

The Mystery of Prayer

Season 2 Episode 7



INTRODUCTION:

What is prayer?

- It's much more than telling God what we need.
- Most if not all religions *involve* some type of prayer.

TALKING POINTS: Teaching Session 1

Prayer is a part of every major religion, but there are several distinct differences that make Christianity unique.

- Christians have been given the privilege to know their God personally.
 - Christians have been given a personal invitation to have the very Spirit of God live inside them through a belief in Jesus.
 - Through His Spirit God reveals His very nature to us.
 - That's what it means to have a personal relationship with God—you don't just know about Him—you know Him.
- No other religion on earth offers a personal relationship with God.

The effectiveness of your prayer will rise in direct proportion to the depth of your relationship with God.

- The more effort you put into knowing God's ways through His Word and His Holy Spirit, the more attune you will be during prayer.
- The more attune you are in prayer—knowing the will of the Father—the more you will see your prayers answered.
- Prayer is not telling God what we want to happen—it's knowing what God desires to happen and aligning our will with that.

The recognition of *Who* we are praying to.

- Prayer is unlike any other conversation we will have during our day.

- You are praying to the Creator of all Heaven and earth.
- You are praying to the Uncreated, Who knows the exact location of everything at every moment.
- You are praying to Him who knows every thought every person has ever had—or ever will have—and the motivation behind those thoughts.
- This same God, despite the mind-boggling scope of his power and majesty, is the same Person who loves you.

Faith—that invisible force that makes all prayer work.

- Faith is what makes prayer work.
- Faith is the understanding of how the system of Heaven works.
 - The system of Heaven works through faith.
 - The centurion's faith (Luke 7 & Matthew 8).
 - » Jesus marveled at the centurion's faith—which was displayed by his understanding of how faith worked. Jesus had spent his entire life around Rabbis and teachers of the law, but this is the only time we see Jesus marvel at the revelation of another human being. Jesus referred to John the Baptist as the greatest prophet, and once gave Peter a pat on the back when the Holy Spirit revealed to him that He was the Christ. But this is the only time Jesus marveled. Why? Because it involved the relationship between two of Jesus' most talked about subjects—faith and the Kingdom.
 - » The centurion understood that it wasn't necessary to see something take place to believe that it would.
 - » The centurion understood how authority and obedience worked—that the one with authority commands, and the one under that authority obeys.
- When you pray, you should assess whether you truly have faith for what you're about to pray about.
- There is this substance called unbelief.
 - When we don't have faith that God will answer our prayer, it's often because of this strange substance. Ask God to remove it.

Our will and God's will.

- When we begin prayer, our will and God's will aren't necessarily the same thing.
- It's like we're trying our best to play a song, but our instrument is out of tune. What gets us out of tune?

- Our soul—our mind, will and emotions.
 - » To reach the next level of prayer, we have to quarantine our soul.
 - » Entering prayer out of a sense of obligation can cause you to pray out of the emotions of the moment.
- God's ways are so much higher than our ways.
- God's will is based upon His wisdom, which is derived from Him seeing the end from the beginning.
- Prayer is not telling God what needs to happen. It's groping for God's plan for the person or the situation and then agreeing with that plan.

TALKING POINTS: Teaching Session 2

Forgiveness

- When you pray, ask the Holy Spirit to reveal any sin in your life for which you haven't asked God's forgiveness. Then ask for forgiveness.
- Forgiveness is a big issue to God, so big He sent His Son to die for your sins.
 - Effective prayer acknowledges when you've fallen short and includes you repenting, or turning from that sin..
- It's important to forgive others as well.
 - If you expect God to forgive you, then you can't withhold your forgiveness from others. Withholding forgiveness can hinder God from answering your prayers. So can lingering arguments with your spouse.
 - In 1 Peter 3:7 we're told that husbands must make peace with their wives so "their prayers won't be hindered."
- Repentance and being clean before God is not a salvation issue. But it is a vital part of your relationship with God.
- Repentance increases the effectiveness of your prayers.
 - Being clean before God increases your sensitivity to the Holy Spirit, which then spiritually aligns your will to God's will.

Thankfulness

- Telling God how thankful you are for everything He's done in your life charges the atmosphere of prayer with a spiritual energy.
- In Luke 17, Jesus healed 10 lepers, but only one returned to Him.
 - When he returned, he worshiped God and fell to the ground thanking Jesus.

- All 10 were healed, meaning the leprosy disappeared. But only the one who thanked Jesus was made whole.
- Jesus told him to rise and go, that his faith had made Him whole. That meant that the digits that had been eaten away from leprosy, returned. Fingers that were missing, grew back.

The highest form of prayer is asking God to fulfill His desires, rather than yours.

- God's plan for prayer has never been for believers to achieve their goals—it's always been about God achieving His goals through believers.
- That's not to say we don't ask God to supply for our needs. But that's only part of the picture of prayer.

Be sensitive to the Holy Spirit and pray for protection.

- Pray through the Holy Spirit's prompting.
- All prayer in one way or another is spiritual warfare.
 - When you begin stepping up the power of your prayer, the enemy will take notice.
- Pray in advance for protection and also ask God to reveal any traps of the enemy along the way.

God has never made a defensive move.

- The mystery of prayer is joining together with God's plan to destroy the work of the enemy. And every prayer you've ever prayed has a measure of that in it.
- Sometimes we pray amiss. If you follow the steps I've outlined above, your prayer life will improve and your prayers will be more effective.

TALKING POINTS: Teaching Session 3

The Lord's Prayer.

- Prayer starts by acknowledging to Whom you are praying.
 - You're speaking to the Creator of Heaven and Earth, Who already knows your needs before you even ask.
 - *"Our Father who are in Heaven, hallowed be your name."*
- Next, the substance that makes prayer work is faith.
 - Faith is the understanding of how the system of Heaven works.

- Faith is the understanding that God's ways and His will are far superior to yours.
- Faith doesn't require that you always understand God's ways, it just means you trust His ways.
- *"Your Kingdom come, Your will be done. On earth as it is in Heaven."*
- The next step is repentance and forgiveness.
 - Being clean before God clears the spiritual frequencies.
 - It allows you to hear from the Holy Spirit and it prepares you for the next step, which is to ask your prayers.
 - Ask God for everything you need today—healing, provision, and whatever else you need to conquer evil and advance the Kingdom.
 - *"Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors."*
- Finally, ask God for his divine wisdom and protection.
 - We never focus on what the enemy is doing in our life, but that doesn't mean we don't prepare.
 - The moment you pray, the spiritual atmosphere changes around you.
 - The enemy isn't sure what's going to happen next, but whatever it is, he's not going to like it. So, an effectual prayer should also ask for God's wisdom and His hand of protection over your life.
 - *"And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom, the power, and the glory for ever and ever. Amen."*

CONCLUSION:

Prayer is a mystery. It's like a treasure we walk past every day without fully realizing its value. If we truly believed prayer was a treasure, we would treat it as such. We would share its beauty with the ones we loved. We would keep it in a protected place so that no one could take it from us. We would find out all there was to know about it, so we truly understood its worth and value.

Praying isn't a duty—it's a privilege. It's humanity's greatest privilege and what distinguishes us from all other creation. Nothing else God created has been given the ability to interact with the Creator like us—not even the angels. So, if there is a mystery of prayer that we may never know the answer to—it's this—why? Why does God love us that much? Why would He listen to our simple, immature cry out for help? Not just listen, but patiently wait and listen to them?

In prayer, we stand at the edge of eternity and stare into its great and vast mystery and yearn to peek behind the veil. In prayer we leave, if only for a matter of moments, this temporary, mortal existence and enter the place where our Creator awaits. Prayer is our meeting place. It's the dinner table prepared for us in the presence of our enemies. It's the green meadow. It's the still waters. It's all of these. But you have to answer the faint knocking at the door.