

and walk away from sin.

Our prayers will become more helpful and personal when we add substance to them. There is nothing better than Jesus' divine example.

### **The Persistency of Prayer (Luke 11:5-9).**

Jesus' illustration includes a man who knocks at his companion's door asking for bread so that he may fulfill the hospitable opportunity. The friend refuses because of the time; however, because of the man's "importunity" (persistence) the man eventually grants the desire. Comparingly, God often grants petitions in this way.

God does not grow weary by continual pleading; in fact, He welcomes it. It is essential then that we always pray (Ephesians 6:18) and never stop (1 Thessalonians 5:17). Paul told the Colossians to "Continue in prayer" (Colossians 4:2) and the Romans to continue instant in prayer (Romans 12:12). The man in Jesus' illustration did not arise and give bread to the friend until after persistency. God may withhold answers to prayers until He sees that we are serious about a request. We should remember to pray for daily things daily and weekly things weekly.

Jesus also used the present tense when He commanded His disciples to ask, seek, and knock (Luke 11:9). How many hours we spend in prayer may declare to God how much we trust, care, and desire our requests. We should not become weary in prayer but remember to be persistent like the widow (Luke 18:1-8). Saying the same prayer and asking for the same things is allowed (Matthew 26:44). One prayed "O Lord, give me grace to feel my need of Thy grace! Give me grace to ask for Thy grace! Give me grace to receive Thy grace! And when in Thy grace Thou hast given me grace, give me grace to use Thy grace!"[6]

### **The Power of Prayer (Luke 11:10-13).**

Because prayer works, prayer should be practiced. Prayer is the spark that lights the forest fires of blessings. As Charles Spurgeon said, it is "the hand that

moves the world." Prayer is a like letter that grants requests, a map that finds treasure, and a key that opens up doors. Jesus would agree with His blood brother who wrote, "the effectual prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16). Note Jesus' three verbs:

- Asking.
- Seeking.
- Knocking.

Jesus wanted His disciples to know that God responds to prayer. He is the good Father that cares for His children. Prayer shows God's power and love. Mary Queen of Scotland was worried when she said, "I fear the prayers of John Knox more than all the assembled armies of Europe."

Prayer is the oxygen of a Christians spiritual fire.[7] Without it we choke. If Jesus taught on and practiced prayer, we ought to perfect our prayer lives to be as close to Him as possible.

### **Endnotes**

[1]Strong's Concordance.

[2][https://www.dulleschurchofchrist.org/articles/2023/04/29/demonstrating-](https://www.dulleschurchofchrist.org/articles/2023/04/29/demonstrating-reverence#:~:text=We%20demonstrate%20reverence%20in%20how%20we%20speak%20to,he%20is%20also%20above%20and%20separate%20from%20us.)

[reverence#:~:text=We%20demonstrate%20reverence%20in%20how%20we%20speak%20to,he%20is%20also%20above%20and%20separate%20from%20us.](https://www.dulleschurchofchrist.org/articles/2023/04/29/demonstrating-reverence#:~:text=We%20demonstrate%20reverence%20in%20how%20we%20speak%20to,he%20is%20also%20above%20and%20separate%20from%20us.)

[3]Rachel Olson

[4]Robert J. Morgan, Preacher's Sourcebook of Creative Sermon Illustrations, Thomas Nelson, 2005, 627.

[5]Allen Webster

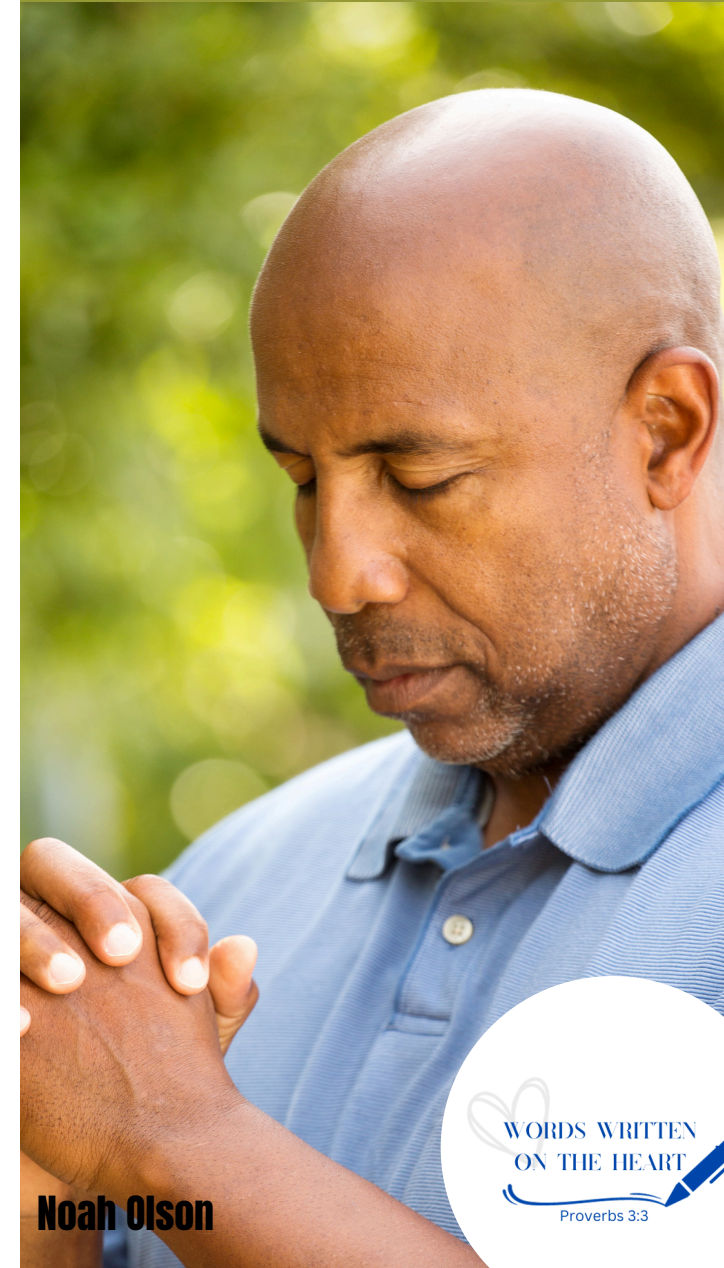
[6]Biblical Illustrator

[7]Allen Webster

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# The Three P's of Prayer



Jesus preached many lessons, but to the disciples, one on prayer was most meaningful. On one occasion, as He was praying one of the disciples asked him to teach them how to pray. This follower saw what Jesus did and wanted what Jesus had. The apostles knew how to baptize (John 4:2), preach (Matthew 10:7) and heal (Matthew 10:1), but they needed a sermon on prayer. Jesus did not refuse and say, “we’ve already discussed prayer.” He engaged in another discourse on the facets of prayer and the importance of it. Let us discuss the three P’s of prayer.

### **The Principles of Prayer (Luke 11:2-4).**

All prayers should include important aspects of life, work, and church. Jesus gives the disciples a cheat sheet, a template, or a module for them to follow. These words were never meant to be uttered verbatim, lest one take the risk of praying in vain (Matthew 6:5-8). What tenants of prayer does Jesus give the disciples?

*Recognize the direction.* Prayer is to an actual Being. He hears cries (Genesis 21:17; Exodus 3:7; Psalm 65:2). This Being is God, who is called “Father.” Prayer is a conversation only secluded to families (1 Peter 3:12). God bends His ear to hear His children’s petitions. This relationship is personal and familial. The direction of prayer is not toward Mary, departed saints, or ancestors. Only God is to be the direction of a man’s prayers, for He is the only one to give us good things (James 1:17). He abounds in heaven (2 Chronicles 20:6; Psalm 11:4). Wonderfully, prayer has travelled longer distances than the world’s farthest satellite! It reaches realms, not just miles! While it takes a phone to reach a friend thousands of miles away, all it takes is a word to call upon the ear of God.

*Revere God.* While God is our Father, He is not our “daddy,” “dad,” or “papa.” Such titles flirt with blasphemy and irreverence. Prayer must include humility and sanctity. The word hallowed means to make holy.[1] While prayer is a conversation and formality is not required, reverence most assuredly is demanded. Much carefulness would be taken when approaching the office of the President, Governor, or Senator; prayer should be preceded by more caution.

God is reverend (Psalm 111:9). He is perfectly holy (1 John 1:5) and expects (Leviticus 10:3) and demands perfect respect. Isaiah-like attitudes are good when approaching God’s presence (Isaiah 6:5). The Psalmist said, “God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him” (Psalm 89:7). While we can approach God’s throne confidently (Hebrews 4:16) we must never do so casually.[2]

*Pray for the Kingdom.* If Jesus was willing to die for the Kingdom (Acts 20:28; Revelation 1:5-6), then we should bring it up constantly in our prayers. Jesus lived before the Kingdom’s arrival. In fact, He was never on earth when it was established (Acts 1-2). Because its coming was still in the future, Jesus could pray “thy kingdom come.” The Kingdom was a special part of Jesus’ teaching (Matthew 4:17). The Kingdom’s arrival was so important to Jesus that He prayed for it. We do not pray for the Kingdom’s arrival, but for the Kingdom’s prosperity and growth, since it is already here (Colossians 1:13).

*Yearn for the will of God.* God is not a genie in a bottle[3]; we do not rub the lamp to get our three wishes for the week. Prayer is made for us to pour our hearts before the throne of God, not our sinful desires (James 4:3). Jesus desired the will of God in His example of prayer. He searched for God’s will, not His own in prayers (Matthew 26:42) and in life (John 5:30; Hebrews 5:8; 10:7). The will of God is the only filter that answered prayers pass through (1 John 5:14-15). Men who pray aside from His will cannot be positively answered. While it may seem like a burden, praying for the will of God is the best for man since His ways work out better for us than our own (cf. Isaiah 55:8-9). It is also good to pray that we might conform to His will (Psalm 40:18; 143:10). Praying for His will, will help us forget our own. Praying for our will to conform to His, will help us put away fleshly lusts (1 Peter 4:2). Read the verses and add the phrases to your prayers: 1 Samuel 3:18; Romans 1:10; 15:32; 1 Corinthians 16:7; Hebrews 6:3; James 4:15. E. Stanley Jones illustrated “Prayer is surrender to the will of God and cooperation with that will. If I throw out a boat hook from a boat and catch hold of the

shore and pull, do I pull the shore to me, or do I pull myself to the shore? Prayer is not pulling God to my will, but the aligning of my will to the will of God.”

*Don’t forget daily necessities.* God doesn’t listen to lusts, but He does hear requests (Romans 1:10; Philippians 4:6). Jesus’ next tenant of prayer is supplications. Daily bread is a reference to sustenance. God doesn’t want Christians only thanking Him; He wants them to come to Him like a child to a Father asking for gifts. If we do not ask for them, we should not expect to receive them (James 4:2). One man was taken to heaven and asked to see a big building while there. The angel told him he would be disappointed but as he got in there were gifts that were wrapped and ready to be distributed. The man asked what they were to which the angel responded, “We wrapped these things, but people never called for them.”[4] The Father knows that we have daily needs, why not come to the Father for them?

*Ask God for forgiveness.* Jesus had no need to pray this prayer, but His words do apply everyone because every Christian sins (1 John 1:8; 2:1). Christians must agree with God about their sins (1 John 1:9). A heart that merely prays for forgiveness as a compulsion or without a desire to change will not be heard. It is wise to use language like the Psalmist (Psalm 25:11, 18; 32:5-6; 51:1-12). Confess specific sins after they are committed, leaving nothing out. Tell God what you did, that you are sorry, and what you plan to do to fix it. It is best to always include asking for forgiveness but remember that God also judges prayers based on how we have treated those who have asked for forgiveness from us (Matthew 6:14-15).

*Petition the counsel of God for aid during temptation.* Jesus does not suggest that God leads men into temptation (James 1:13), but it is prayer for guidance when we are being tempted. This prayer must have power during temptation for Jesus would not have suggested the apostles pray for naught.[5] God does provide ways of escape (1 Corinthians 10:13), only if men pray and decide to overcome sin. God wants to deliver, can deliver (cf. Psalm 121:7) and will deliver, if we will just but ask for His hand