



Sermon Outline

ELEMENTS OF SUCCESSFUL PRAYER

Introduction

- Luke 11:1
- Prayer is not to bend God our way, but to bend us to His way.
- This sermon will teach some of the elements of successful prayer. These elements are not so much for His benefit but for ours, so that we will know who we are talking to and certain attitudes that will greatly facilitate our communication with our Heavenly Father.
- The problem is not that God does not know us. The problem is that we don't know Him.
- The problem is not that God doesn't know what we need. The problem is that we don't know what we need.

The following are some elements of successful prayer.

- I. **Praise** - Psalms 50:23: "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth Me: and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I shew the salvation of God."
 - a. During the past few years there is a tendency to bring God down to our level.

There is a song that refers to God as the 'man upstairs.' A young man was to have remarked that he and 'JC' got along just fine. There is a high school football team in the mid-West called the Cougars. Before a game, they pray to the 'Big Cougar in the Sky' (all examples of trivializing God).
 - b. Learning to praise God is important, because we can rise no higher than our concept of God. If He is the "man upstairs," "JC," or the "Big Cougar in the Sky," we are in trouble.
 - c. The Bible says: Proverbs 9:10: "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the Holy is understanding."
 - d. Though God is our friend, we must recognize that our relationship to Him must be full of reverential awe and respect. We don't worship our friends!

- e. When Isaiah saw the Lord, he said, "... Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts." Isaiah 6:5. When we lift Him up, His glory will fill the temple of our hearts.

II. **Confession and Repentance** - 1 John 1: 9: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

- a. There is an emphasis these days on God's forgiveness. But little emphasis on confession and repentance.
- b. Confession is the condition for forgiveness.
- c. Interesting how we sometimes play word games. We will say, "Forgive my sins." Other times we say, "Forgive my sins and mistakes." Sometimes we even say, "If I have sinned, please forgive me." (example of presumption)
- d. Story of blind man of Jericho - Luke 18: 35-41. Notice that Jesus asked the man what he wanted Him to do. Didn't Jesus see he was blind?

Jesus wanted to hear the man admit that he was blind and then request what he needed. Sometimes we confess some sins and not others. We have pet sins that we don't want to give up.

- e. The next time you ask Jesus to forgive your sins, He has a question for you: "Which ones?"
- f. There will not be much change in our lives until we begin to see sin as Jesus sees it.
- g. We often pray too late. There is an old saying, "An ounce of prayer for deliverance from temptation is worth a pound of confession later on."

III. **Intercession** - Jeremiah 27: 18: "But if they be prophets, and if the word of the Lord be with them, let them now make intercession to the Lord of hosts, that the vessels which are left in the house of the Lord, and in the house of the king of Judah, and at Jerusalem, go not to Babylon."

- a. Intercession can be praying for those who are not praying for themselves.
- b. Intercession can be praying for those who are sorry and those who aren't.
- c. Intercession keeps the Holy Spirit working when otherwise He might be driven off.

- IV. **Petitions – Requests** - Philippians 4:6: “Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.”
- a. We need to pray that God will teach us what we really need.
 - b. Prayers sometimes cancel each other out. We ask the Lord to give us patience and then in the next breath we pray to be delivered from the very things that bring patience into our lives.
 - c. All things work together for good. He works for our long-term good and always for His glory. Romans 8:28: “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.”
 - d. Our prayers tend to be selfish. Next time you ask God for something, be honest and tell Him why you want it. You may end up saying, “Never mind.”
 - e. God will provide for every real need. Don’t be embarrassed to discuss things with Him.
 - f. Remember, He puts first things first. So must we. Matthew 6:33: “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”
- V. **Giving thanks** - Ephesians 5:20: “Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”
- a. Giving thanks for all He has done will keep our greedy spirit in check and build our trust and dependence.
 - b. Don’t thank Him just for the good things only, inasmuch as all things work together for good to them that are called according to His purpose.
- VI. **Meditation** – Psalm 1:2: “But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in His law doth he meditate day and night.”
- a. There is a danger in meditating about nothing. The devil can move into the void.
 - b. Meditation is most effective when it is the process by which we take the Word of God and apply it to our lives.
- VII. **Commitment** - Proverbs 3:6: “In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths.”

Conclusion

- a. The elements of successful prayer are:

Praise, confession, intercession, petition, giving of thanks, meditation, and commitment.

- b. Do you mean if I don't pray that way, it won't work?

Not at all. God understands even body language. He reads our hearts.

- c. Sometimes when our problems are really complicated, we can pray, "Holy Spirit, pray for me." Romans 8:26: "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit Itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."

Closing Prayer