

## Fundamentals of Our Faith from the Beginning

### Means of Grace (Part Three): Prayer

**Main Idea:** Prayer is a primary means of grace. In the Word we hear His voice and in prayer because of Christ we have His ear. Scripture not only informs the attitude with which we should pray, it also directs and inspires us in what we should pray.

**Q38:** What is prayer?

**A38:** Prayer is pouring out our hearts to God in praise, petition, confession of sin, and thanksgiving.

**Psalm 62:8** Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us. (ESV)

#### Discuss the Scripture:

- What does it look like to pour out our hearts before God? (1 Sam 1:15; Ps 42:4; Lam 2:19)
- What is a refuge? How is God a refuge for us?

#### Discuss the answer in light of the Scripture:

- How might praise in prayer take shape? (Luke 1:46-55)
- How might petition in prayer take shape? (1 Sam 1:9-17)
- How might confession of sin in prayer take shape? (Ps 51)
- How might thanksgiving in prayer take shape? (Phil 4:4-6)

**Q39:** With what attitude should we pray?

**A39:** With love, perseverance, and gratefulness; in humble submission to God's will, knowing that, for the sake of Christ, he always hears our prayers.

**Philippians 4:6** Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. (ESV)

#### Discuss the Scripture:

- Why might we be tempted to view the first command in verse 6 as difficult?
- What is the second command in verse 6? How does this command impact how we read verse 6 as a whole?
- What is the relationship between disordered emotions and prayerlessness?
- Why is it important that our petitions be made with thanksgiving?
- What is the promise found in verse 7?

#### Discuss the answer in light of the Scripture:

- What does it mean to pray in humble submission to God's will?
- Why does God always hear our prayers?
- What does it mean to pray with an attitude of love/perseverance/gratefulness?

**Q40:** What should we pray?

**A40:** The whole Word of God directs and inspires us in what we should pray, including the prayer Jesus himself taught us.

**Ephesians 3:14-21** For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and

length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen. (ESV)

#### **Discuss the Scripture:**

- What three primary things does Paul pray for Christians and what do they mean?
- In what ways is this prayer in humble submission to God's will?
- To whom is this prayer addressed and how is he described? (verses 20-21)
- For whom is this prayer? (verses 20-21)

#### **Discuss the answer in light of the Scripture:**

- Why do we need to be directed and inspired in what we should pray?
- What are some of the patterns for prayer in the Word of God that direct and inspire our prayers?
- What are some ways in which the whole Word of God directs and inspires our prayers? (i.e. How does the whole Word of God direct and inspire our prayers and not just the parts with patterns for prayer?)
- How is biblical meditation an aid to us in our prayers?
- How is praying the Bible an aid to us in our prayers?

**Q41:** What is the Lord's Prayer?

**A41:** Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

**Matt 6:9** Pray then like this: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name...." (ESV)

#### **Discuss the Scripture:**

- What is the context of chapter 6?
- What are empty phrases? (Matt 6:7)
- What specific flaws of these empty-phrase prayers does Jesus draw out?
- What do empty-phrase prayers indicate about the disposition of our hearts?

#### **Discuss the answer in light of the Scripture:**

- What are the characteristics of the one to whom we pray listed in verse 9? Do we tend to emphasize one of these characteristics above the other?
- What is the general focus of the first three petitions?
- What is the general focus of the second three petitions (though ultimately there is continuity with the first three petitions)?

### **Bibliography**

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