*

In Luke 18:9-14, *Yeshua* gave the story of the Pharisee and Publican. The Pharisee used his prayer time merely to inform God how lucky He was to have this Pharisee on his team; the Pharisee expressed no need and no petition, he expressed pride. The publican, however, expressed a prayer of need. It was a petitionary prayer and there was a clear acknowledgement on the part of the publican of divine adequacy.

### **4. Importunity or Persistence**

The fourth personal prerequisite is importunity or persistence.

This is taught by the parable that Jesus spoke in Luke 11:5-13. A man suddenly had a visitor. He did not have anything to serve the visitor, so he kept pestering his neighbor until his neighbor was willing to get out of bed and provide for his needs. The persistence arose out of a crisis, which prompted a petition. The reason for persistent prayer is that it will get results. The tense of verse 9 does imply continuous action and that is what persistence is: continuous action.

Persistence has three levels of prayer. The first level is that of asking: to keep on asking, for this shows that the petitioner believes enough to receive and this is important (Jas. 1:5-6). The second level of prayer is seeking: keep on seeking for the purpose of finding the answer (II Cor. 12:9). The third level is knocking: keep on knocking for the purpose of getting those doors opened (Rom. 1:9-12).

### **5. Submission**

The fifth prerequisite of prayer is submission to the will of God. We must be in submission to God's will so that we are willing to receive whatever answer to our prayers He so chooses to give.

According to Matthew 6:10, we should pray: *your will be done.*

In Matthew 26:39, *Yeshua* Himself prayed: *not as I will, but as you will.*

In II Corinthians 12:8-9, Paul himself was willing to be in submission to the will of God concerning removal of the thorn.

According to I John 5:14, we are to pray according to His will.

## **6. Obedience**

A sixth prerequisite is that of obedience.

In I John 3:22, John wrote:

*. . . whatsoever we ask we receive of him, because we keep his commandments and do the things that are pleasing in his sight.*

Prayer is not effective if it does not align itself with the character of God. By aligning ourselves with the character of God, we are characterized by obedience and God will answer our prayers because we keep His commandments.

## **7. Earnestness**

The seventh prerequisite is that of earnestness.

Luke 22:44 states: *And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly.* The context is that of the agony at Gethsemane. Three times Jesus prayed and the agony with which he prayed showed earnestness.

In Acts 12:5, we read that: *prayer was made earnestly [of the church] unto God [for Peter].*

## **8. Abiding in the Messiah**

The eighth personal prerequisite is abiding in the Messiah. This means being in fellowship with the Lord.

John 15:7 states:

*If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto you.*

John 15:1-8, the context of verse 7, is the simile of the vine and the branches. The branch produces what the vine has determined. It is the vine that determines the fruit that the branch is going to produce. If we abide in Him—if we remain in fellowship with the Lord—we ask *whatsoever* He determines. In other words, this is not a blanket promise that we get whatever we ask. But if our desires are His desires, if the fruit we are producing is what the vine wants us to produce, then our desires are His desires. In that sense, of course, God will answer the specific request.

The meaning of *abide* is “to remain,” to remain in vital contact with someone or something. It is a word that means, “to be joined with,” “to be totally submitted to,” and “to be depended upon.” So, in the context, *Yeshua* said: *If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you.*

Then in verse 10, He says: *If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love.* Thus, the way we show that we are in fellowship with the Lord is by keeping His commandments.

To *abide* in the Messiah means to be so adjusted to Jesus as to have uninterrupted fellowship with Him. A believer is abiding when he decides to conscientiously depend upon *Yeshua* as the condition for being fruitful. When He said: *my words abide in you* (v. 7) and *I in you* (v. 4), it points out that Jesus is also in submission to His Word (Jas. 1:22).

## 9. Forgiveness

The ninth prerequisite is having a forgiving spirit.

In Matthew 6:12, the context of the model prayer, *Yeshua* said that we can ask for the forgiveness of our sins because we forgive those who sin against us.

In Mark 11:25, Jesus said: *And whensoever you stand praying, forgive.*

In other words, a forgiving spirit is a vital prerequisite to prayer life. If we have a bitter spirit, we may be mouthing prayers, but those prayers are unreal and, even worse, they are not heard.

## 10. Repentance

The tenth prerequisite to prayer is true repentance. This is the point of Luke 18:13-14 when the publican prayed: *be merciful to me a sinner*, he was expressing true repentance. Merely confessing our sins without true repentance does not avail.

## 11. Righteousness and Godliness

The eleventh prerequisite to prayer is righteousness and godliness.

Psalm 32:6 reads: . . . *let everyone who is godly, pray unto you . . .*

Psalm 34:15:

*The eyes of the Jehovah are toward the righteous,  
And his ears are open unto their cry.*

Psalm 145:19:

*He will fulfill the desire of them that fear him;  
He also will hear their cry, and will save them.*

Proverbs 15:8:

*. . . the prayer of the upright is his delight.*

I Peter 3:12:

*For the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous,  
And his ears unto their supplication:  
But the face of the Lord is upon them that do evil.*

## **12. Boldness**

The twelfth prerequisite to prayer is boldness. This is the point of Hebrews 4:16. We are to approach His *throne with boldness*, in light of the fact that we have *a high priest* that can be *touched with the feeling of our infirmities* (v. 15).

## **13. Fervency**

The thirteenth personal prerequisite for prayer is fervency. James 5:16-18 teaches: *The supplication [fervent prayer] of a righteous man avails much in its working.*

### **B. The Confession Of Sins**

We need to confess our sins; we need to “wipe our slate clean” as part of our prayer life.

Psalm 66:18 states:

*If I regard iniquity in my heart,  
The Lord will not hear: . . .*

We may be mouthing prayers, but if we dwell on iniquity, the prayer is not being answered.

Proverbs 28:9 teaches:

*He that turns away his ear from hearing the law,  
Even his prayer is an abomination.*

Isaiah 59:1-2: . . . *your sins have hid his face from you, so that he will not hear.*

Confessing sin is an important element as a subjective condition. Ideally, we should confess our sins when we first become aware of them. But there are two time limits that the Bible provides. First, Ephesians 4:26 states: *let not the sun go down on your wrath*. This teaches that sin should be confessed by nightfall. Secondly, I Corinthians 11:23-33 admonishes us to examine ourselves before we partake of Communion. Confessing sin is vital to prayer life.

So when we sin, we need to apply I John 1:9:

*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

### **C. Watchfulness**

By watchfulness we mean wakefulness; the wakefulness of the body with the mind; mental alertness. This is taught by Matthew 26:41: *Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak*. Yeshua coupled watching with prayer.

That same point is made in Mark 14:38-39:

*<sup>38</sup>Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. <sup>39</sup>And again he went away, and prayed, saying the same words.*

After informing the disciples that they needed to be characterized by watchfulness, He showed them what watchfulness was by taking off again to pray. Watchfulness emphasizes wakefulness because, in this context, the disciples were sleeping when Jesus made these statements.

### **D. Faith**

Because faith is so important, we will discuss it in relationship to prayer in four parts.

#### **1. Belief**

First, we must believe. So Matthew 21:21-22 states:

*. . . have faith and doubt not, . . . And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.*

Have faith in God; for he that does not doubt, but believes that which God says will come to pass, then he will have it. All things *whatsoever* you pray and ask for, believe that you receive them, and you shall have them.

Ephesians 3:12:

*... in whom we have boldness and access in confidence through our faith in him.*

James 1:6-8: *But let him ask in faith, nothing doubting.* A doubter will not have his prayers answered, for one who doubts is *a double-minded man*.

And, James 5:15 speaks of answered prayer and calls it *the prayer of faith*.

So clearly, the Bible teaches that we must believe.

## **2. The Content of Faith**

Secondly, we need to raise a question. What is it that we need to believe in connection with prayer? We need to believe three things. This is where we exercise our faith.

### **a. The Existence of God**

First, we must believe that God is; it is important that we believe in the existence of God. Hebrews 11:6 states:

*... and without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto him; for he that comes to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek after him.*

### **b. God's Ability to Hear Our Prayers**

The second thing we must believe is that He is able to hear and answer prayer. This is brought out a number of times in the Book of Psalms.

Psalm 4:1: *... hear my prayer.*

Psalm 6:9: *Jehovah has heard my supplication, ... will receive my prayer.*

Psalm 17:1: *Give ear to my prayer, ...*

Psalm 39:12: *Hear my prayer, O Jehovah, ...*

Psalm 54:2: *Hear my prayer, O God; ...*

Psalm 55:1:

*Give ear to my prayer, O God;  
And hide not yourself from my supplication.*

Psalm 61:1: *Attend unto my prayer.*

Psalm 88:2: *Let my prayer enter into your presence; . . .*

Psalm 102:1: *Hear my prayer, O Jehovah, . . .*

Psalm 143:1: *Hear my prayer, O Jehovah; give ear to my supplications . . .*

Notice how frequently in the Book of Psalms the emphasis is upon God's hearing the prayer. The psalmist, who comes to God in these prayers, clearly believed not only that God existed but that He was able to hear and therefore able to answer their prayers.

### **c. God's Disposition to Answer Our Prayers**

The third thing we need to believe is that God is disposed to answer our prayers; that He wants to answer our prayers.

Psalm 66:19 states: *He has attended to the voice of my prayer.*

Psalm 66:20:

*Blessed be God,  
Who has not turned away from my prayer;*

Matthew 7:9-11:

*. . . how much more shall your Father who is in heaven give good things to them that ask him? (v. 11)*

Hebrews 11:6: . . . *he is a rewarder of them that seek after him.*

James 1:5-6: . . . *let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally . . .*

## **3. The Promises of God**

Thirdly, the faith must be based upon the promises of God. Philippians 4:19 emphasizes God's promises, therefore we pray.

## **4. The Prerequisite Subjective Condition to Prayer**

Fourthly, faith is a prerequisite subjective condition to prayer. This is brought out in two accounts in Scripture.

### **a. Inadequate Faith**

The first account concerns the powerless disciples who were unable to cast out a demon, found in Matthew 17:19-20 and Luke 9:37-42. From these two passages, we can draw eight deductions. First, the disciples had *little faith*; that is, too little for this occasion. Second, it is not necessary to have great faith since even the amount measured by *a mustard seed* would have been sufficient. Third, it is important to have consistent

faith. Fourth, the seed is a small thing, but it has the ability to shoot forth into flowering plants. By the same token, faith is a little thing that has great ability. Fifth, a little faith consistently applied can shoot up to great accomplishments. Sixth, correct prayer is impossible without faith, without faith we are not praying correctly (Jas. 1:6). Seventh, deficiency in faith will render prayer ineffective. And, eighth, this context of casting out a dumb demon, requires the prayer of faith.

### **b. Adequate Faith**

The second account concerns the withered fig tree, found in Matthew 21:18-22 and Mark 11:20-24. The believer must continually believe that what he is asking for is happening right now; faith is to be exercised continually. This statement implies a note of expectation. Furthermore, asking is praying and praying is asking. In Greek, the action of the verb “receive” actually takes place before the action described in the verb “believe.” What that means grammatically is: go on believing that you have received it, asking with expectancy. We are to go on believing even while we are asking knowing that God has already heard and answered our petition; maybe not the way we wanted Him to; maybe not the answer we wanted, but He has answered and we need to believe that.

### **c. The Order**

This raises a theological question. What is the order? Is it prayer and faith or faith and prayer? Mark 11:22 teaches that it is not faith in faith nor is it faith in your prayer, but your faith is in God. It is impossible to exercise faith in one’s prayer petition without at the same time having faith in God from whom the answer is going to come. So, faith in God comes first before any praying.

## **E. In Accordance With the Will Of God**

### **1. The Principles**

There are five principles of praying in accordance with the will of God.

First, God will answer every prayer positively that is consistent with His own purposes and with our own best good. In other words, God will say, “yes” to every prayer we pray that is consistent with His own purposes and for our own best good. If it is not for our own best good or if it is not consistent with His own purposes, God will say, “no.”

The second principle is that God’s will is what He purposes and plans. So if our prayer request is consistent with His purposes and plans, he will say, “yes.” If they are inconsistent, then he will say, “no.”

The third principle is that God binds Himself to answer every prayer that comes within the scope of His will.

The fourth principle is that prayer is a means of aligning our desires with the will of God. It is the means by which we grow sensitive to the will of God and, therefore, align our own desires with the will of God.

The fifth principle is that when the will of God is clear, we can ask with full confidence.

## 2. The Scriptures

There are eight specific passages where these principles are found.

### a. Matthew 21:21-22

The first is Matthew 21:21-22. Verse 21 states:

*If you have faith, and doubt not, . . . it shall be done.*

True faith aligns personal desires with the will of God and such requests are guaranteed. Whenever we ask something that aligns with His will then positive answers are guaranteed. In Scripture, a request was often based on the promises of God and, where a promise is made, it is a guaranteed answer to prayer. But if God has not made a promise in a specific category, there is no guarantee that He will answer the prayer positively.

Verse 22 states:

*And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.*

The *believing* of verse 22 is the *faith* of verse 21 and the *all things* of verse 22 are the personal desires which are aligned with the will of God.

### b. Matthew 26:39 and 42

The second passage is Matthew 26:39 and 42 with a parallel account in Luke 22:42, which records both the prayer and the answer. First is the prayer. The request was: *let this cup pass away from me*. The condition was: *not as I will, but as you will*. Then came the answer. This request was not in accordance with the will of God. The result was that the request was denied. God the Father did answer the prayer of *Yeshua* but He did not answer it the way *Yeshua* wanted because it did not align itself with His will, with His plan, or with His purposes.

### c. Mark 11:22-24

The third passage is Mark 11:22-24. Verse 22 admonishes:

*Have faith in God.*

Faith is the means of receiving answers to your prayer. True faith always aligns personal desires with God's will.

So verse 23 adds:

*... Whosoever . . . shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that what he says comes to pass; he shall have it.*

Negatively, one should *not doubt*—not doubting in what God has promised because there should be no doubt about that which God has promised. We can have doubts whether something is God's will when God has not spoken specifically or made a specific promise. But in those things that God has promised, there should be no doubt. Such prayers have guaranteed answers.

Not doubting is the negative but believing is the positive. If God has promised it, when we pray, we should believe that God will do it, and the result is, we shall have it. In James 1:5, for example, God made a promise: that those who prayed for wisdom will get it. So when we approach God and ask Him for wisdom, we need to believe that God will give it to us because this is a promise. When our prayers are based upon a clear promise of God, we have a guaranteed answer.

Verse 24 goes on to state:

*All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for, believe that ye receive them, and you shall have them.*

If the request is in alignment with the will of God, then, after praying, one should believe with all confidence that he will receive. If he believes with full confidence, he will receive, because it was a promise that God has made.

#### **d. John 14:13-14**

The fourth passage is John 14:13-14:

*... whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye ask anything in my name, that will I do.*

Again, the *whatsoever* in this verse is limited to that which will bring glory to God. If it will not bring God glory, He may not answer positively. But if it will bring God glory, He will answer. If a “no” answer will give God the greater glory, so be it. God may be glorified with a “yes” answer or He may be glorified with a no answer. Whichever way God is glorified, that is the way He is going to answer the prayer.

A good example of this is Paul's *thorn in the flesh* in II Corinthians 12:7-10. Was God going to get the greater glory with a yes answer or a no answer? The context

indicates that if God gave a yes answer, it was more likely that Paul would have gotten the glory rather than God. By refusing the request Paul made, the no answer gave God the greater glory because Paul was going to learn how to be sufficient in God's grace. So in this case, a no answer did give God the greater glory.

**e. John 15:7**

The fifth passage is John 15:7:

*If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto you.*

The context of this verse is that of "abiding in the Messiah" which means, "to be in fellowship with Him." The issue in this context is not salvation, but fruit-bearing. So if one is abiding in the Messiah, he will not be asking anything outside the will of God. If we are in fellowship with God, we will not ask for things outside His will. The *whatsoever ye will* statement in this verse is limited by the context, which is speaking of fruit-bearing. Whatever you ask in the realm of fruit-bearing, God will answer because fruit-bearing is part of the revealed will of God. It is something he wants to see in every believer. Every prayer in this regard will definitely be answered.

**f. John 15:16**

The sixth passage is John 15:16:

*. . . that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.*

The context here is also that of fruit-bearing, and prayer here is prayer associated with productivity. The *whatsoever ye shall ask* is limited in this context to fruit-bearing. Since fruit-bearing is part of the revealed will of God, God will answer every prayer in this regard. So what was taught by John 15:7 is also taught by John 15:16. Believers were chosen by God for two reasons: first that they *should go [out] and bear fruit*; and secondly, that *whatsoever [they] shall ask*, He will answer. In this context, He will answer their prayers that they become fruitful. Fruit-bearing believers is definitely a part of the will of God.

**g. John 16:23-24**

The seventh passage is John 16:23-24:

*If ye shall ask anything of the Father, he will give it you in my name.*

This is not a “blank check” that anything you ask for God will give you, no matter what. The context has to do with *joy* and *sorrow* (v. 22). A believer’s joy is very much part of the revealed will of God. Because such prayer is within the realm of God’s will, the request will be answered. So if we ask for joy in the realm of our salvation, we will get it. If we ask for joy in living out the spiritual life, we will get it. God wants to answer these types of prayer.

#### **h. I John 5:14-15**

The eighth passage is I John 5:14-15. Verse 14 states:

*... if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.*

This is an absolute principle. Anything we ask in accordance with His will, He will hear us. The *anything* of the previous passages is limited by this passage to *according to his will*. So anything according to His will, will be granted. Anything not according to His will, will be denied. That is why it is so important to remain in fellowship with the Lord. That is why it is so important to realize that we stand on the promises of God; that is why it is so important to understand that these promises are limited by specific conditions. The condition here is: *according to his will*.

Then verse 15 states:

*... and if we know that he hears us whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions which we have asked of him.*

Again, the *whatsoever* and *the petitions which we have* of verse 15 are all limited by verse 14: they need to be prayed in accordance with the will of God. If they are according to the will of God then, yes, we have them. God will answer prayers, which are in accordance with His will.

These eight passages provide the principles of prayer discussed earlier. God will answer every prayer positively that is consistent with His own purposes and for our own best good. God’s will is what He purposes and plans so that if we ask in accordance with His purpose and plan, the answer is “yes,” but if not, the answer will be “no.” God binds Himself to answer every prayer that comes within the scope of His will. Fellowship is a means of aligning our desires with the will of God. When the will of God is clear or when we have a clear promise from God, we can pray confidently that prayer is going to be answered.

### **COMPONENTS AND CONTENT OF PRAYER**

This manuscript is a continuation of our study, “The Conditions of Prayer” in Radio Manuscript 148. In the first part of the study, we dealt with “The Subjective Conditions of Prayer.”

## II. THE OBJECTIVE CONDITION OF PRAYER

### A. The Principle

The principle for the objective condition is that prayer is to be addressed to the Father, through the Son, by means of the Holy Spirit.

Ephesians 2:18 states:

*. . . for through him we both have our access in one Spirit unto the Father.*

All three members of the Trinity are found in this verse: *for through him* [the Son] *we both have our access in one Spirit, unto the Father*. Prayer is to the Father, through the Son, by means of the Holy Spirit.

A second passage is Ephesians 3:14-17:

*<sup>14</sup>For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father, <sup>15</sup>from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, <sup>16</sup>that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, that ye may be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inward man; <sup>17</sup>that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; to the end that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, . . .*

Here again all three members are mentioned, and the point is the same: prayer is to the Father, through the Son, by means of the Holy Spirit.

A third passage that teaches this same principle is Colossians 3:17:

*And whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*

Here two members of the trinity are mentioned, but the point is the same: our prayers are to God the Father, but they are through the Son.

### B. The Role of the Father

All prayers are to be addressed to God the Father. In this regard, three things should be noted.

## 1. The Only Addressee: God the Father

First, prayers should not be addressed to the Son, or to the Spirit, or to anyone else. Some people feel it is permissible to address our prayers to the Son on the basis of Acts 7:59:

*. . . Stephen, calling upon the Lord, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my Spirit.*

Stephen, of course, spoke to the *Lord Jesus* directly. Actually, Acts 7:59 is not a prayer, but it is a commitment of the soul and spirit at death. Furthermore, Stephen, at that moment, was actually seeing *Yeshua* (Jesus) in a vision. So, it is not really a prayer as such. There is no example of any prayer being addressed to the Son.

Prayer is not to be addressed to the Holy Spirit either. We have no biblical record of addressing prayers to the Holy Spirit. Furthermore, we should never address our prayers to angels or saints. That, too, goes contrary to Scripture. Prayer should not be addressed to the Son, nor to the Holy Spirit, nor to angels, nor to saints.

## 2. The Old Testament Prayers

The second thing concerning prayer being addressed to the Father is that, in the Old Testament, prayers were simply addressed to God in general. There was no clear concept of a Trinity in the Old Testament. For example:

Psalm 5:2 states: . . . *For unto you do I pray.*

Psalm 42:8 is: . . . *a prayer unto the God of my life.*

Psalm 69:13: *But as for me, my prayer is unto you, . . .*

And, Jeremiah 29:7: . . . *pray unto Jehovah for it; . . .*

In the Old Testament, prayers were simply addressed to God in general.

## 3. The New Testament Prayers

The third point is that with New Testament revelation, we learn that prayer must now be addressed directly to the Father. This is the way all New Testament prayers are addressed. For example:

Matthew 6:9: *Our Father who are in heaven.*

In Luke 11:2: the prayer is addressed to: . . . *Father, Hallowed be your name.*

In John 15:16 and 16:23, Jesus said: . . . *ask of the Father, . . .*

Acts 4:24 says:

*And they, when they heard it, lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, O Lord, . . .*

In Ephesians 1:16-17, Paul addressed the prayer to: . . . *the Father of glory, . . .*

Ephesians 3:14 states: . . . *I bow my knees unto the Father, . . .*

And, Ephesians 5:20:

*. . . giving thanks always for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father; . . .*

The clear teaching of the New Testament is that our prayers must be directed and addressed to God the Father.

Our greatest example of prayer life is from *Yeshua* Himself. While *Yeshua* would not have addressed a prayer to Himself, He could have addressed His prayers to the Holy Spirit if doing so were legitimate. But He never addressed a prayer to the Holy Spirit; all His prayers were addressed specifically to God the Father.

There are six examples of this in one chapter of John. Six different times as Jesus was praying, He addressed God the Father in John 17:1, 5, 11, 21, 24, and 25:

*<sup>1</sup>These things spoke Jesus; and lifting up his eyes to heaven, he said, Father, the hour is come; glorify your Son, that the son may glorify you: . . .*

\* \* \*

*<sup>5</sup>And now, Father, glorify you me with your own self with the glory which I had with you before the world was.*

\* \* \*

*<sup>11</sup>And I am no more in the world, and these are in the world, and I come to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are.*

\* \* \*

*. . . <sup>21</sup>that they may all be one; even as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us: that the world may believe that you did send me.*

\* \* \*

*<sup>24</sup>Father, I desire that they also whom you have given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory, which you have given me: for you loved me before the foundation of the world.*

\* \* \*

*<sup>25</sup>O righteous Father, the world knew you not, but I knew you;  
and these knew that you did send me; . . .*

Therefore, if we follow the prayer life of *Yeshua* as our example, every prayer is to be addressed to God the Father. A correct prayer, a right prayer, a legitimate prayer is one which is addressed to God the Father.

### **C. The Role of the Son**

The role of the Son is that prayer is to be prayed through the Son, meaning, in the name of the Son. Concerning this, four points should be noted.

#### **1. The Meaning**

What is the meaning of praying “in the name of Jesus”? It is the means by which we pray. It is through the Son. To pray in His name means, “to pray in His authority.” We have the authority to approach God the Father, and *Yeshua* has given us that authority; so we pray in the name of *Yeshua*.

We also pray “for His sake,” which means “for His glory” according to Colossians 3:17. So, praying in the name of Jesus means to pray in His authority as well as for His sake and for His glory.

It means we have regard for the Person in whose name a thing is requested. Likewise, this is also the ground on which it is granted. In other words, when we approach God the Father in the name of *Yeshua*, we are asking God to answer our prayer, not because of our merits, but because of Jesus’ merits, in whose name we pray. We are asking God to answer our prayer because of our relationship with *Yeshua* the Son.

We are asking the Father on the basis of our being “in the Messiah,” which is our position since our salvation. We are to pray on the basis of our new and exalted position in the Messiah.

Thus, to pray in Jesus’ name means to pray in His authority, and for His sake, and for His glory.

#### **2. The Scriptures**

The second thing about the role of the Son is that six times we are admonished to pray in the name of *Yeshua*. All six examples are in the Gospel of John.

**a. John 14:13**

First is John 14:13:

*And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.*

In this verse, prayer is directly associated with the accomplishment of the activity. There is a conditional clause: we can have our prayers answered only if we pray in the name of Jesus.

**b. John 14:14**

The second example is John 14:14:

*If ye shall ask anything in my name, that will I do.*

The word *that* specifies a specific thing asked for, in accordance with the condition, will be granted. And the condition is to pray in His name, and *Yeshua* Himself will do the answering.

**c. John 15:16**

The third example is John 15:16:

*. . . whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.*

In this case, prayer is directed to the Father in the name of Jesus. God conditions His actions on the fact that the asking was in the name of Jesus.

**d. John 16:23**

The fourth example is John 16:23:

*. . . If ye shall ask anything of the Father, he will give it you in my name.*

**e. John 16:24**

The fifth example is John 16:24:

*. . . ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be made full.*

Here is a dispensational distinctive. Up to this point, whenever they prayed, they did not pray in *Yeshuas'* name. But now they are to do just that. This is part of the dispensational

change between the Old and the New, between the Dispensation of Law and the Dispensation of Grace.

#### **f. John 16:26**

The sixth admonition is in John 16:26:

*In that day ye shall ask in my name: . . .*

This also emphasizes a dispensational change.

### **3. A Key Example**

The third point concerning the role of the Son is the key example of someone who was praying in Jesus' name.

This is found in Ephesians 5:20:

*. . . in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father; . . .*

Notice the prayer is addressed to God the Father, but it is prayed *in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ*.

### **4. Our High Priest of Prayer**

The fourth thing concerning the role of the Son is that the Messiah is now our High Priest of prayer. This is the teaching of two passages.

#### **a. Hebrews 4:14-16**

The first is Hebrews 4:14-16. The point of verse 14 is that we now have a High Priest in Heaven. The point of verse 15 is that this High Priest who we now have in Heaven knows what it feels like for humans on earth.

Verse 16 says:

*Let us therefore draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace, . . .*

Because *Yeshua* is our High Priest of prayer, we need to make use of Him.

#### **b. I John 2:1-2**

The second passage is I John 2:1-2, which states that we now have *an Advocate with the Father*.

## D. The Role of the Holy Spirit

The point here is that prayer should be “in the Holy Spirit”; prayer should be by means of the Holy Spirit. Here, too, four things should be noted.

### 1. The Meaning

First, what does it mean to pray by means of, or “in, the Holy Spirit”? It means to pray in the “sphere of”—praying along the same lines, about the same things, in the same name as the Holy Spirit. We are to pray the same thing that the Holy Spirit is praying. The reason that these kinds of prayers are guaranteed to be answered is because we are praying the same prayer that He prays. When we are not doing so, then our prayers may not be answered.

### 2. The Scriptures

The second thing to point out are the Scriptures regarding the role of the Holy Spirit in prayer. There are three Scriptures, which teach this.

#### a. Ephesians 5:18-20

The first is Ephesians 5:18-20. Verse 18 states: *be filled with the Spirit*. He does not say to pray to the Holy Spirit, but when we are *filled with the Holy Spirit*, we pray with the proper reliance on the Holy Spirit.

Thus, in verse 20, we are told to:

*... giving thanks always for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father; ...*

Our prayer is to be addressed to God the Father in the name of the Son, but our prayers are in accordance with the Holy Spirit.

#### b. Ephesians 6:18

The second passage is Ephesians 6:18:

*... with all prayer and supplication praying at all seasons in the Spirit, ...*

The context of this passage is praying in the realm of spiritual warfare.

#### c. Jude 20

The third passage is Jude 20: *praying in the Holy Spirit*. The context here is that of *building up* the faith. When we pray in the Holy Spirit, we are *building up* the faith.

### 3. The Prayer of the Holy Spirit for Us

The third thing about the role of the Holy Spirit is that the Holy Spirit prays for and with us. Romans 8:26-27 states that the Holy Spirit prays in order to help our infirmities. The Greek word for “help” is used only here and in Luke 10:40. It means practical help. The Holy Spirit gives practical help in our prayer life.

The problem is that: *we know not how to pray as we ought*. The solution is that: *the Spirit [of God] maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered* (Rom. 8:26).

The result is that: *he [the Father] that searches the hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit*. The Father always answers the prayers of the Holy Spirit. The reason for the answer is because: *[the Spirit himself] makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God* (Rom. 8:27).

Galatians 4:6 also teaches that:

*. . . God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father.*

The Holy Spirit is praying for us and with us.

### 4. The Implications

Fourth, the implication of the role of the Holy Spirit in prayer is twofold. The first implication is that we will not ask God to do that which He chooses not to do. The second implication is that the opposite of praying in the Spirit is praying in the flesh.