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## Being Molded for Prayer

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### **Matthew 6:33; 2 Corinthians 5:11; Ephesians 5:25; James 5:13-18**

What is prayer? Prayer is an intimate communication between God and man. It is the wonderful privilege of talking directly to God at any time about anything. We have this opportunity because of what Christ did. The Christian life is about the ongoing, personal relationship you have with God through Jesus Christ and what He has done that is for now and all of eternity. As we are in Christ and He is in us, we are in a sacred, transcending union. It is as a Bride bestowed to her husband, given each to the other. Prayer is the communication between Christ and His Bride—between Him and us! We must see the sacredness of prayer so we can better receive its impact!

God is a jealous God and wants us with Him without distractions; it is almost like a marriage. We are bestowed to *one* husband as the Bride of Christ. Thus, when we neglect or abuse prayer, we are literally cheating on God just as one might cheat on a spouse! This form of carelessness not only neglects God, but also betrays Him! Yes, fortunately, we have grace, but why would we even desire to cheat on our loving Lord? When we jump to other solutions—even good ones—and we leave prayer out, we are cheating on God. However, this does not mean we should only pray and do nothing else, as prayer requires the motion of our will, hands, and feet in response.

Prayer is the spiritual communication between human beings and God. Just as in a good effective marriage, communication must be present; it must be clear and on going. If not, the marriage decays and even divorces. God will not divorce us, but we can decay our relationship with Him when we neglect prayer or fail to see its relevance. We must have prayer that is real and growing in order to have a viable relationship with God. We talk, He listens; He talks, and we listen. It is a *two-way street!*

But, in this communication, we are not an equal partner, as we are before the Holy God of the universe. It is like a child before his or her loving Father. The Father listens, instructs, challenges, disciplines, and loves. We, as children, may ask, but it is not always in our best interest to get what we want. God, who loves and nurtures us, will say, “No” to what we may think we need and want and we have to see that as OK. He has more knowledge and understanding, and sees beyond what we can see (Psalm 91:15; Isa. 65:24; Matt. 7:7). We can have confidence that God does indeed hear and respond to our prayers!

Prayer is receiving the amazing, redemptive work of our Lord and God Jesus Christ, so His power and purpose can flow into us and then onto others. Prayer is spending time and talking with God, expressing our hearts to Him and our interceding on behalf of others. It is meant to be exciting, powerful, and fulfilling. Just as in a phone conversation, prayer is not a one-way communication. God will speak to us—not necessarily as a burning bush, but often in quiet ways, so we must also listen. However, always compare to Scripture what you think He said, as He will never contradict

Himself. That way, you will be able to differentiate your desires from His precepts. There is no need we can ever face that prayer cannot meet; there is never a problem we go through that prayer cannot answer (Psalm 46:10; Matt. 6:7-15, Luke 11:1-13)!

Prayer is the expression of our intimate relationship and union with Him. Our union with Christ is the basis of how and why we are able to commune with Him. This is also described as “Communion” as the Lord’s Supper is also a means of communication, and goes beyond ceremony into real, practical intimacy (Isa. 52:15; 53:12; Matt. 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:15-20; 1 Cor. 11:17-25)! It is not to be just a ritual in our church or a quick thing we do before bed, but an enduring, passionate attitude of building our relationship with Christ. It is about who we are in Christ, so we can see His Holiness and His availability to communicate with us and us with Him. This involves a gift; as we present ourselves to God, our will is laid aside and our desires are put on hold so His plan and eminence can be seen we can respond to Him (John 3:30).

We are to make ourselves available and bestowed to Christ. We give ourselves to Him just like in a wedding ceremony where the pastor asks *who is giving this bride to be married* and the parents respond, *I do, or we do*. We are in union with Him through His gift of grace, Spirit, and faith to us and communication with Him. All this is rooted in what He has done for us on the Cross. He has personally done this for you; you did not deserve it! Thus, we need to see that prayer is not just casual conversation, or something laid aside until we need Him; rather, it is a deep, metaphysical union between the Holy, Awesome God of the universe and us. He is beyond any human means of communication, yet, He allows us this communication! Prayer needs our attentiveness and utmost respect so we are molded to Him. Prayer is indeed most sacred. Let us never take it for granted. We must see prayer as a privilege and go before Him with the utmost respect, reverence, and adoration! (2 Cor 5:11 Eph. 5:25)!

Something must happen in us for this attitude of prayer to come about. That is, we must see Him—really see God. We will not see Him literally. Since God is eternal, omnipotent, and omniscient, He cannot be seen with human eyes. We must recognize His presence, His reality, His purpose, His love, His care, and His plan as He enfolds us. This comes about from developing our relationship with Him. Through a steady diet of our spiritual formation, we become more aware of Christ and His work. Then, we can resound with faith and maturity. Thus, as we grow, our communication with Him grows. Our faith becomes honed; it becomes more prevalent and powerful.

Prayer is not just an exercise we do. Rather, it is active communication with God. It is the most important action for us in any manner or endeavor. Prayer is not about our will; it is rather a means to seek His (Matt. 6:33).

Many people, including pastors, make the mistake of thinking that prayer is the preparation for whatever we do. This is true to a point, but prayer is not merely preparation! Oswald Chambers said, “Prayer does not just prepare us for ministry and service, prayer *is* our ministry and service.” Prayer is not just a means to prepare us for

the encounters and battles of life, prayer *is* the battle we do in life! Prayer is more about being the greatest work we can do than the results we receive from it!

Remember, our obedience is what is important, not how others respond to us. We are even called to bless those unreasonable people, and we do that by remaining true to His Lordship. You cannot be responsible for how others respond and treat you when you are acting in godly character (Rom. 12:14-21; James 5:13-18).

## Questions to Ponder

**Read** Matthew 6:33

1. What is prayer?
2. What have you done for Christ lately?
3. How is prayer an intimate communication between God and you?
4. Do you see prayer as a wonderful privilege of talking directly to the Most Sovereign Holy God of the universe at any time about anything?
5. Do you realize that when we are carelessness with prayer, it not only neglects God, but also betrays Him? How so?
6. How would you describe prayer as communication on a *two-way street*?
7. How is prayer a picture of the redemptive work of our Lord and God Jesus Christ?
8. What does it mean to you that His power and purpose can flow into you and then onto others?
9. How is prayer an expression of our intimate relationship and union with Him?
10. Why is prayer not to be just a ritual in our church or a quick thing we do before bed?
11. How will a good attitude and practice of prayer help mold us to be enduring, and build our passionate relationship with Christ?
12. His Holiness and His availability is made for us too, how so? So, how can and should we make ourselves available and bestowed to Christ?
13. How do you give yourselves to Christ? How should you?
14. Prayer is indeed most sacred. What can you do to never take it for granted?

15. How does prayer help us live in His presence, His reality, His purpose?
16. How does God's love and care for you help motivate you more for prayer and the deeper things of God? How will this help you see His plan unfold before you?
17. Do you realize that as you grow, your communication with Christ grows, your faith becomes honed; it becomes more prevalent and powerful?
18. How can you see prayer as a privilege? How will this help you go before Him with the utmost respect, reverence, and adoration?
19. What must happen in you for a better attitude and practice of prayer to come about in your daily life?
20. What are you going to do about prayer now?