

Acceptable Worship

Prayer (I Jn 5:14-15)

INTRODUCTION

1. Good Morning,
 - a. Greeting...
2. Series on what “Acceptable Worship” truly is.
 - a. Last week we examined what acceptable “Preaching” is according to God.
 - i. **II Ti 4:2** “preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.”¹
 - b. This week we are going to examine what acceptable “Prayer” is according to God.
 - i. **I Jn 5:14-15** “And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. 15 And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him.”
3. There are a number of places we could go in discussing this most important topic however today we will look at the parables Jesus gave to examine what acceptable prayer truly is.
 - a. We will be examining today...
 - i. **Lk 11:5-8** “And he said to them, “Which of you who has a friend will go to him at midnight and say to him, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves, 6 for a friend of mine has arrived on a journey, and I have nothing to set before him’; 7 and he will answer from within, ‘Do not bother me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed. I cannot get up and give you anything’? 8 I tell you, though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his impudence he will rise and give him whatever he needs.”
4. With that let us go now to God’s precious Word and examine therein His truths concerning prayer.

I. Prayer Is...

- A. Coming to God at any time
 1. “Midnight”
 - i. **Lk 11:5** “And he said to them, “Which of you who has a friend will go to him at midnight...”
 2. Judges sit only at certain times and Kings have fixed hours where they can be approached.
 - i. **Es 4:11** “All the king’s servants and the people of the king’s provinces know that if any man or woman goes to the king inside the inner court without being called, there is but one law—to be put to death, except the one to whom the king holds out the golden scepter so that he may live. But as for me, I have not been called to come in to the king these thirty days.”
 3. God can be approached at any time.
 - i. **Ps 119:62** “At midnight I rise to praise you, because of your righteous rules.”

¹ All Scriptures are taken from the ESV unless otherwise noted. If other translations are used this is not necessarily an endorsement of the translation.

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- B. Coming to God in confidence
1. “lend me three loaves”
 - i. **Lk 11:5** “... Which of you who has a friend will go to him at midnight and say to him, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves’”
 2. There can be no doubt this friend had been found to be helpful before.
 - i. God desires to be a friend to His people.
 - a. **Ja 2:23** “and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”— and he was called a friend of God.”
 - ii. Jesus desires the same.
 - a. **Jn 15:14** “You are my friends if you do what I command you.”
 3. Therefore we see that a helpful friend is one that we can have confidence in and God, as our friend, is one we can approach with confidence.
- C. Coming to God as an adequate provider
1. “I have nothing...”
 - i. **Lk 11:6** “for a friend of mine has arrived on a journey, and I have nothing to set before him”
 2. Man will have a desire usually to help another out but not always the means or power to do so.
 - i. God’s resources are infinite however.
 - a. **Ps 24:1** “The earth is the LORD’s and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein”
 - b. **Ps 50:10-15** “For every beast of the forest is mine, the cattle on a thousand hills. 11 I know all the birds of the hills, and all that moves in the field is mine. 12 “If I were hungry, I would not tell you, for the world and its fullness are mine. 13 Do I eat the flesh of bulls or drink the blood of goats? 14 Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and perform your vows to the Most High, 15 and call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me.””
 3. God is He who is our perfect provider and let us go to Him in prayer.
- D. Coming to God with persistence
1. “yet because of his persistence.”
 - i. **Lk 11:8** “I say to you, though he will not rise and give to him because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will rise and give him as many as he needs.” (NKJV)
 2. Persistence in prayer is the main point of this parable.
 - i. This has always been an expectation of God for us.
 - a. **I Th 5:17** “pray without ceasing”
 - b. **Ro 12:12** “Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.”

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3. In this parable there is an unwillingness of the one to help his friend.
 - i. This is not the case with God as God is always willing to help.
 - a. However it might be at the “time” of the prayer it cannot be done according to His will.
 1. **Ja 4:15**
4. God can be persuaded by persistence in our prayers.
 - i. Make sure your prayers are based therefore in God’s Will.

II. Prayer Is Not...

- A. Simply a desire
 1. Many people desire many different things but they do not make an intelligible request to God for such desires.
 - i. **Ja 4:2** “You desire and do not have... You do not have, because you do not ask.”
 2. We cannot be too proud to “ask” God for what we need.
- B. Vain repetition of words
 1. We need to model our prayers after the pattern of the righteous.
 - i. **Ep 3:16-19** “that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, 19 and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.”
 2. Our prayers cannot be words we simply say to “be saying something” but rather should be thoughtful and have much forethought.
- C. For show to be seen by others
 1. This is why prayer in private was mentioned by Jesus.
 - i. **Mt 6:5-6** “And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. 6 But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.”
 2. However with public prayers this cannot not be done.
 - i. Therefore our prayers must be sincere and heartfelt.
 - a. If we pray to God in thanksgiving about Him giving us His divine Word but never study it we are not being sincere.
 - b. If we pray to God for the opportunity to meet together to worship but are irregular in our attendance we are not only not sincere but our heart is not truly reflected.
 3. Our prayers must not be done just for show.

CONCLUSION

1. Brethren as we meet to worship let our prayers be done in an acceptable and righteous manner before our Great & Awesome God.
 - a. Those that lead us in prayer do so with proper forethought and sincerity.

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2. Question: Is your prayer life an acceptable to God?
 - a. If so continue therein and grow thereby.
 - b. If not why not?
3. Invitation
 - a. For those that are Christians but are not living for Christ repent by confessing your sins to God that He may forgive you and dedicate your life/time back to Him.
 - i. **I Jn 1:7, 9** "But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin...9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."
 - b. For those that are not Christians or for those that think they are Christians and want to know for sure notice what is required to become a child of God or Christian according to God and God only.
 - i. Hear/Study **Rom 10:17; II Tim 2:15**
 - ii. Have Faith In Jesus **Jn 3:16; 8:24**
 - iii. Repent/Turn To God **Ac 17:30; Lk 24:47**
 - iv. Confess Jesus As Lord **Mt 10:32; Rom 10:9**
 - v. Immersed For The Forgiveness of Sins **Ac 2:38; 22:16; I Pt 3:21**
 - vi. Live A Faithful Life **I Jn 1:7; Eph 5:8**