

## Prayer

Sermon Topic: Prayer

Bible Verse: 1 Thessalonians 5:17

Sermon Theme: Understanding the positive and practical benefits of prayer.

Main idea: If the sum of our prayer life consists of reciting the Lord's prayer once a week, then we have to say that our prayer life is not strong enough. Usually this happens because we don't understand the value of prayer and the very real things that prayer can accomplish in our life. When Jesus prayed the Lord's prayer, he didn't mean for us to just recite that prayer and call that a prayer life. In Matthew 6:9, Jesus says "Pray ye, after this manner"; in other words, prayer in this tradition or style, but not word for word. In this sermon we want to explore the real benefits of prayer.

1. Prayer develops our personality, because in prayer we are having give and take with God who is the source of our identity. As a result, we gain a clearer, firmer hold of our own self image. This makes for a more confident, outgoing, and loving individual. Prayer is like water for our soul. With the constant supply, our personality becomes bright and beautiful.
2. Prayer gives us the confidence to succeed. Usually fear of failure comes from bad self image. Prayer changes our wrong self images and gives us confidence in ourselves and what we must achieve. This doesn't mean we become cocky, but, as Matthew 19:26 says, "...with God all things are possible..." When God is present with us in prayer, we naturally feel, by His grace, the real opportunities made possible.
3. Prayer solves problems. Got a problem? Don't know the answer or solution? Pray about it. God is the source of all intellect. God know everyone better than they know themselves. Prayer is, therefore better

than they know themselves. Prayer is, therefore, the highest path to real problem solving. God understands every situation and can provide real answers, specific answers. God is a cosmic God, but also an intimate God who know each of us in an intimate fashion. Matthew 10:30: "...the very hairs of your head are all numbered."

4. Prayer changes things. James 5:14-15. Prayer for others and based on the sincere heart of your prayer allows God to intervene in that situation. God can carry out His will much more effectively on the sincere prayers of the believers. Jesus prayed, "God's will be done, on earth as in Heaven." (A God personal experience is effective here.)
5. Prayer helps us to realize our mistakes. Prayer is the prelude to repentance and renewal. Many times we can't repent, simply because we have failed to realize the nature and extent of our sin. Prayer brings these things into clear focus. Prayer helps us to realize how our sin has hurt God, how our sin has hurt others, and how our sin has hurt ourselves.
6. Prayer helps us to understand God's heart and will. How does God feel about things? What is His will about my life? Etc. Mostly we act impulsively in life, without deep reflection. No wonder we many times are confused and unhappy. We need to live our lives in accordance with God's heart and will in order to realize a truly happy life. Prayer brings the heart and will of God into clear focus. If the chosen people, two thousand years ago, had prayed first about Jesus, then I'm sure they would have accepted and followed him.

Summary: We should begin a true prayer life, seeking to know God's heart and will, realizing our sin and repenting, seeking the accomplishment of God's will, solving our problems as well as the problems of others, gaining confidence in the capability of God to work, and perfecting ourselves in His image. Amen.