

BIBLE LIFE MESSAGES

What is Prayer For?

James 5:14-18

¹ What is prayer for? ²

The Bible says the prayers of a righteous person are powerful and effective. ¹ ³ If this is the case, what are prayers for?

Our scripture today from James, chapter 5, verses 14 through 18 will help you understand. ⁴

Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. ² ⁵

Elijah was a man just like us. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. Again he prayed, and the

¹ James 5:16 - Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.

² James 5:14-16.

heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops.³

6

I. Prayer is for the Expression of Faith

Prayer is for the expression of faith.⁷

Prayer let's God know you believe in His existence and His availability to you. With so many today denying God's existence, prayer is a demonstration of your faith.⁸ Hebrews, chapter 11, verse 6, **And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.**

God loves it when you seek Him out and talk to Him.⁹ In the Garden of Eden, God, Adam and Eve were **walking in the garden in the cool of the day.**^{4 10}

Prayer let's God know you trust Him to do what He said He would do.

³ James 5:17-18.

⁴ Genesis 3:8.

God made certain promises in the Bible. Prayer let's Him know you have found those promises and trust Him to fulfill them.

Lord Jesus said a couple of things about that. ¹¹ **If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer.** ⁵ ¹² In Mark, chapter 11, verse 24, He also said, **Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.**

¹³

Next . . .

II. Prayer is for Worship

Prayer is for worship. ¹⁴

Worship ascribes “worth” to God. Who, of all beings, is deserving of it! ¹⁵

Our English word **worthy** is from the Old English word “weorth”, which means “worthy of honor”. ¹⁶

⁵ Matthew 21:22.

The word “worship” in the original language ⁶ literally means “to kiss like a dog licking his master’s hand.” The idea comes from the Persian custom of kneeling before the king to show honor and respect. ¹⁷

Here are some examples of prayers of worship in the Bible. ¹⁸

Isaiah, chapter 6, verse 3, **And they were calling to one another: “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.”** ¹⁹ Psalm, chapter 150, verse 2, **Praise him for his acts of power; praise him for his surpassing greatness.** ²⁰ The Lord’s example prayer begins like this, **“This, then, is how you should pray: ”“Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name . . .”** ⁷ ²¹

Prayers of worship are simply telling the Lord how wonderful He is. ²² For instance, Nehemiah, chapter 9, verses 7 and 8, **You are the LORD God, who chose Abram and brought him out of Ur of the Chaldeans**

⁶ προσκυνέω.

⁷ Matthew 6:9.

and named him Abraham. You found his heart faithful to you, and you made a covenant with him to give to his descendants the land of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Jebusites and Girgashites. You have kept your promise because you are righteous. ²³

Then, the Apostle Paul exalts the Lord like this, **Now** to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen. ⁸ ₂₄

⁸ Ephesians 3:20-21.

III. Prayer is for Confession

Prayer is for confession. ²⁵

You are to confess your sins in prayer to receive forgiveness. ²⁶ First John, chapter 1, verses 9 and 10, If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives. ²⁷

Here are some examples of prayers of confession. ²⁸ David's confession before the Lord went like this, David was conscience-stricken after he had counted the fighting men, and he said to the LORD, "I have sinned greatly in what I have done. Now, O LORD, I beg you, take away the guilt of your servant. I have done a very foolish thing." ⁹ ²⁹

Nehemiah, chapter 1, verse 7 says, We have acted very wickedly toward you. We have not obeyed the

⁹ II Samuel 24:10.

commands, decrees and laws you gave your servant Moses. ³⁰

IV. Prayer is for Thanksgiving

Prayer is for thanksgiving. ³¹

Did you know that **ingratitude is a mark of the ungodly**? ³² Paul said in Romans, chapter 1, verse 21, **For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.**

³³

So, you are encouraged to thank God for everything - even trials! ³⁴ Colossians, chapter 3, verse 17 encourages, **And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.** ³⁵ Then First Thessalonians, chapter 5, verses 16 through 18 continues, **Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.** ³⁶

Finally . . .

V. Prayer is for Request

Prayer is for request. This is what most of us identify prayer as. ³⁷

Prayer is not only our grateful response to God's grace, but it's also **requests for your needs and the needs of others.** ³⁸

God has offered to provide your needs. ³⁹ The Lord said, **So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.** ^{10 40}

God tells you to ask for your needs to be supplied. ⁴¹ For your own needs, **Ask and it will be given to you;** seek and you will find; knock and the door will be

¹⁰ Matthew 6:31-33.

opened to you.¹¹ 42 Then, also for the need of the world to have witnesses. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.¹²

43

Agreement on these requests have great power! 44 Matthew, chapter 18, verse 19 emphasizes, Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven.

The power of prayer is more powerful than most of us can even imagine.

The Yoido Church in Seoul, Korea, is the largest church in the world. I organized a religious retreat for my soldiers once every two months when I was stationed there in the Army. Sunday morning, before returning to our installation, we attended worship at the main campus. At that time, 1989 through 1990, the church had a membership of 650,000. The church

¹¹ Matthew 7:7.

¹² Matthew 9:38.

reached its peak membership in 2007 with 830,000. Pastor David Yonggi Cho attributes the reason the Yoido Church has grown so large to his prayer life. He prays for his church five hours each morning. ⁴⁵

God is a loving Heavenly Father Who longs for fellowship with His precious child!

So, hop up on His knee. Snuggle up to Him emotionally and tell Him about your day!

biblelifemessages.org