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## How to Pray! Part VIII

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### Our Response to Prayer!

#### Colossians 4:2-6; 3:2; 1 Peter 3:15-17

How does the pursuit of prayer happen? The key is being continually devoted to Christ. *Continue earnestly* (Col. 4:2-6)! This phrase in Colossians continues the theme to *set our minds on things above*, meaning to be in “fullness” with Christ (Col. 3:2). This attitude is what spurs on our commitment and our outreach. Without persevering with Christ, we cannot persevere persuasively, or even at all with others. Our fullness in Christ will reflect His work in us and be the beacon of hope to others! In Colossians, *praying* refers to more of a “militant prayer,” as in urgent and vigorous, not weak or superficial. Prayer is our dependence on Christ and our platform for His power (Eph. 1:15-20; 6:18-20). Because of what Christ did for us, we will want the same for the lives of others (1 Cor. 16:9).

Do you realize that when we devote ourselves more to Christ, we have more opportunities in life and ministry? Why would any Christian not want that? The call is simple and the action to make this call, to be devoted to Christ as Lord, is a simple endeavor. To have a mindset that our relationship with Christ must be preserving and persevering, our will needs to be open so it can be shaped and formed by Him! Yet, this can be very hard for most Christians! First, we are to be in prayer—in direct communication with Christ. And, when we engage in prayer or in any action regarding our Lord (and that would be all things in life), our minds are to be alert. We are also to be grateful, to have a thankful attitude and composure. When we have these right attitudes, then we have the right aptitude. With a heart and mind shaped by Christ, we can remember others and keep them in specific prayer. Then, we will see the opportunities that He brings us and be able and willing to proclaim His message of grace to those around us in a good attitude and lifestyle. As Saint Francis said, *if you need to, even use words*. Then, we can place ourselves into situations where God will use us to impact others. But the key is to remain in Him and not allow the world and its evil desires to influence us; rather, be the influencers to them!

Prayer—earnest and real prayer—will help us go beyond ourselves and into the lives of others. By our example and faith, others will be spurred on further in the faith by our attitudes, lifestyles, and deeds. It is about Christ’s work, not our efforts. We can then walk closer with and wiser in Him so we will see the opportunities He has for us. We then can do them, not by our abilities, but by allowing Him to work in and through us. Paul was in prison when this letter was written. He did not seek to be released, even though he must wanted to be. Rather, he sought how the Lord could use him, regardless of his situation. This was an example of real prayer, to allow *Thy will*, not *my will*. Paul sought opportunities for ministry, not opportunities for his freedom. In other words, he placed the call of God over his perceived needs and desires, even if they were good (2 Cor. 13:7; Eph. 1:16-23; Phil. 1:9). Perhaps we can grow ever so much more with such a mindset, to see opportunities to make our Lord known and not just to make ourselves feel good (1 Cor. 16:9; 2 Cor. 2:12; 1 Pet. 3:15-17; Rev. 3:7-8).

When we have the right attitude and aptitude to set our minds on Him, we can be used more powerfully and effectively for those around us. Our prayers and deeds will show His love and care. Our relationships and the people we have prayed for will ooze His love and precepts because our minds will be focused on Him, our hope and heart poured out to Him. Others will see Christ through us and receive the power and impact of the Spirit as God uses us as examples. What an incredible opportunity we have! Let us make the most of it (Psalm 1:1-3; 119:97-104)!

The passage in 1 Peter is about how we are to be as a witness, but something has to happen in us to make us a good witness. And real heartfelt prayer life is a key to that door. Our prayer life is more important than our feelings or our circumstances. This comes down to how we, as an example of the Lord, are being a witness for the Lord. Our desire to fight back or be in fear are temporary solutions to our emotional struggle. This only ends up escalating the situation and proving true the critics of Christ and His Church. When we remain in control of our emotions and physical reactions, our witness will resonate into eternity.

Remember this imperative truth, God is the One who keeps us and rewards us. Even when the world is falling apart around us, He cares for us, so we have no need to worry or fret. If we do good (and we should always strive our best to do so), people will come against us. We should not stop or become afraid, frustrated, or disillusioned; rather, we should keep it up, showing the work of Christ in us. We do this by prayer and worshiping Him! Let Him be your Lord; that means He leads in all aspects of your life. We do this by being readers of the Word so we can be doers of the Word, and be a person who is the Lord's display case as the Word of Life is played out in your actions and relationships.

What you say, how you say it, what you do, and how you do it will be prime witnesses for our Lord. Our attitudes are tempered in our prayer times with God. So when we are called to be ready to explain our life in Christ, we have something of worth to display and even utter that work of Christ that is in us. When we do, it will always be in the parameters of the Fruit of the Spirit. Thus, we are called to respect, listen, and be gentle so the real Gospel message goes out from us not only in how we are, but also in how and what we say.

## **Questions to Ponder**

### **Read Colossians 4:2-6; 3:2**

1. How do you hope in Him, worship Him, and allow Him to be your lead?
2. How do you display the wonder of His love and grace in your daily life?
3. How can your prayer life become more effectual and vibrant?
4. How does the pursuit of prayer happen? How can it happen?

5. How do you hope in Christ, worship Him, allow Him to be your lead? Does knowing that your security is in Him and not how you are treated help you when you are going through a tough time?
6. How does your attitude spur on your commitment in your call and your outreach?
7. What in your attitude needs to improve or fixed so you can be stimulated on more in your commitment for Him?
8. What does militant prayer mean to you? How can you practice this form of prayer?
9. How have your prayers been urgent and vigorous? What causes your prayers to be weak or superficial?
10. Prayer is our dependence on Christ and our platform for His power. So what needs to be fixed in you to have more of this power and purpose flowing through you?
11. Do you realize that when we devote ourselves more to Christ, we have more opportunities in life and ministry? What causes some Christians to not want that?
12. What does it mean to you to be devoted to Christ as Lord? What should it mean? How have you experienced this?
13. Why is prayer sometimes very hard for most Christians?
14. How can having a thankful attitude and composure improve your prayer life?
15. How does an effective prayer life influence you? How can it be used to influence others?
16. What is earnest and real prayer to you? How have you experienced this? What needs to take place so you can go beyond yourself and into the lives of others?
17. How can you prepare your attitude and faith for suffering?
18. Do you realize that when you are in Christ, no harm will come to you that is not allowed for a purpose. Knowing this, how can you further trust in Him and endure all that comes your way?
19. What needs to happen to have a more right attitude and aptitude to set your mind on Christ?
20. How might Jesus use you more powerfully and effectively to those around you? How will prayer be used for this endeavor?