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## Prayer is a Recognition of God

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### Prayer is a Recognition of God's Person, Purpose, Provision, and Presence

#### John 3:30; Philippians 3:10-14; Colossians 1:9-14

When we grow more in our prayer life, we will see more of God in our lives, more realization of Him and His power. Thus, everything we do will be affected in a positive way as a response of His work in us and our personal adjustments in becoming less of ourselves and more of Him (John 3:30; Gal. 2:20-21; Phil 3:1-14). James 5 calls this the *power of faith*; it refers to trusting in God and then being faithful towards our intercessory duty to others. It does not mean a *special power*, as some have proclaimed; rather, it is a call to action to show our Christian community our faith displayed as we care for one another.

Yes, God does heal today, but healing is not guaranteed or even normative. How we respond and learn concerns God over all else—even an actual healing. A healed body is of no good without a mind and heart centered on Him. It is merely a temporary restoration; it is of no eternal use. The power of God is never to be a show; His work in us is a more powerful and desirable venture!

The result of our prayer life will enable us to praise our Lord with unity and willing loving hearts along with other Christians. The James 5 passage calls this, *Sing songs*. This is one aspect that is never for show—it is real worship and not just music. It is a response of praise from our love. In worship, we are the performers and Christ is the audience. It is the same with prayer. What Christ is doing in us should bring real, authentic prayer and worship. It is not about form, function, or type; it is about our hearts showing our love to Him. Prayer and worship share the same heart and attitude (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:12-17; James 5:13).

A real prayer life will bring an attitude of confession and cleansing of sin because of the commitment of our all to God. God's purpose, His plan, is to make us His children (1 John). He is the good parent who guides His children and protects them. At the same time, He does not over-protect them so they lose opportunities to please Him.

One of the roles of the Holy Spirit is to be our Advocate before the Father and to make all experiences work to the glory and purpose of God, regardless of what we face in pain, suffering, and hardships. In the big picture, we are not meant for this world, but for eternity. We are here temporarily, but with hope for what is to come. Christ will see us through if we trust and obey in His way. When we understand this deeply, we are able to trust our Lord in all things. We can grow through our perseverance, and becoming stronger and more mature in the faith! Just think how transformed your life would be just by changing your perceptions of what you now see in front of you to seeing Christ in front of you!

Colossians 1:9-14 gives us some very valuable insights on prayer. Paul gives us the motivations and reasons why we pray. *Live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way.* He tells us not to *stop* or *cease to pray!* This means that in the proper and honorable sense, we are always to pursue God and to seek Christ and His wisdom and knowledge through prayer and the Word (Ex. 28:30; 1 Sam. 12:23; Prov. 1:2-7; Col 1:9-14). We are to *walk worthy of the Lord*, which means to pursue God, His righteousness, and His precepts, so He becomes more and we become less. This is our *walk with God*, meaning our living out the daily Christian life. It is never a walk in our own will and strength; this would bring pride and disobedience to our loving Lord (Lev. 26:3; Ezek. 36:27; John 3:30; Gal. 2:20-21; 5:16; Phil. 3:10-14).

How we do this? Colossians continues to tell us by saying that God *qualified us*. Paul boldly states that Christ alone accepts us. No entity in the universe has better qualifications than our Lord Jesus Christ (John 14:6; Rom. 3:23; Gal. 2:21; Eph. 1:1-11; 2:8; Col. 2:16, 18, 20-23)! The church at Colosse taught, which Paul corrected, that other supernatural beings brought them wisdom, and they needed to get this wisdom through channeling in order to grow in faith. Also, they taught that these beings could also hinder a person from seeking truth- a blatant contradiction. Thus, believing and seeking pagan gods or our own inclinations shows our lack of faith in the One True God. We need to see the goal, our *inheritance!* This meant for the Jews the Promise Land, but more appropriate it is having God as our God, for us the Christian it is having Him live in us, and our possession of the world to come. We become "joint heirs" (Acts 3:25; Rom. 8:17; Gal. 3:29; Titus 3:7; Heb. 6:17; 11:9; 1 Pet. 3:7) of His promises. He is the Light to shine on our life and path, the world is the darkness we avoid the evil while bearing the Light by our deeds (Psalm 27:1; Isa. 9:2; 42:6; 49:6; 58:8-10; 60:1).

One more reason why we pray, as stated in Colossians, is He *delivered us*. This denotes rescuing a slave from captivity, as we are slaves to sin and darkness but we obtain freedom in Christ (Gal. 1:4; Eph. 2:1-3; 6:11). He rescues us from the *power of darkness*, which refers to sin and the ways of the world that are meaningless and hopeless without Christ who is the Perfection. Only He has the power and authority to be the Light and shatter the darkness on our behalf (2 Cor. 3:15; 4:4-6; 6:14; Eph. 5:8-14; Phil. 2:15; 1 Thess. 5:5). He has *redeemed us*. In the Greek, this means to free a slave by paying the price for him. We are the slaves that have been freed! We receive this forgiveness because Christ redeemed us; He paid for our sins (Rom. 8:23; 1 Cor. 4:8-13; Col. 1:21-22; 2:13, 17, 20; 3:9-10).

Why is prayer important? Prayer is like a divine telephone of communication! It lines us up with Christ, and helps us be sensitive to His Spirit and to the needs of others. God, in His time, gives us a complete understanding of His will for our lives. The key is asking Him for this wisdom and insight. The focus is our spiritual formation; then, from our growth in Him, the opportunities and abilities to know and meet His call will come. When we focus on Christ, all the other things and stuff in life start to line up better; then we honor Him as Lord better!

Goodness and kindness come from a transformed heart poured out to Him. It does not flow from just the will to do it; we have to be the person, in Christ, to do the work to which He has called us. He gives us the strength and power to be in Him and to

allow His love and fruit to flow from us. In Him, we can do all things; apart from Him, we can do nothing. With His power and purpose in us, we have the endurance, hope, and patience to overcome all that life throws at us—even stress and suffering!

Our identity and joy is in Christ alone! Let us be real, authentic Christians who are thankful for who He is, what He has done for us—His rescue, His Kingdom, His freedom, His forgiveness of our sins, and His purchase of our being. Christ is our inheritance, hope, and our very lives both here on earth and for eternity to come. Therefore, let us live the Light; let us live out our lives as worthy (Col 1:9-14).

Do we fully understand that we have been rescued from sin and darkness, from hopelessness and despair? Has that *hit home*? To venture beyond our saving faith, we have to take heed and be encouraged because God is our Rescuer! Therefore, we are to respond in gratitude for His gifts (Col. 2:7; 3:17; 4:2)! Thus, to grow in our prayer lives, we must desire to experience a meaningful relationship with Him from the depths of our innermost being, all stemming from whom He is and what He has done!

## Questions to Ponder

### Read Colossians 1:9-14

1. Why is prayer important to you? How can it be more so?
2. How would you describe your prayer life in the following areas:
  - a. Gratitude to Christ
  - b. Love
  - c. Fruit of the Spirit
  - d. Character
  - e. Spiritual Growth
  - f. Relationships with Others?
3. How is prayer a recognition of God's Person, Purpose, Provision, and Presence?
4. How does prayer set a tone for us in our behaviors and insights? How can prayer help your church or relationships?
5. How does prayer help you in trusting in God and then being faithful towards your intercessory duty to others?
6. How does prayer help you engage in your Christian community? How is your faith displayed as care for one another?
7. How can the result of your prayer life enable you to praise our Lord more? How would this translate to unity in your church with a willing loving heart cooperating along with other Christians?

8. How does your prayer life tune you in to what Christ is doing in you? How will this help you bring real, authentic prayer and worship to Him? How will this affect your family, work, school, church and other relationships?
9. How will a real authentic prayer life bring an attitude of confession and cleansing of sin because of the commitment of our all to God in your life? What about your church?
10. What do you need to do so Jesus becomes more and you become less in will and desires?
11. What does it mean that God *qualified you*?
12. Now as a Christian, you receive His forgiveness because Christ redeemed you; He paid for our sins. How does this fuel your prayer life?
13. How can the focus of your spiritual formation help from your growth in Christ? How would this help you and your church take a hold of the opportunities and abilities to know and meet His call?
14. What does it mean to you that when you focus on Christ, all the other things and stuff in life start to line up better; then we honor Him as Lord better? How can this improve your church?
15. Do you fully understand that you have been rescued from sin and darkness, from hopelessness and despair? Has that *hit home*? What gets in the way of receiving Christ as LORD over all things in your life?
16. What do you need to do to venture beyond your saving faith, so you have to take heed and be encouraged because God is our Rescuer?
17. How will you grow in your prayer life? What must you desire in order to experience a meaningful relationship with Christ from the depths of your innermost being, all stemming from whom He is and what He has done?
18. What do you need to do to grow more in our prayer life? How will this help you see more of God in your life, more realization of Him and His power?