

Prayer

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Throughout man's history people have prayed. Some have directed their prayers to Almighty God while others have prayed to an idol, or a god of their own imagination.

According to one dictionary definition of prayer, it is the act or practice of addressing God or a god in words or through meditation, as in praise, gratitude, sorrow, or intercession. A specially worded form used in addressing God; a petition, or act of devotion, to an object of worship; a fervent request.

So whether a person is praying to Almighty God or some other object of worship, there is communication being initiated on the part of a human being with the hope that some response will occur. Although the connection is rarely made, if someone is praying to anyone other than Almighty God, knowingly or unknowingly, that person's prayers are open to interference from fallen angels. These angels will mislead, lie, and deceive whenever they have an opportunity to do so,

The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders,¹⁰ and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.¹¹ And for this reason (Almighty) God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie,¹² that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth (of Almighty God as described in His law and commandments) but had pleasure in unrighteousness (2Thes. 2:9-12; cf. Jn. 8:42-44; Rev. 12:9; NKJV used throughout unless otherwise noted; Ed. notes in parentheses).

To avoid communicating with fallen angels, it is essential to know the only true God so that prayers are directed to Him and no one else. Jesus Christ taught this basic truth during his earthly ministry,

But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father (no one else) who is in the secret place (heavenly realm); and your Father who sees in secret will reward you (respond) (Mt. 6:6; RNT; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Although Jesus Christ has a great deal of authority, including the right to carry many of the titles and offices of His Father, this authority is given to him by delegation from his heavenly Father (Ex. 23:21; Isa. 9:6; cf. Mt. 1:23; Jn. 5:23, 43). Christ's authority is recognized every time someone approaches God our Father in prayer because we are to make our petitions (requests) in the name and by the authority of Jesus Christ. However, we are not to pray directly to Jesus Christ. To do so would be breaking the first commandment (Ex. 20:3),

And whatever you (Christ's disciples) ask (almighty God) in my (Christ's) name, this I will do, so that the Father may be glorified in the son (Jn. 14:13; cf. 15:16; RNT; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Christ also pointed out that unless a person is seeking to obey his Father's word, which includes the law and commandments, that person's prayers will not be considered,

Jesus answered and said to him (Judas, not Iscariot), 'If anyone loves me, he will keep my word; and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.²⁴ He who does not love me does not keep my words; and the word which you hear is not mine but the Father's who sent me (Jn. 14:23-24; Ed. notes in parenthesis; emphasis added).

The truth that Almighty God is not obligated to hear prayers from those who live contrary to His will, as expressed in His law and commandments, is confirmed in many scriptures,

And you (the nation of ancient Israel) will cry out in that day because of your king whom you have chosen for yourselves, and the Lord will not hear you in that day (1Sam. 8:18; Ed. note in parenthesis).

When you pray I will hide My eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not hear. Your hands are full of bloodshed (lawlessness) (Isa. 1:15; cf. 1Jn. 3:4; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Will you steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, burn incense to Baal (false system of worship), and walk after other gods whom you do not know (Israel learned about these gods from other nations) (Jer. 7:9; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Therefore (Jeremiah) do not pray for this people (nation of Israel), nor lift up a cry or prayer for them, nor make intercession to Me; for I will not hear you (because of Israel's persistence in living contrary to God's word) (Jer. 7:16; 11:14; 14:11-12; Eze. 8:18; Ed. notes in parentheses).

But your iniquities (sins; cf. 1Jn. 3:4) have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear (your prayers) (Isa. 59:2; cf. Mic. 3:4; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

One who turns away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer is an abomination (Pr. 28:9; emphasis added).

There are many people who do not believe they need to obey God's law and commandments and these same people will claim, with certainty, that their prayers have been answered. Again, this can be a deception combined with coincidence. In other words, the outcome these people prayed for actually occurred, but not necessarily because Almighty God responded,

The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, nor bread to the wise, nor riches to men of understanding, nor favor to men of skill; but time and chance happen to them all (Ecc. 9:11).

The most important aspect of prayer is that it develops a close relationship between God and the individual who is praying. It is not possible to build this close relationship when the person praying lives contrary to God's will. Time and again Jesus Christ pointed out that prayer must always be in accordance with God's will and not ours,

And he (Christ) was withdrawn from them (the disciples) about a stone's throw, and he knelt down and prayed, ⁴² saying, 'Father, if it is your will, remove this cup from me; nevertheless not my will, but Yours be done' (Lk. 22:41-42; cf. Mt. 26:39; Jn. 4:34; 5:30; 6:38; 8:29; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Because Christ's disciples communicated with him on a daily basis, there was a close relationship formed over the course of his earthly ministry. By praying daily to God our Father, a similar bond develops between Almighty God and the individual praying to Him,

No longer do I call you (Christ's disciples) servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you (Jn. 15:15; Ed. note in parenthesis).

And the Lord said, 'Shall I hide from Abraham what I am doing, ¹⁸ since Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in (through) him (because Jesus Christ would be born through one of Abraham's descendants)? ¹⁹ For I have known him (a close relationship), in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the Lord, to do righteousness and justice (cf. Ps. 119:142-143, 151, 160, 172), that the Lord may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him' (Gen. 18:17-19; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Are You not our (Judah's) God, who drove out the inhabitants of this land before Your people Israel, and gave it to the descendants of Abraham Your friend forever? (2Chr. 20:7; Isa. 41:8; Jas. 2:23; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

So daily prayer, combined with a deep desire to obey God's word as Abraham did, will contribute to building a close relationship with Almighty God. As any relationship develops, trust will grow; even under trying circumstances. This trust is essential when it comes to prayer. In other words, if God does not respond in a manner that we hope for or expect, we need to trust that He is working in our lives to bring about the best possible result, even though it may not appear that way at the time we pray,

And He (God) said (to Abraham), 'Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you' (Gen. 22:2; Ed. notes in parentheses).

At this point, there should be little doubt that Abraham was praying fervently for "this cup to pass" from him (cf. Mt. 26:39). The strength of Abraham's trust in Almighty God could not have been tested more severely,

Then they came to the place of which God had told him. And Abraham built an altar there and placed the wood in order, and he bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, upon

the wood. ¹⁰ And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son (Gen. 22:9-10).

Abraham knew God well enough to trust that He would always provide the best possible outcome, no matter how bleak a situation may look. Abraham was prepared to sacrifice his son if it was necessary, rather than go against God's command. Thankfully, Abraham was spared that grief and the experience confirmed his faith in God's ability to provide whatever is needed in any given situation,

Then Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind him was a ram caught in a thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son. ¹⁴ And Abraham called the name of the place, The-Lord-Will-Provide; as it is said to this day, 'In the Mount of the Lord it shall be provided' (Gen. 22:13-14; emphasis added).

Abraham is referred to as being faithful (Rom. 4:19-22) because he trusted God and obeyed His commands no matter how difficult or inconvenient they were - from a human perspective. Those who expect their prayers to be heard today need to follow Abraham's example. Jesus Christ taught that faithful prayers could be so effective that, if they were in accordance with Almighty God's will, they could move mountains (symbol of nations and governing authorities),

Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, 'Why could we not cast him (a demon) out?' ²⁰ So Jesus said to them, '**Because of your little faith; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you** (Mt. 17:19-20; RNT; Ed. notes in parenthesis).

It is important to note in the scripture above that Christ was speaking to his disciples and not the public at large. His disciples were being taught how to be more faithful and all the other attributes associated with pleasing and serving Almighty God. Once they learned these vital lessons, their prayers would be an extremely powerful witness of Christ's death and resurrection,

But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. ²⁶ Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were loosed. ²⁷ And the keeper of the prison, awaking from sleep and seeing the prison doors open, supposing the prisoners had fled, drew his sword and was about to kill himself. ²⁸ But Paul called with a loud voice, saying, 'Do yourself no harm, for we are all here.' ²⁹ Then he (the prison guard) called for a light, ran in, and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. ³⁰ And he brought them out and said, 'Sirs, what must I do to be saved?' ³¹ So they (Paul and Silas) said, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.' ³² Then they spoke the word of the Lord (Almighty God's word, including repentance of sin which precedes baptism) to him and to all who were in his house. ³³ And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes. And immediately he and all his family were baptized (Ac. 16:25-33; Ed. notes in parentheses).

So Paul and Silas' prayers were very effective as they trusted God with the outcome of their predicament,

...The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails (benefits) much. ¹⁷ Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. ¹⁸ And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit (Jas. 5:16b-18; Ed. notes in parenthesis).

Although Elijah had the same human nature that all people have, he had a deep desire to serve and obey God. He was God's witness against the sins of Israel, and his earnest prayer was instrumental in God's discipline of the nation through drought and famine. Because Elijah was deeply troubled by Israel's rebellious attitude, his prayer was answered by Almighty God. This leads to the question, "What should people pray for?" Thankfully, Jesus Christ answered this question in a summary form, or prayer outline. Christ also pointed out that this prayer outline is not to be repeated verbatim. To do so is the same as vain repetition, which God does not approve (Mt. 6:7),

Thus, pray in this way; 'Our Father, who is in the heavens, your name be sanctified,' (Mt. 6:9; RNT)

The terms father, fathers, father-in-law, and forefathers are used to describe our paternal ancestry in whose line we follow. Jesus Christ even referred to Satan as being a father to the Jewish religious leaders of his day because they followed Satan's traditions (Jn. 8:44). Therefore, when we pray it is vital that we clearly distinguish who we want our prayers to go to. Ideally, everyone should want Almighty God to listen to their prayers, not some other spirit-being. As God our Father reigns from heaven, it is important to make this distinction when praying.

Christ mentioned that his Father's name is to be treated with great respect because his Father is the Most Holy, and the Most High God (hallowed; SGD # 37 from # 40; cf. Gen. 14:18-22; Ps. 78:56; Dan. 3:26; 5:18, 21; Mk. 5:7; Ac. 16:17; Heb. 7:1). Therefore, when we pray to the Most High God, our Father who is in the heavens, we are stating that our prayers are going to the One who is in absolute authority over all of Creation in heaven and on earth (Isa. 66:1-2; Ac. 7:49-50).

Your kingdom come, Your will be done also on earth, as in heaven, (Mt. 6:10; RNT)

In the scripture above, Christ is showing what the main focus of prayer should be; not that it is wrong to pray for our basic needs and those of other people (Mt. 6:11). It is placing God's will first and our desires second. It is teaching all of humanity that the answer to their problems lies in obedience to God and the return of His government to this planet; we need to have a deep desire that this occur sooner than later. In the interim, we are to pray that God's will, as expressed in His law and commandments, be done on earth as in heaven (currently). By making this request, or petition, we are taking responsibility to do our part in serving Him here and now, to the best of our ability. As we are weak

and fallible human beings, part of this request needs to acknowledge that we want and need help from God in order to better accomplish this difficult task,

But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you (1Pet. 5:10; emphasis added).

It is by God's strength and help that we can do things that are normally not possible (Mt. 19:26; Mk. 10:27; Phil. 4:13).

Our bread, which descends, give us today (Mt. 6:11; RNT).

Although this statement by Christ could be taken to mean that we should ask God to provide us with physical food each day, it is not the real intent of this verse. The real meaning is spiritual in nature,

But he (Christ) answered and said, "**It has been written, 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God'**" (Mt. 4:4; RNT; Ed. notes in parenthesis; OT quote in Bold text).

The importance of this verse is to reinforce that human beings need spiritual food on a daily basis in order to maintain a healthy relationship with Almighty God, just as physical food is essential to maintaining good health. Human beings cannot go for a long time without physical nourishment before they become sick and die. This same principle applies in our relationship with God. If we neglect regular study, prayer, and meditation (concentrated thought and reflection), our relationship with God will eventually come to an end (1Thes. 5:19).

And release us from our debts, as we also have released our debtors (Mt. 6:12; RNT).

Every human being is a debtor to God our Father because we have all sinned (Rom. 3:23; 5:12) and earned the wages of sin, which is death (Rom. 6:23). Therefore, we should all want our sins forgiven so that we can enter the kingdom of God. It is very presumptuous for any human being to think that their sins are not as bad as another person's,

For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all (Jas. 2:10).

Our self-image, when it comes to the sins we have committed, should be so repugnant that we are more than happy to forgive someone else if they do something against us,

Then Peter having gone toward him (Christ), said, "How often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Until seven times?"²² Jesus said to him, "**I do not say to you seven times, but until seventy times seven.**"²³ **For this reason the kingdom of the heavens was compared to a man, a king, who wanted to take up account with his bondservants.**²⁴ **And when he had begun to take up account, there was one brought toward him a debtor of ten thousand talents.**²⁵ **But having nothing to repay, his lord**

commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and the children, and everything, whatever he had, and to repay (Mt. 18:21-25; Ed. note in parenthesis).

The servant who owed ten thousand talents and could not pay is symbolic of every sinner who cannot possibly re-pay Almighty God for the sins committed over the course of their lifetime,

Then the bondservant, having fallen down, was prostrating himself, saying, 'Be patient with me and I will repay everything to you.'²⁷ "And the lord of that¹ bondservant, having compassion for him, forgave him (Mt. 18:26-27; RNT).

This servant had good intentions and was genuinely desirous of re-paying even though it was completely beyond his ability. This pictures repentant sinners who wished they had never sinned and that there was some way they could compensate God for the sinful deeds they committed, even though it is impossible to undo the damage they have created, including the death of Jesus Christ, which is the means through which our debts can be forgiven,

But that bondservant, having gone away, found one of his fellow-bondservants who owed him a hundred denaria, and having taken hold, he choked him, saying, 'Repay what you owe.'²⁹ "Then his fellow-bondservant, falling down, asked him earnestly, saying, 'Be patient with me and I will repay you.'³⁰ "But he was unwilling; and when he had gone away, he cast him into prison until he should repay what was owed.³¹ "So his fellow-bondservants having seen what had happened, were deeply grieved and came and reported to their lord all that had happened (Mt. 6:28-31; RNT).

Although the first servant had mercy extended to him and his debt (sins) forgiven by his master, this servant did not extend the same mercy to one of his fellow-servants. Instead, he looked down on his fellow-servant and felt justified to exact every last penny from him. The main lesson here is that everyone is guilty of owing a great debt to Almighty God and as He forgives us this debt, we need to extend that same attitude toward all of our debtors because we are all equally guilty of sin and therefore should look upon one another as equals. If someone has caused us an injury, we need to recall that we also have caused injuries in one way or another, and we need to pray for those who have caused us harm,

And I say to you, love your enemy and pray for those who persecute you.⁴⁵ "so that you become sons of your Father who is in the heavens, for He causes His sun to rise on the evil ones and the good ones; and rains on *the* righteous and *the* unrighteous (Mt. 5:44-45; RNT; emphasis added).

But to you who are listening I say, love those hostile to you, do good to those who hate you,²⁸ ble^ss those cursing you, pray about those who mistreat you (Lk. 6:27-28; RNT; emphasis added).

As our true enemies are ultimately not composed of "flesh and blood", we need to pray for those in the spirit realm who have gone astray from serving God, just as every human being has. We need to ask Almighty God to lead them to repentance so they can be forgiven and restored to the family of God our Father,

For we (human beings) do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places (Eph. 6:12; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

There are some who do not believe this restoration of the fallen host is going to occur, but that is because they do not understand the extent of Almighty God's love, mercy, and forgiveness (2Pet. 3:9), let alone His overall plan and power to accomplish whatever He decides to do,

Ah, Lord God! Behold, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and outstretched arm. There is nothing too hard for You (Jer. 32:17; cf. Mt. 19:26; Mk. 10:27; emphasis added).

The last verse of the prayer outline, given by Jesus Christ, can be confusing depending which translation of the Bible is being used. Some state "temptation" which is not the most accurate English word for the Greek (SGD # 3986). Instead, it should be "trials",

And bring us not into trials, but rescue us from evil (Mt. 6:13; RNT).

Trials, adversity, or afflictions, may serve to test or prove one's character and faith; However, Almighty God does not tempt anyone,

Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am tempted by God'; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone. ¹⁴ But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. ¹⁵ Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death (Jas. 1:13-15; cf. Rom. 6:23).

The Matthew 6:13 scripture is an admission that human beings are weak and in need of God's protection and help at all times; this is especially true when facing various trials. This is a serious matter and something that needs to be part of our prayers on a daily basis,

Remove falsehood and lies far from me; give me neither poverty nor riches – feed me with the food You prescribe for me (what's good for me according to God's wisdom); ⁹ lest I be full and deny You, and say, 'Who is the Lord?' (cf. Deut. 8:11-17) Or lest I be poor and steal, and profane the name of my God (Pr. 30:8-9; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

The latter part of Matthew 6:13 is acknowledgment, on the part of the individual who is praying, that Satan and his forces are hostile toward human beings and are looking for any opportunity to cause harm. Therefore, our prayers should include a request that Almighty God deny the evil one any opportunity to create upheaval, unless it is the only way we are going to make necessary changes in our lives, and that God provide the means through which we can overcome any attack,

Simon, Simon, behold, Satan requested you (plural - meaning *you all*) **back to sift like wheat;** ³² **but I entreated concerning you** (singular – i.e. Simon), **that your faith might not**

be taken out; and you then, having returned, strengthen your brothers (Luke 22:31-32; RNT; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Christ's arrest and execution caused a tremendous upheaval for his disciples and they were tested during that time (Mt. 26:69-75). Yet, due to Christ's prayer on behalf of his disciples, they all came through having learned some very valuable lessons about themselves,

No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man (because of our own weaknesses); but (through them all) God is faithful (even when we fall short), who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it (1Cor. 10:13; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

In the case of most of Christ's disciples, their way of escape (way out, exit) was death through martyrdom. They had endured many trials in order to complete God's work at that time while proving their faithfulness to the word of God (2Cor. 11:25).

After Jesus Christ finished the prayer outline in Luke 11:1-4, he went on to explain other important principles associated with praying,

And he (Christ) said to them (his disciples), "Which of you will have a friend, and go to him in the middle of the night and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread;'⁶ for a friend of mine arrived from a journey, and I have nothing to set before him',⁷ and he, from within, answers and says, 'Do not trouble me, the door has already been shut and my children are with me in bed; I am not able to get up and give you *anything*.'⁸ I say to you, even though he will not get up and give to him, because he is his friend, indeed because of his boldness, he will get up and give him as much as he needs.⁹ And I say to you, ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.¹⁰ "For everyone who asks (according to God's will; cf. Rom. 1:9-10), receives; and he who seeks (truth), finds; and him who knocks (makes requests), it will be opened (revealed) (Lk. 11:5-10; RNT; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

So being persistent in prayer is important providing it is for the right reason and in accordance with God's will. What God really wants is a persistence to know more about His truth,

Therefore, laying aside all malice, all guile, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking,² as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word (of God), that you may grow up to salvation (1Pet. 2:1-2; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

This thought is continued in Christ's ongoing instructions in the eleventh chapter of Luke,

But which of you fathers, *if your son should ask for a fish* (cf. Mt. 7:9), instead of a fish will he give him a snake?¹² "Or if he should ask for an egg, will he give him a scorpion?¹³ "If you then, being evil (by nature; cf. Rom.8:7), know to give good gifts to your children, how much would the Father from heaven rather give holy spirit to those who ask Him?" (Lk. 11:11-13; RNT; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Christ emphasized the importance of praying for our spiritual well-being more than our physical needs (cf. Mt. 6:8). Also, we need to pray for others as much as we do for ourselves, trusting that God is always looking after our best interests just as a human father should give good (appropriate) gifts to his children. This trust in God is a prerequisite to our prayers being answered,

But without faith (trust in God and His word) it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God (in prayer) must believe that He is (exists), and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him (Heb. 11:6; Lk. 11:9-10; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

If our conduct is contrary to God's will in any way, our requests could be placed on hold no matter how honorable they may be. This is something to be examined if we feel our prayers are not being answered (1Cor. 11:28; 2Cor. 13:5),

Likewise you husbands, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife (a type of the church of God; cf. Eph. 5:22-33), as to the weaker vessel (which human beings are when compared to Christ who is the head of the wife – the church), and being heirs together of the grace of life (everlasting), that your prayers may not be hindered (1Pet. 3:7; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

You ask (in prayer) and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures (Jas. 4:3; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Even though Jesus Christ provided a prayer outline in Matthew 6:9-13, we may still have difficulty praying. When this happens, we need to begin our prayer by asking for God's help in order to speak to Him in accordance with His will in our life and in the lives of those we are praying for,

Likewise the (God's Holy) spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought (to), but the (God's Holy) spirit itself makes intercession with groanings which cannot be uttered (Rom. 8:26; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

Prayer is not a tool that can be used to manipulate God to do our will. When we pray about something that God does not want to act upon, we need to accept "no" for an answer. This is very important because many people believe that when God does not give them what they want, that He is not listening. In reality, if we are striving to live in accordance with God's will, He hears our prayer but is working something out that we are not aware of, do not understand at the time, or refuse to accept. Thankfully, Paul understood why God said "no" to his prayer,

And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations (that God gave to Paul), a thorn in the flesh (an illness or affliction) was given to me, a messenger of Satan to beat me, lest I be exalted above measure. ⁸ Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me (but it didn't) (2Cor. 12:7-8; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

There are many things to consider when praying to Almighty God, and they are all important. Prayer is the means through which human beings can

communicate with their Creator. The prayers of those who have a deep desire to trust and obey God are very important to Him. Symbolically, these prayers are contained in golden bowls before His throne (Rev. 8:3) for consideration and action of one kind or another,

Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are (represent) the prayers of the saints (Rev. 5:8; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

One of the most important instruments through which Almighty God speaks to mankind is through His word, the Bible. Therefore, our prayer requests should include the deep desire to better understand the truth and what God is teaching through His word (2Tim. 3:16-17).

This document is the collaborative work of individuals who believe God's truth should be given freely (Mt. 10:8; 1Cor. 2:12; 2Cor.11:7; Rom. 10:14-21) and the message of the one true God should be made available to all nations (Mt. 24:14) as a prerequisite to the return of Jesus Christ as King of kings (Mt. 17:10; 19:17; Mk. 9:11; Lk. 1:17; Rev. 19:11-16).

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