

Prayer: Study #1

I Thessalonians 5:17

I'm so glad you could join me today for another program of "It's a Good Life."

Last week we looked at a short introduction about prayer. As we look at this subject, we need to understand that prayer is very important. God's people are a praying people. Prayer has been called the thermometer of spiritual life. When love and adoration of God are lively and warm in the soul, this will be reflected in much prayer. When spiritual activity is cool, this will result in little prayer. Prayer is a measurement of spiritual temperature. Prayer is worship. It is a matter of the heart, not only of the understanding.

First Thessalonians 5:17 says, *Pray without ceasing*. To pray is to talk to God. Effectual fervent prayer is effective prayer. It produces results. Fervent prayer is heartfelt with sincerity and passion. Availing prayer produces results; it accomplishes. And of course, we see that, the "effectual fervent prayer" listed and mentioned there in James chapter 5, verse 16, the last part of that verse says, *The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much*. Well, today, we want to look into the subject of supernatural contact of prayer, and we want to look first of all at praise.

A man by the name of the Reverend J.H. Jowett quotes a man by the name of William Law, and he says this about William Law. William Law said, "When you begin your petitions, use such various expressions of the attributes of God as may make you most sensible of the greatness and power of the Divine nature." And then he says that William Law gives various examples, and he says, "which I am bound to say would not be helpful to me, as

they would imprison my spirit in a coat of mail. But I want to emphasize," Jowett says, "and commend the principle of it, which is that our fellowship should begin with the primary elements of adoration and praise." In other words, when he, J.H. Jowett, would go to prayer, he didn't want to feel obligated to follow any set plan or anything that would seem like it was a repetition of something. He wanted to be free to pray in the way that he felt that he should be praying.

In Matthew chapter 6, you know that familiar section of Scripture where the Lord gives us an example as to how to pray, he says, "Our Father, which art in Heaven." And we approach God in that manner, "Our Father which art in heaven." Well, J.H. Jowett said that, although he didn't want to be hindered by following a set regimen of how to pray, he also believed that the primary elements of adoration and praise were very important. And I believe that, as we start our private time of prayer, as we are alone with the Lord in prayer, we should praise God for who He is and what He is. Praise is very important and I believe this is the way we need to approach God first, is with praise.

To praise Him means that we ought to recognize Him. We recognize God for who and what He is. Now, God knows who He is, but He wants us to let him know that we know who He is. In Psalm 63, verses 1 through 3, the Bible says, ¹*O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is;* ²*To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.* ³*Because thy lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee.*

Certainly, a people who have been saved, who have been brought to life by the power of God need to, first of all, approach this God with praise on their lips and in their hearts. We need to recognize God for who and what He is. In other words, we need to recognize God, recognize Him for who and what He is.

Psalm 34, verses 1 through 3, says, ¹*I will bless the LORD at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth.* ²*My soul shall make her boast in the LORD: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad.* ³*O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together.*

We are also to magnify the Lord. In Psalm 34 and verse 3, we've read that verse where it says, *O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together.* In Luke chapter 1 and verse 46, it says, *And Mary said, my soul doth magnify the Lord.*

Well, what happens when we magnify the Lord? I believe, as we follow the principles and precepts of the Bible and see men and women of the Bible as to what God did when they magnified Him, we see that, when we magnify the Lord, He will magnify us. In Joshua chapter 3 and verse 7, the Bible says, *And the LORD said unto Joshua, This day will I begin to magnify thee in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee.* Of course, Joshua was taking over for Moses. He was going to start leading the children of Israel, and we also know that he was getting ready to march around the city by the name of Jericho and how that later on the walls would come tumbling down. They would fall flat, according to the Word of God, and they did. And God exalted Joshua because Joshua was obedient to what God had placed before him to do. God magnified him because he magnified God.

We are to exalt God's name. Chapter 34 and verse 3 of Psalms says that once again. First Chronicles

chapter 29 and verse 11, it says, *Thine, O LORD, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O LORD, and thou art exalted as head above all.* If you go back to Matthew chapter 6, you'll read words similar to this in what is known as the Lord's Prayer, or the Model Prayer.

Well, how are we to exalt and magnify God's name in prayer? I believe we exalt and magnify God in prayer by praising His name. Praise Him by name. In Isaiah 25 and verse 1, the Bible says, *O LORD, thou art my God; I will exalt thee, I will praise thy name; for thou hast done wonderful things; thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth.* And once again, God knows who He is, but we need to let Him know we know who He is by calling Him by name.

Now, there are several names for God in the Word of God. I think of several:

Jehovah-Jireh, the Lord our Provider;

Jehovah-Nissi, Our Banner, a Banner of Love and Protection. You know that song that says, "The Banner over me is love." Well, that comes from those words *Jehovah-Nissi*.

Jehovah-Shalom, our Perfect Peace;

Jehovah-Tsidkenu, the Lord is our Righteousness.

Jehovah-Shammah, the One Who is with Us Everywhere for He is omnipresent. God is everywhere, and that means, if you're going through a difficult time right now, God knows about it. He's there with you. And sometimes we just turn our backs and we don't realize that God is right there with us, but He never turns His back on us. And we need to depend upon the Lord because He's everywhere. He's with us no matter if it's good times or bad times, He's there.

Jehovah-Sabaoth, and Psalm 46:7 talks about this, the Lord of Hosts, our Protector. He is our Protector.

And then, *Jehovah-Raah*—R-A-A-H. In Psalm 23, the Bible talks about, *The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want*. Well, He's our Shepherd who tenderly leads us, loves us, and will keep us safe.

Jehovah-Rapha, I Am the Lord Your Physician, or I Am the Lord Your Healer. God takes care of His people. Now, sometimes, some people don't understand this, but God will heal sometimes by taking a person home to be with Him. When it's God's timing, we can't improve upon that, and we need to let God take care of our lives. I don't believe that God wants anyone to be sick, because the Bible tells us that it's because of this old sinful flesh that we're sick. It's not God's fault. It's not God's fault that people die.

The Bible says, *Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned*. It's sin. It's what Adam brought into this world, and it's what God sent His Son to do away with. His Son died on the cross that you and I and the people of this world can have everlasting life and that sin curse can be removed. Now, unless Jesus comes back in a rapture of the church and takes us out, we're all doing to die because of the sinful flesh. But thank God, one day, the sinfulness of this world is going to be put an end to and the Bible says that Jesus has right now stopped the curse of the sin death, of that spiritual death that keeps a person from Heaven. How? By receiving Him as Savior by trusting Him. He shed His blood for us.

There are many names that Jesus, and God, is called by. We see that, God the Holy Spirit. First Thessalonians 4:8 talks about that. And then we see Jehovah, the name Jehovah. Psalm 83:18 says, *That men may know that thou, whose name*

alone is JEHOVAH, art the most high over all the earth.

We know that the Lord is called by many names which describe some of His attributes, and we need to be praising Him today for His love, for His goodness, for His mercy, for His grace, for being eternal, for being immutable. In other words, He never changes.

Have you trusted Jesus today as your Savior? Do you know for sure you are on your way to Heaven? If not, may I invite you to receive Him right now as your Lord and Savior. This is the first prayer, and this may shock some people. The first prayer that God will hear from the lips of man or woman is, "Lord, have mercy upon me, a sinner." If you'll pray that prayer today, "God, I know I can't save myself. Have mercy upon me and save me through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ." If you pray that prayer today, God will save you. The Bible says to as many as received Him to them gave He the power to become the children....the sons of God. What a blessing it is to be called a son, a child of God. Won't you ask Him into your heart today?

And if you're saved and you've gotten away from Him, come back to Him today. Let Him lead you and take care of your life so that you can serve Him and bring honor and glory to Him. Prayer... begin it with praise.

Thank you for being with me today, and let me invite you to go to our website, www.LRWM.org. On that website, you'll be able to download a transcript of this program. You can also request other transcripts of "It's a Good Life," or write to me, Lewis Woodard, 497 Judith Avenue, Fruitland Park, Florida 34731.

And as always, I'll be looking forward to having a time of prayer and Bible study with you next week at this time. May the Lord bless you richly is my prayer.