

## **CHRISTIAN BASICS: PRAYER**

### **1 Thessalonians 5:17 (NKJV) “Pray without ceasing.”**

#### **I. INTRODUCTION-**

- a. Today we continue our sermon study on the Christian basics... by looking at some of what the Bible says about prayer.
- b. Of all the privileges of the Christian life... none is more wonderful than the privilege of prayer.
- c. Through the privilege of prayer... God invites His children... to come into His presence at any time... in any place... in any circumstance... to worship Him... to fellowship with Him... and to make their requests made known to Him.
- d. Even though prayer is a wonderful privilege... maintaining a consistent ... on-going... and growing Christian life... is a struggle for many Christians.
- e. Yet being a consistent person of prayer... is essential for any Christian to be a growing ... maturing... Spirit-filled... and useful Christian.
- f. How can we become people of prayer?... let's look at some biblical truths about prayer.

#### **II. THE COMPULSION TO PRAY-**

- a. The compulsion to pray... the desire to pray... is one of the marks of a born again Christian.
- b. When a person is born again... they are born again with the desire to pray.
- c. The Christian life begins with a prayer... a prayer of repentance ... faith... belief in... and surrender to Jesus as the Lord of our life.

- d. *Romans 10:9-13 (NKJV) “That if you **confess** with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the **mouth confession is made** unto salvation. For the Scripture says, “Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.” For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. For “whoever **calls on the name of the LORD** shall be saved.”*
- e. Once a person is saved... and transformed by the power of Christ... because of what God has done in their life...they will continue to have a desire to pray.
- f. The desire to pray... to worship and serve God... is one of the marks of a true born-again experience.

Compulsion

### III. THE COMMAND TO PRAY-

- a. In His Word... God teaches us how to pray... He encourages us to pray... He assures us that He hears our prayers... and God promises that that He will answer our prayers in the way that is best for us.
- b. And in His Word... God commands Christians to pray.
- c. In Luke 18:1... Jesus taught His disciples that we should... always pray and not lose heart.
- d. The Bible commands in Romans 12:12... that Christians should be... *“joyful in hope...patient in affliction... and always faithful in prayer.”*
- e. Ephesians 6:18 says that Christians are to... *“pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests.”*
- f. Philippians 4:6 says that believers are not be anxious about anything ... but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving... we are to present our requests to God.

- g. Colossians 4:2 says that believers are to... *“devote ourselves to prayer ... being watchful and thankful.”*
- h. 1 Thessalonians 5:17... commands Christians to *“pray continually.”*
- i. In 1 Timothy 2:1... the Apostle Paul wrote to us... *“I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone.”*

Compulsion... Command

#### **IV. THE CONFLICT OF PRAYER-**

- a. Even though prayer is a wonderful privilege... and even though we are born again with a desire to pray... maintaining a consistent ... on-going... and growing prayer life... is a struggle for many Christians... why is this true?
- b. #1, Satan’s opposition ... if developing and maintaining an ongoing... alive... and active prayer life is essential to being a growing... maturing... active... useful ... Spirit-filled... and victorious Christian.
- c. Then you had better believe that your prayer life... is Satan’s number one target in your life.
- d. Satan will do all he can to hinder us from praying... to cause us to doubt God promises concerning prayer ... to cause us to doubt the power of prayer.
- e. Satan knows that if he can hinder a Christian from praying... he will unplug us from God’s presence and power... he will make us more vulnerable to his temptations... he will make us grow cold to the things of God... and he will hinder us from being the Christians that God wants us to be.
- f. After the Lord Jesus was baptized... the Bible says that He went into the wilderness to pray and prepare Himself for His coming ministry.

- g. But while Jesus was there praying... Satan entered into that holy ground and attacked Jesus with temptation... Satan did not want Jesus to pray... and he does not want you to pray either.
- h. #2, The opposition of our flesh... as saved as we are there is something in every Christian that will fight every good and godly thing that God wants to do in our life.
- i. The Bible calls that part of us “the flesh”... the flesh is the residue of our lost life... that we will not be free of until we go to Heaven.
- j. As saved as we are... as long as we live in these fallen bodies... and as long as we live in this fallen world... we will still have to deal with temptation... we will still have to deal with the potential... and the possibility of sin.
- k. It was the flesh that suggested to you this morning that today would be a good to sleep in and skip church... it is the flesh that hinders and fights every godly impulse... and everything that God wants to do in your life.
- l. Listen to this paraphrase... of how the Apostle Paul described his fight with the flesh.
- m. *Romans 7:22-25 (NLT2) “I love God’s law with all my heart. But there is another power within me that is at war with my mind. This power wants me to be a slave to the sin like I was before I was saved. Oh, at times I am so miserable! When will I be free from this struggle with the flesh? Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord. The more I love Him and live for Him the more victory I will have over the sinful flesh that is still within me.”*
- n. Every time you pray... the flesh will fight and oppose you.
- o. #3, The lost world system opposes our prayers...the lost world system around us that opposes God... that denies God... that mocks God... that hates God ... will oppose and hinder our prayers.

- p. The Bible warns Christians not to get caught up and entangled in the interests...affairs...activities...and values of the lost world around us.
- q. Worldly Christians and carnal Christians... are always... without exception ... prayerless Christians... Christians who no longer pray.
- r. #4, The busyness of life opposes our prayers... modern life is so busy ... that many Christian struggle to find time to pray.
- s. But really how busy are we?... the following may not be true of you... but according to the first-quarter 2018 Nielsen Report... American adults are now spending over 11 hours per day... listening to... watching... reading... or generally interacting with some kind of media... television... radio ... Facebook... the internet... etc.
- t. We may be busy... but is what we are busy with... more important that spending time with God in prayer?
- u. Praying each day is a matter of discipline... choice... and priority... the truth is we may be busy... but none of us are too busy to pray.
- v. #5, Impurity in our life... sins that we allow to linger in our life... sins that we refuse to confess and forsake... will hinder our prayers.
- w. *Isaiah 59:1-2 (NKJV) "Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, That it cannot save; Nor His ear heavy, That it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear."*
- x. #6, Doubting that God really hears our prayers... doubting that our prayers really make a difference... doubting that God really does answer prayer... hinders our prayers.
- y. *Proverbs 15:29 (NKJV) "The LORD is far from the wicked, But He hears the prayer of the righteous."*
- z. Prayer changes things... and the one thing it changes the most is you.

aa. Through prayer God will give you courage... He will give you strength ... He will give you hope... He will give you wisdom ... He will give you assurance... He will give you peace... He will give you guidance... He will give you forgiveness... He will give you renewal ... He will give you revival... He will give you blessing.

bb. God will hear you when you pray for others... God will hear your intercessions and your requests... God will hear your pleas unto Him.

cc. And, God will answer your prayers... He may not always answer them when you think He should... and in the way you think He should.

dd. But if we pray in the right way... in the right spirit... for the right purpose... God will always answer our prayers in the way that is best and right for us.

ee. Don't doubt what God's Word says about prayer... don't doubt God's prayer promises... pray without ceasing.

Compulsion... Command... Conflict

## **V. THE COMMITMENT TO PRAYER-**

- a. Becoming a person of prayer is a choice... it requires discipline, dedication and commitment.
- b. Becoming a person of prayer... will also literally change your life... it will change who you are... it will change how you live in this world ... it will change the blessings and rewards that you will receive in Heaven.
- c. Will you resolve today... to become a person of prayer?... a prayer warrior?
- d. The best way to learn how to pray is to pray... read the Bible as you pray... the Bible will help you to learn how pray and what to pray for ... the Holy Spirit will help you to pray... He is your prayer partner and your prayer guide.

- e. What a blessing prayer is... prayer is how we communicate with God ... prayer allows us to worship and praise the Lord.
- f. Prayer allows us to participate in God's work... Prayer gives us power over evil... Prayer is always available... Prayer keeps us humble before God... Prayer grants us the privilege of experiencing God ... Prayer strengthens our bond with other believers... Prayer succeeds where other means will fail.
- g. Get you a prayer journal... make you a prayer list... develop a prayer plan... and pray!

## **VI. CONCLUSION-**

- a. The prayer that changed my life... the prayer of faith.
- b. *Romans 10:9-13 (NKJV) "That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame." For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. For "whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved."*