

Outline

I. Jesus taught that there is right and wrong praying.

And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

MATTHEW 6:5

- A. A tremendous amount of what's being called "prayer" today offends God and opens the door for the devil.
- B. Jesus had to reveal what prayer is *not* before He taught what it is (Matt. 6:5-13).
- C. The Lord Himself first had to counter the religious concepts concerning prayer in His day, or the people would never have been able to grasp what He was about to say.

II. The heart attitude behind our prayer interests God much more than the actual words we say (Matt. 6:5)—if our attitude is wrong, we're praying wrong!

- A. Praying in tongues, prophesying, having all faith, giving our possessions to the poor, or even laying down our lives will all profit us nothing if done without God's kind of love (1 Cor. 13:1-3).
- B. In the kingdom, heart attitude makes all the difference!
- C. If we aren't seeing the desired results from our prayer lives, we need to check our motives.
- D. It's not God who hasn't been answering; it's our prayers that have been wrong.

III. God has already done everything He's ever going to do.

- A. He moved once and for all in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- B. All of us must receive for ourselves by faith what Jesus Christ has already provided in order to actually benefit from it.
 - i. A gift given isn't fully ours until it's received!

- C. As Christians, we are to instruct people to believe and receive what God has already done for them through the Atonement (Acts 16:30-31).
- IV. Payment has already been made—now it's just a matter of believing and receiving (see Romans 10:9 and 13).
- A. God's Word clearly proclaims, "*As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him*" (Col. 2:6).
 - B. In the same way we appropriate and walk in forgiveness of sin, we receive healing, deliverance, prosperity, and everything else!
 - C. Christ already made full provision for the abundant life through His atonement.
 - D. It's now not up to Him to do but us to receive what He's done.
- V. Jesus commanded us in Matthew 10:8 to "*heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, [and] cast out devils*" (brackets mine).
- A. There's a huge difference between healing the sick and just praying for them.
 - B. Jesus Christ completed everything necessary to save and heal every person—it shouldn't be any harder to receive our healing, since He provided it at the same time as forgiveness for our sin.
 - C. It doesn't take any more faith to raise people from the dead than to see them born again!
- VI. The Gospel is "good news" (what He's done), not "good prophecy" (what He's going to do)!
- A. God has already forgiven, healed, prospered, and delivered us.
 - B. Prayer is receiving by faith what He has already done.

Discipleship Questions

1. A tremendous amount of what's being called "prayer" today does what?
2. What did the Lord Himself first have to counter, or the people would never have been able to grasp what He was about to say?
3. Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-3. What should be your motivation when you pray?
4. If God hasn't been answering your prayers, what's the problem?
5. Read Acts 16:30-31. God moved once and for all in what?
6. As a Christian, what are you to instruct people to believe and receive?
7. Read Romans 10:9, 13; and Colossians 2:6. Since the payment has already been made, now it's just a matter of what?
8. How do you receive healing, deliverance, prosperity, and everything else?
9. Is there a difference between praying for the sick and healing them?
10. Why shouldn't it be any harder to receive your healing than forgiveness for your sin?
11. What is good news?
12. If God has already done everything for you, how should that affect how you pray?

Scriptures

MATTHEW 6:5-13

And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. [6] But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. [7] But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. [8] Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him. [9] After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. [10] Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. [11] Give us this day our daily bread. [12] And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. [13] And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

1 CORINTHIANS 13:1-3

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. [2] And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. [3] And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.

ACTS 16:30-31

And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? [31] And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.

ROMANS 10:9

That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

ROMANS 10:13

For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

COLOSSIANS 2:6

As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.

MATTHEW 10:8

Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.

Outline

- I. There are right and wrong ways to pray.
 - A. Because of this, it's important for us to keep open hearts and ears tuned in to the Holy Spirit throughout this study.
 - B. Holding on to unproductive prayer patterns could mean the difference between life and death for us or our loved ones.
 - C. We should honestly evaluate our prayer lives as different attitudes and popular understandings are confronted.
 - D. This is a great chance to recognize and root out unwanted hindrances that choke our effectiveness in prayer.
 - E. Growing pains mean we're being stretched as we mature!

- II. Certain religious misconceptions exist about prayer.
 - A. One is that we aren't supposed to pray in public.
 - B. But Jesus never said not to pray in public; in fact, He did it Himself (see Luke 11:1)—He just didn't want us praying strictly to be seen by others.
 - C. Another misconception is that we should pray an hour a day.
 - D. God never instructed us to pray for a certain period of time each day, and this is not consistent with the whole of God's Word.
 - E. In fact, from God's perspective, praying an hour a day has no value in and of itself.

- III. Some people believe that longer prayers are better prayers.
 - A. Jesus normally kept His prayers short (see Mark 4:39 and John 11:43) and seldom prayed for extended periods of time.

- B. The shorter the prayer, the greater the faith!
 - C. When Andrew prays for longer periods of time, a significant portion is usually spent praying in tongues.
 - D. Self-edification is an important New Testament purpose of prayer (1 Cor. 14:4 and Jude 20-21).
- IV. The majority of the body of Christ views prayer primarily as an opportunity to petition God.
- A. They see it very narrowly as their time to plead with Him to meet their needs.
 - B. Most Christians' prayer time is spent repenting of sin, asking for things, and in intercession.
 - C. Prayer becomes religious when people try to use it for something God never intended.
- V. Prayer is simply communion with God.
- A. Our communion with God should be constant.
 - B. It's appropriate to isolate ourselves alone with God for special times of intimacy—but not all of the time!
 - C. We must learn to relate to Him in the midst of our daily responsibilities and weekly routines, because they occupy the majority of our lives.
 - D. We should walk and talk with Him all day, every day.
- VI. Some people try to make their relationship with God be a constantly spectacular thing.
- A. God wants each of us to mature to the point where we can enjoy just hanging out with Him.

- B. He desires our fellowship when there's nothing being said and nothing specific happening other than being together and loving each other.
- C. Even reading the Bible is a form of prayer when we do it with our hearts, not just our heads, and learn to meditate, ask questions, and allow God to speak to us.

Discipleship Questions

1. What can holding on to unproductive prayers patterns do?
2. As you progress through this study, this is your chance to recognize and root out unwanted hindrances that have been doing what?
3. What doesn't Jesus want you doing when you pray?
4. From God's perspective, does praying an hour a day have any value in and of itself?
5. Read Mark 4:39 and John 11:43. How do these verses show how Jesus normally prayed?
6. Read 1 Corinthians 14:4 and Jude 20-21. What is an important New Testament purpose of prayer?
7. How does the majority of the body of Christ primarily and narrowly view prayer?
8. What does prayer become when people try to use it for something God never intended?
9. What is prayer?
10. Why must you learn to relate to Him in the midst of your daily responsibilities and weekly routines?
11. God wants you to mature to what point?
12. When is reading the Bible prayer?

Scriptures

MATTHEW 6:5-7

And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. [6] But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. [7] But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.

LUKE 11:1

And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.

MARK 4:39

And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.

JOHN 11:43

And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.

1 CORINTHIANS 14:4

He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church.

JUDE 20-21

But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, [21] Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

PSALM 5:1

Give ear to my words, O LORD, consider my meditation.

Outline

- I. We shouldn't allow Satan to condemn us concerning prayer.
 - A. Much of the traditional teaching on prayer is impossible to implement in daily life.
 - i. For instance, if we have small children, we wouldn't be able to lock ourselves away from them to pray.
 - B. In the times when we can't be alone with Him, we can pray without ceasing all day, every day, in the midst of everything else.
 - C. We can be in constant communion with God, and He's pleased with that!
 - D. Prayer should be something we fit into our normal daily routine.

- II. God is not pleased with all of our religious calisthenics.
 - A. Many teach that we have to get up early in the morning to pray, but that's not often realistic (Ps. 127:2).
 - B. Many Christians are just like the hypocrites Jesus spoke of.
 - i. They pray for the recognition they receive from others and to soothe their consciences.
 - C. God's not impressed with how long we spend in prayer.

- III. Prayer is not to inform God how bad our situations are.
 - A. He already knows what we need—even before we ask (Matt. 6:8).
 - B. It's simply not necessary or beneficial to give God a detailed description of our problems.
 - C. For most people, their problems, needs, and urgency occupy a large percentage of their prayers.

D. If these things were removed from their prayers, not much would be left.

IV. Even in “prayer,” our words produce either death or life.

Death and life are in the power of the tongue.

PROVERBS 18:21A

A. Praying God’s solution from the Word releases life, but praying negatively and focusing on our problems only energizes and strengthens those problems.

B. Many people who think they’re praying are really just griping, murmuring, and complaining.

C. Complaining is not the same as praying.

D. We can release the power of death into our lives through our negativity in prayer—and God’s not pleased with that!

V. Dwight L. Moody led a disciplined life that enabled him to do much of what he did, including leading hundreds of thousands of people to the Lord and founding Moody Bible Institute.

A. He only devoted forty-five minutes to prayer and Bible study from 12 noon to 12:45 each day because the rest of his time, he was out ministering and traveling.

B. According to current models of prayer being taught in the body of Christ, it would be considered impossible for Moody to be so effective—yet he was.

C. He did more than most of us have ever dreamed of.

Discipleship Questions

1. Why is much of the traditional teaching on prayer impossible to implement in daily life?
2. What is God pleased with?
3. What is God not pleased with?
4. Is God impressed with you when you get up early to pray or spend a long time in prayer?
5. Prayer should not be used to inform God of what?
6. It's simply not necessary or beneficial to give God a detailed description of what?
7. Read Proverbs 18:21a. What does praying God's solution from the Word release?
8. What is the result of complaining in prayer?
9. Why would current models of prayer indicate that Dwight L. Moody should not have been effective?
10. Why was he so effective?

Scriptures

PSALM 127:2

It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so he giveth his beloved sleep.

MATTHEW 6:7-8

But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. [8] Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.

PROVERBS 18:21

Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof.

Outline

- I. Jesus didn't intend for what is traditionally called "The Lord's Prayer" (Matt. 6:9-13) to be recited word for word the way it's been done in church.
 - A. Technically speaking, this isn't even a true New Testament prayer—a New Covenant prayer must be prayed in the name of Jesus (John 16:23-24).
 - B. The Lord was giving us a model for prayer, not something to repeat.
 - C. Jesus was communicating scriptural principles through this model prayer.

- II. We should begin prayer by acknowledging our special relationship to God our Father.
 - A. He is no longer only our Judge, our Creator, or God, but He is our Father.
 - B. We should come into His presence praising and worshiping Him (Ps. 100:4).
 - C. As we enter into His presence, instead of focusing on our unworthiness and failures, we should thank Him for His goodness.
 - D. God does not want us to approach Him with a sense of unworthiness, because Jesus has made us worthy.
 - i. If we feel sorry for ourselves, then we should praise Him for loving such sorry people!

- III. God also expects us to come into His presence unafraid.
 - A. If children approached their parents the way religion conditions us to approach God, those parents would be accused of child abuse!
 - B. When Jesus proclaimed "*It is finished*" (John 19:30), He made a way for us to approach our heavenly Father without fear.
 - C. God is not mad at us!

IV. God expects for earth to be just like heaven for the believer.

Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

MATTHEW 6:10

- A. If we Christians really understood this part of the model prayer, we'd quit believing that God is the one who brings bad things into our lives to teach us something.
- B. Because it's God's will that earth is like heaven, we should pray that what's already waiting for us in heaven would begin to manifest here in our lives on earth.

V. Matthew 6:11 teaches that it's okay for us to expect God to meet our needs, just like children expect their parents to meet their needs.

- A. It's familiarity with their parents' love that makes them bold in their approach.
- B. God desires all of us to be so familiar with His love that our approach toward Him is bold (Heb. 4:16).
- C. He yearns for us to believe that all of the provision we need has already been made—we just have to reach out in faith and take it.
- D. Yet most of us approach God more like beggars than children.

VI. Once we've believed and received the Lord, our sins are forgiven—past, present, and future.

And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. [13] And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

MATTHEW 6:12-13

- A. Jesus spoke these things in Matthew 6 *before* the cross and resurrection.
- B. We no longer have to ask for our sins to be forgiven, and we certainly don't have to ask God not to lead us into temptation.
 - i. If we are being tempted, we can be sure that it isn't God tempting us (James 1:13-14).

- C. Jesus has already delivered us out of the kingdom of darkness and set us in the kingdom of light—instead of asking Him to do all of these things in Matthew 6:12-13, we can simply praise Him that they are already done.

Discipleship Questions

1. Read Matthew 6:9-13 and John 16:23-24. Why is “The Lord’s Prayer” not meant to be recited word for word?
2. What was Jesus communicating through this model prayer?
3. Read Psalm 100:4. Why is it important to begin prayer by acknowledging your special relationship to God?
4. How should you come into His presence?
5. How does God expect you to enter His presence?
6. How can you do this?
7. Why would you possibly think that God brings bad things into your life to teach you something?
8. Once you know God’s will in this area, what should you do?
9. Read Matthew 6:11 and Hebrews 4:16. What will help you learn to approach God boldly?
10. What does God yearn for you to believe?
11. Read Matthew 6:12-13. Why is this not a New Testament way to pray?
12. What is a proper response to what God has done for us in Matthew 6:12-13?

Scriptures

MATTHEW 6:9-13

After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. [10] Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. [11] Give us this day our daily bread. [12] And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. [13] And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

JOHN 16:23-24, NEW KING JAMES VERSION

And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you. [24] Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.

MATTHEW 6:7

But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.

PSALM 100:4

Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name.

JOHN 19:30

When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.

HEBREWS 4:16

Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

MATTHEW 4:1-11

Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. [2] And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred. [3] And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. [4] But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. [5] Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, [6] And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. [7] Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. [8] Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; [9] And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me. [10] Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. [11] Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.

JAMES 1:13-14

Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: [14] But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.

Outline

- I. We can use Jesus' model prayer to learn the "sandwich technique" of praying.
 - A. Christ's model prayer started with praise: "*Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name*" and ended with praise: "*For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen*" (Matt. 6:9 and 13).
 - B. We should start our prayers thanking God, praising Him, and declaring how big He is.
 - C. Then, we can slide in our petitions and end by praising Him some more.
 - D. When we pray this way, we'll discover that we don't really have that much to ask Him for.

- II. Whatever we focus on in prayer will magnify in our eyes.
 - A. So, instead of focusing on our problems, we should focus on God (our solution), and then our vision of Him will increase.
 - B. Most of our prayer time should be spent praising God, not telling Him about our problems.
 - C. Praise is important because it blesses God, because it strengthens us, and because the Lord inhabits the praises of His people (Ps. 22:3).

- III. God is a Person, and we should treat our relationship with Him as we do other relationships we want to develop.
 - A. God wants us to spend time with Him because we want to, not because we have to.
 - B. Just like with our other relationships, it takes time to build a strong relationship with God.
 - C. Intimate relationships must be developed over time, whether with God or anyone else.

- IV. We must be careful not to become addicted to God's spectacular experiences.
 - A. The Lord delights in using subtle ways to reveal Himself, and He won't always come to us in a spectacular manner.
 - B. Jesus described Himself as "*meek and lowly in heart*" (Matt. 11:29).
 - C. God wants us to respond to Him by faith, not by always having to see the spectacular.

- V. We don't always have to be in a heightened emotional state to pray.
 - A. There will be times of special intimacy with God, but we shouldn't limit our experiences with Him to these times.
 - B. These occasions make up an important part of our relationship with God, but only a small part of the whole.
 - C. It's most important that we learn how to fellowship with God in the midst of everyday life.
 - D. We should work on learning to appreciate Him in the small things and not always try to do something earthshaking or monumental to build our intimacy with Him.

Discipleship Questions

1. What is the “sandwich technique” of praying?
2. What will you find when you approach God with this type of prayer?
3. What will magnify in your eyes?
4. What should and shouldn't you focus on in prayer?
5. How should you treat your relationship with God?
6. How must an intimate relationship be developed, whether it's with God or anyone else?
7. Read Matthew 11:29. How does Jesus' description of Himself express how He wants to reveal Himself to you?
8. How does God want you to respond to Him?
9. What part of your relationship with God do special times of intimacy play?
10. In learning to appreciate God, what things should you work on?

Scriptures

MATTHEW 6:9

After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

MATTHEW 6:13

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

PSALM 22:3

But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.

MATTHEW 11:29

Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

Outline

- I. Matthew 6:9-13 is commonly called “The Lord’s Prayer,” and Luke 11:2-4 offers it again in abbreviated form.
 - A. Immediately afterward, Jesus shared a parable often used to teach about prayer (Luke 11:5-8).
 - B. However, what’s most often taught is exactly opposite of what the Lord meant!
 - C. It’s taught that God is like the “friend” in the parable, and we have to beg Him to answer our prayers.
 - D. But Jesus was making a contrast, trying to show that God would never treat us as badly as the “friend” in the parable (Luke 11:9-13).

- II. It’s an insult to God to think we have to badger Him to do something.
 - A. If the Lord hasn’t already supplied our need by grace, our faith can’t make Him do it.
 - B. Contrary to popular belief, faith does not move God.
 - C. God has already done everything and met all of our needs.
 - i. Since He’s already done His part, we don’t have to beg and plead.
 - D. He’s trying to get His blessings to us, but we have to cooperate with Him to see His power manifest.

- III. We are taught that we must pray and beseech God to pour out His Spirit—that’s slander because He already did (Acts 2:1-4).
 - A. God’s not holding anything back!
 - B. God’s not mad at us because of our sin, and we don’t have to plead for His mercy.

- C. He's doing everything He can to bless our country.
- D. But, although God isn't going to judge us, we're not safe and secure.
- E. We ruin ourselves by giving place to the devil.
- F. We must repent and turn from our self-destructive ways, but we don't need to plead with God to pour out His Spirit all over again.

Discipleship Questions

1. Read Matthew 6:9-13 and Luke 11:1-13. What was Jesus trying to do by teaching these two passages?
2. What is the whole point of the parable in Luke 11:5-8?
3. Thinking that you have to badger God to make Him do something does what to Him?
4. Why don't you ever have to beg and plead with God to get Him to answer your prayers?
5. Is there ever a time when you have to pray for God's mercy because of your sin or your country's sins?
6. How are you ruining yourself?

Scriptures

LUKE 11:1-13

And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples. [2] And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth. [3] Give us day by day our daily bread. [4] And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. [5] And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; [6] For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him? [7] And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee. [8] I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth. [9] And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. [10] For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. [11] If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? [12] Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? [13] If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

MATTHEW 6:9-13

After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. [10] Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. [11] Give us this day our daily bread. [12] And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. [13] And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

ACTS 2:1-4

And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. [2] And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. [3] And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. [4] And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Outline

- I. Most of us as Christians don't understand that the establishment of the New Covenant made a huge difference in the way everything works, including prayer!
 - A. Abraham was able to beg and plead with God (Gen. 18:23-25) because it was a different covenant then; Jesus hadn't yet atoned for our sins.
 - B. The Lord was angry at sin in the Old Covenant, so it was okay for Abraham to pray the way he did.
 - C. At the time of Sodom and Gomorrah, the Lord's wrath toward sin hadn't yet been satisfied.
 - D. Now we're in the New Covenant, and God's anger toward sin has been appeased.

- II. Abraham and Moses (Ex. 32:9-14) both acted as mediators.
 - A. Mediators seek to peacefully reconcile two opposing parties who have a dispute with each other.
 - B. Abraham and Moses each negotiated with God not to destroy the people.
 - C. Moses went so far as to tell God to repent—and He did!

- III. Many of us as Christians today believe we still must beg, plead, and badger God until He answers our prayers.
 - A. Praying with an adversarial, demanding, self-righteous attitude toward the Lord today (like Moses did in Num. 16:28-50) is totally offensive to Him because it means we aren't trusting in what Jesus has already done.
 - B. Much of what is taught about prayer and intercession today is a totally wrong way for New Testament believers to pray.
 - C. We no longer have to beg God to turn from His wrath.

ANDREW'S RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

For an in-depth study of the truth that Christ's atonement has completely satisfied the wrath of God toward sin, please refer to my teaching entitled *The War Is Over*.

Discipleship Questions

1. Read Genesis 18:23-25. Why was it okay for Abraham to pray the way he did?
2. In the New Covenant, what has been appeased?
3. How were Abraham and Moses acting as mediators?
4. What happened when Moses told God to repent?
5. Read Numbers 16:28-50. What is totally offensive to the Lord?
6. What's wrong with much of the teaching on prayer and intercession today?

Scriptures

GENESIS 18:23-25

And Abraham drew near, and said, Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked? [24] Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city: wilt thou also destroy and not spare the place for the fifty righteous that are therein? [25] That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: and that the righteous should be as the wicked, that be far from thee: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?

EXODUS 32:9-14

And the LORD said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiffnecked people: [10] Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation. [11] And Moses besought the LORD his God, and said, LORD, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people, which thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power, and with a mighty hand? [12] Wherefore should the Egyptians speak, and say, For mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people. [13] Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swarest by thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever. [14] And the LORD repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people.

LUKE 11:5-8

And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; [6] For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him? [7] And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee. [8] I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth.

NUMBERS 16:28-30

And Moses said, Hereby ye shall know that the LORD hath sent me to do all these works; for I have not done them of mine own mind. [29] If these men die the common death of all men, or if they be visited after the visitation of all men; then the LORD hath not sent me. [30] But if the LORD make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth, and swallow them up, with all that appertain unto them, and they go down quick into the pit; then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the LORD.

NUMBERS 16:41-50

But on the morrow all the congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron, saying, Ye have killed the people of the LORD. [42] And it came to pass, when the congregation was gathered against Moses and against Aaron, that they looked toward the tabernacle of the congregation: and, behold, the cloud covered it, and the glory of the LORD appeared. [43] And Moses and Aaron came before the tabernacle of the congregation. [44] And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, [45] Get you up from among this congregation, that I may consume them as in a moment. And they fell upon their faces. [46] And Moses said unto Aaron, Take a censer, and put fire therein from off the altar, and put on incense, and go quickly unto the congregation, and make an atonement for them: for there is wrath gone out from the LORD; the plague is begun. [47] And Aaron took as Moses commanded, and ran into the midst of the congregation; and, behold, the plague was begun among the people: and he put on incense, and made an atonement for the people. [48] And he stood between the dead and the living; and the plague was stayed. [49] Now they that died in the plague were fourteen thousand and seven hundred, beside them that died about the matter of Korah. [50] And Aaron returned unto Moses unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation: and the plague was stayed.

Outline

- I. In the New Covenant, Jesus is the only mediator who stands between God the Father and mankind:

I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; [2] For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. [3] For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; [4] Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. [5] For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.

1 TIMOTHY 2:1-5, EMPHASIS MINE

- A. Sin is no longer a problem with God because Christ has borne the judgment for all sin—past, present, and future.
 - B. Moses had to mediate in the Old Covenant because sin still had to be judged.
 - C. If we try to be mediators like Moses or Abraham today, we are antichrist: against Christ, against His finished work, and attempting to take His place!
 - D. Jesus Christ is now the *only* mediator between God and man.
- II. God's not angry at people anymore because His justice was satisfied through Jesus' sacrifice.
- A. But we still need to preach because, although God has made the provision available, people must believe and receive for themselves.
 - B. God didn't create hell for people (Matt. 25:41), and He doesn't want them to go there.
 - C. Wrath and judgment remain for those who don't accept Jesus as their Savior (John 3:36).
 - D. God has made His provision through Jesus, but people need to properly respond to Him.

III. Jesus paid for our sins and satisfied God's wrath, but not all of us understand this yet.

- A. We still perceive God like He was in the Old Testament: angry.
- B. We believe we still need to beg and plead with Him for His mercy.
- C. But we no longer have to pray in order to turn God from His wrath.
- D. He's already provided everything we need, including healing.
- E. He loves us and wants us to have it.

IV. God is not like the so-called "friend" in Luke 11:5-8.

- A. Jesus used this parable as a contrast, then pressed His point by saying,

And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. [10] For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

LUKE 11:9-10

- B. He illustrated this truth even further by using the same logic with another human relationship (Luke 11:11-13).
- C. If we wouldn't even consider treating our children so cruelly, why do we think God would refuse or even hesitate to meet our needs?
- D. Most people beg and plead with God in "prayer" because they think that He's against meeting their needs.
- E. But Jesus taught the exact opposite.

ANDREW'S RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

My teachings entitled *Redemption; The Gospel, the Power of God; and Whose Righteousness?* all amplify and expound upon this truth that because of Christ's atonement, sin is no longer a problem with God. The issue is whether or not we believe on Jesus and what He's done through His death, burial, and resurrection.

Discipleship Questions

1. Why is sin no longer a problem with God?
2. What does it mean to be antichrist?
3. If God's no longer angry, why is preaching still necessary?
4. Read John 3:36. Who does God's wrath and judgment remain for?
5. What is it that you may not understand yet?
6. Since God loves you and wants you to have everything you need, including healing, what does this imply He has turned from?
7. Read Luke 11:5-8. Was Jesus comparing or contrasting God to the friend in this parable?
8. If you, as an imperfect human parent, wouldn't even consider treating your children so cruelly, you shouldn't think that God, your heavenly Father, would refuse or even hesitate to do what?

Scriptures

1 TIMOTHY 2:1-5

I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; [2] For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. [3] For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; [4] Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. [5] For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.

JOHN 3:36

He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

MATTHEW 25:41

Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.

LUKE 11:5-13

And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; [6] For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him? [7] And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee. [8] I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth. [9] And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. [10] For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. [11] If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? [12] Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? [13] If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

Outline

- I. Luke 18:1-8 is another passage often used to teach “importunity in prayer.”
 - A. God is not like the unjust judge.
 - i. In this passage, Jesus is making another contrast, not a comparison.
 - ii. He was using an absurd example to illustrate His point.
 - B. Most of us put more faith in an earthly judge to treat us well than in God!
 - C. This parable is a contrast showing us the absurdity of such thinking.

- II. God is not like this unjust judge, making us wait a long time for His answer (Luke 18:6-8); He avenges speedily.
 - A. The problem isn’t God’s willingness or ability to give but, rather, our ability to believe and receive.
 - B. We shouldn’t approach God like an adversary who doesn’t want to answer our prayers, but as an advocate.
 - C. This mindset has led many of us to believe we must stand in between God and our country to beg for His mercy so He won’t judge us.

- III. When we approach God in an adversarial relationship, we are in unbelief, we slander His character, we don’t esteem Christ, and we don’t believe that what He did was enough.
 - A. Instead, we’re believing the devil’s lies and embracing religion’s views.
 - B. Many intercessors believe that God is angry and that He’d just let people die and go to hell if it weren’t for their prayers.
 - C. God gives us the desire to see our country and others changed so we would start releasing His power, not so we can plead with Him for His mercy.

- IV. Instead of doing what He's commanded us to do, we're asking God to do what He told us to do.
 - A. God has already placed inside us the same power that raised Jesus from the dead.
 - B. We just need to start speaking the truth and encouraging each other to act on it.
 - C. We must start believing, going, and doing—as we do, the signs will follow.

- V. Satan tries to get us to take God's position, telling Him to repent from the wrath that He no longer has, begging for the Holy Spirit who's already been poured out, and pleading for God to become as merciful as we are.
 - A. We should be speaking God's Word and demonstrating it by commanding healing, not busy "interceding" in our closets for an hour or more each day.
 - B. This is a ploy of the devil.

Discipleship Questions

1. Read Luke 18:1-5. Why did the judge finally change his mind about helping the widow?
2. What is the point of this parable?
3. Read Luke 18:6-8. How does God avenge?
4. If the problem isn't with God's willingness or ability to give, what is it with?
5. When you consider the Lord as your adversary, whose lies are you believing?
6. Why does God give you the desire to see others changed?
7. What are you doing instead of what God has commanded you to do?
8. What will happen when you start believing, going, and doing?
9. Who tries to get you to take God's position?
10. Instead of speaking and demonstrating God's Word, what does the devil have you doing?

Scriptures

LUKE 18:1-8

And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint; [2] Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: [3] And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. [4] And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; [5] Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. [6] And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. [7] And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? [8] I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?

Outline

- I. Salvation works by planting the seed of God's Word into people's hearts (see 1 Peter 1:23).
 - A. We cannot get other people saved on our faith.
 - B. Acts 16:31 is saying that a person's entire household can be saved because salvation is for everyone, but each person must receive salvation personally.
 - C. We cannot "claim" salvation for someone else.
 - D. More believers are in their prayer closets "claiming" others' salvations than there are believers out planting God's Word.

- II. There is no New Testament model for today's form of intercession.
 - A. Jesus never organized "prayer warriors" and "intercessors" the way it's modeled today.
 - i. Neither Jesus nor Paul sent intercessors ahead of them to "prepare the ground" or to bind the "strongman" over certain areas.
 - B. We can't "claim" people and force them to be born again against their wills, and we can't cast demons out of people against their wills, even though most believers have evil spirits that harass and afflict them.

- III. God's Word is what changes lives, yet telling people the truth of God's Word isn't properly emphasized.
 - A. Ten believers out doing the work of the ministry—raising the dead, healing the sick, and speaking the Truth—would accomplish more good than a hundred million intercessors pleading with God to do what He's already done!
 - B. Paul destroyed the demonic power behind Diana of the Ephesians by proclaiming the truth with Holy Spirit power demonstrated, not through intercession.

- IV. Demonic entities over cities derive their power from the people who believe and act on their lies.
- A. Human beings are the ones who empower demons by believing their lies and cooperating with their unholy desires.
 - i. It's often been said that homosexual spirits control the San Francisco area, so intercessors need to go in and bind those demonic powers so that the people can be set free.
 - ii. But it wasn't the demons who brought the homosexuals; it was the homosexuals who brought the demons.
 - B. If we've fallen for this wrong type of intercession instead of sharing God's Word, we need to ask for God's forgiveness and for Him to lead us to people to talk to.
 - C. The Holy Spirit leads, but we have to believe, go, and do.

Discipleship Questions

1. Read Acts 16:31 and 1 Peter 1:23. Why can't you get others saved on your faith?
2. Instead of planting God's Word into people's hearts, what are many believers doing?
3. How do you know that today's form of intercession is not correct?
4. What can you not do against people's wills?
5. What isn't properly emphasized?
6. How did Paul destroy the demonic power behind Diana of the Ephesians?
7. Who empowers demons and how?
8. The Holy Spirit will lead, but you have to what?

Scriptures

ACTS 16:31

And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.

1 PETER 1:23

Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

JOHN 13:26-27

Jesus answered, He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. And when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. [27] And after the sop Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly.

ACTS 19:23-41

And the same time there arose no small stir about that way. [24] For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, which made silver shrines for Diana, brought no small gain unto the craftsmen; [25] Whom he called together with the workmen of like occupation, and said, Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth. [26] Moreover ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands: [27] So that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth. [28] And when they heard these sayings, they were full of wrath, and cried out, saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians. [29] And the whole city was filled with confusion: and having caught Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul's companions in travel, they rushed with one accord into the theatre. [30] And when Paul would have entered in unto the people, the disciples suffered him not. [31] And certain of the chief of Asia, which were his friends, sent unto him, desiring him that he would not adventure himself into the theatre. [32] Some therefore cried one thing, and some another: for the assembly was confused; and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together. [33] And they drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And Alexander beckoned with the hand, and would have made his defence unto the people. [34] But when they knew that he was a Jew, all with one voice about the space of two hours cried out, Great is Diana of the Ephesians. [35] And when the townclerk had appeased the people, he said, Ye men of Ephesus, what man is there that knoweth not how that the city of the Ephesians is a worshipper of the great goddess Diana, and of the image which fell down from Jupiter? [36] Seeing then that these things cannot be spoken against, ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing

rashly. [37] For ye have brought hither these men, which are neither robbers of churches, nor yet blasphemers of your goddess. [38] Wherefore if Demetrius, and the craftsmen which are with him, have a matter against any man, the law is open, and there are deputies: let them implead one another. [39] But if ye enquire any thing concerning other matters, it shall be determined in a lawful assembly. [40] For we are in danger to be called in question for this day's uproar, there being no cause whereby we may give an account of this concourse. [41] And when he had thus spoken, he dismissed the assembly.

Outline

I. God's Word reveals the presence of demonic deception in unbelievers' lives:

In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

2 CORINTHIANS 4:4

- A. In view of this truth, we should begin praising God and then bind their blindness, in the name of Jesus.
- B. Since lost people have the right to void our prayers, we may need to pray several times.
- C. God may convict them, but if they ignore the Holy Spirit's prompting, they've negated our prayers.
 - i. Unlike praying for ourselves, we need to keep praying for an unbeliever until we see the manifestation.
 - ii. God has answered our prayer, but they are negating it by not responding to Him.

II. After binding the blindness and deception over them, we need to remember that unbelievers must be born again of the incorruptible seed of God's Word:

Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

1 PETER 1:23

- A. We should pray Matthew 9:38 and ask for laborers to be sent to them.
 - i. God wants to reach them, but He must flow through people.
 - ii. If the unsaved aren't inviting God into their lives, they need someone to pray for them who will.
 - iii. They need someone who will speak and release these things by faith.

- B. After doing that, we should offer ourselves as laborers to share God's Word with them.
- C. Also, we need to pray that God would bring back to their minds the Word they've already received (John 14:26).

III. We can't receive forgiveness for someone else's sins, but we can remit them:

Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.

JOHN 20:23

- A. Remittance speaks of the effects of sin.
 - i. We can't stop sin or pray forgiveness over someone, but we can deal with sin's negative repercussions.
 - ii. We can keep releasing God's power and protection into their lives until they respond favorably.
- B. We can't make people receive the Lord, but we can put positive spiritual pressure on them by releasing the power of God into their lives (Matt. 23:37 and 1 Cor. 7:16).
- C. Even Jesus, the perfect intercessor, couldn't convince people or set them free through His faith alone (Matt. 23:37).
- D. All we can do is be a channel for God's power to flow through and touch people because, ultimately, they must choose the Lord for themselves.

Discipleship Questions

1. How can you counter the presence of demonic deception in unbelievers' lives?
2. What may you need to do, since lost people have the right to void your prayers?
3. Read 1 Peter 1:23 and Matthew 9:38. People must be born again of what?
4. What should you do once you've prayed for someone, speaking and releasing these things by faith?
5. Read John 20:23, Matthew 23:37, and 1 Corinthians 7:16. Although you can't stop sin in other people's lives, what can you do for them?
6. How do you put positive spiritual pressure on someone?

Scriptures

2 CORINTHIANS 4:4

In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

2 PETER 3:9

The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

1 PETER 1:23

Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

MATTHEW 9:38

Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.

JOHN 14:26

But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

JOHN 3:16

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

JOHN 20:23

Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.

MATTHEW 23:37

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!

1 CORINTHIANS 7:16

For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?

Outline

- I. Prayer is simply communion with God, involving fellowship, relationship, and intimacy with Him.
 - A. Prayer is both talking and listening; it must be a two-way dialogue.
 - B. Most teaching on prayer today centers on how to request and receive from God.
 - C. While asking and receiving is *one* purpose of prayer, it is not *the* purpose of prayer.
 - D. When we seek first God's kingdom by loving, worshiping, and fellowshiping with Him, we'll soon discover that we don't have as many needs and that things are supernaturally added to us.

- II. Our perspective changes when we put God first by praising Him.
 - A. Many of our cares cease being problems anymore.
 - B. As we spend time with Him, His attitude becomes our attitude, and the entire way we think will change.
 - C. When God is our source, we won't have to worry about fixing our own problems.

- III. When we put God first and love Him, there will be a supernatural flow in our finances, and we won't have to ask Him for financial help.
 - A. Instead of pleading or even asking God for money, we should meditate on scriptures regarding finances, and worship and fellowship with Him.
 - B. He will supernaturally add everything we need.

- IV. Stress wouldn't be a part of our lives if we were constantly in God's presence, loving and worshiping Him.

- A. It's possible to be too blessed to be stressed!
 - B. Looking into the brightness of God's glory blinds us to other things.
 - C. We don't have to have the worries and cares that other people have when we don't see what they see.
- V. Ministers often ask God to bring the people to their meetings, then beg Him for His anointing to be present.
- A. That's an insult to God!
 - B. We shouldn't have to ever ask God to anoint us, because His Word says in Luke 4:18 and 1 John 2:20 that He already has.
 - C. We must realize that God wants to change people's lives more than we do, and His anointing is always present to do so.
- VI. Prayer is primarily for loving God, not getting our needs met.
- A. When we magnify God, we discover how insignificant our problems really are and that 90 percent of what we've been obsessing over is unimportant.
 - B. If we'd quit asking Him for things and just start loving Him, we'd start seeing everything in our lives change for the better.
 - C. The Lord did say "Ask, and you shall receive," but it's not what prayer is all about.
 - D. If loving and communing with God isn't our primary purpose in prayer, we're missing out on what Christianity is all about!

Discipleship Questions

1. What is prayer?
2. How do you seek first God's kingdom?
3. What are some results of praising God?
4. When can you stop worrying about fixing your own problems?
5. Why shouldn't you have to ask God for finances?
6. Instead of pleading with God for financial help, what should you do?
7. How can you stay free of stress?
8. What blinds you to other things?
9. Read Luke 4:18 and 1 John 2:20. What does God's Word say you already are?
10. Who wants to change people's lives more than you do?
11. What do you discover when you magnify God?
12. When do you miss out on what Christianity is all about?

Scriptures

JOHN 16:24

Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.

MATTHEW 6:25

Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

MATTHEW 6:33

But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

LUKE 4:18

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised.

1 JOHN 2:20

But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.

LUKE 10:38-42

Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. [39] And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word. [40] But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me. [41] And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: [42] But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

Outline

- I. “Not perishing” isn’t really the goal of salvation—eternal life is!

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

JOHN 3:16

- A. Eternal life truly begins the moment we’re born again (John 3:36).
- B. It’s a present-tense—not future-tense—reality.
- C. Eternal life is knowing God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ:

And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

JOHN 17:3

- II. *Knowing* means to have a personal, intimate, experiential knowledge of someone (see Gen. 4:1).

- A. Jesus Christ died to produce *knowing* both Him and the Father intimately now in this life, not just at some future time in heaven—this is the goal of salvation!
 - i. Complete salvation is being able to be so intimate with God that He’s our very best friend.
- B. If all we’ve received is forgiveness of our sins, we’ve missed the main purpose of salvation.
- C. Sin wasn’t the object of Christ’s coming; it was simply the barrier that stood between mankind and God.
- D. His ultimate purpose wasn’t to overcome sin, but to restore man to a close, personal, intimate relationship with Him—this is the eternal life Jesus came to provide.

- III. The first-century church experienced true eternal life and shared it with the world.
 - A. The Gospel spread like wildfire due to their aggressive witness and infectious quality of intimacy with God.
 - B. Early martyrs considered it an honor to die for the glory of God.
 - C. The joy, peace, and love emanating from these believers' faces as they gladly died for their Beloved provoked others to also give up their own lives to have a relationship with Someone like that.

- IV. Unlike the early martyrs, most believers today are too selfish to give their lives for the Gospel.
 - A. Salvation has been cheapened to the point where it's just an opportunity for us to look to God to meet all of our needs.
 - B. If we would tell people about God's greatness, goodness, and grace and that He's not angry with man anymore, people would want to join us.
 - C. Instead, "turn or burn" is preached, and people look at God as their "fire insurance."
 - i. When people are taught that the reason they should be saved is to escape hell and then get all of their needs met, that's what they'll have faith for.
 - ii. If that's the goal, they'll serve Him just enough to get what they need, and then they'll forget about Him.
 - D. That's the way salvation has been preached.

- V. God loves us so very much that He gave His own Son for us!
 - A. He's not mad at us but desires intimacy with us more than we could ever imagine.
 - B. He's not holding our sins against us but views us through our righteous, born-again spirits.
 - i. Almighty God wants to hang out with us because He loves us!

- C. Instead of using prayer to try to make God do something, we should use it for communion and fellowship with Him.
 - i. When we do, the things we want will just supernaturally show up.
 - D. When 95 percent of our prayer life is spent asking for things or complaining, we're missing out on what Christianity is all about: knowing and loving God.
- VI. God isn't as concerned about what we do as much as He is about who we are.
- A. He wants our fellowship more than our service.
 - i. We're supposed to be "human beings," not "human doings."
 - ii. We've equated His love and acceptance of us to be proportional to how well we think we're performing.
 - B. We feel obligated to serve him because we feel we owe Him.
 - C. If we give God our hearts, He'll have no problem getting our service, but our service can never replace intimate fellowship with Him.
 - i. Our service is a byproduct of our intimate relationship with Him—He does not want our service without our hearts.
 - D. When we are intimate with God, He's blessed and we change!

Discipleship Questions

1. Read John 3:16 and 36. What is the goal of salvation?
2. When does eternal life truly begin?
3. What does knowing, as it's used in Genesis 4:1, mean?
4. What was Christ's ultimate purpose in coming?
5. Why did the first-century church have much better results than this century's church?
6. What was the early martyrs' attitude toward death?
7. How are most believers today different from the early martyrs?
8. What would people want to do if you told them about God's greatness, goodness, and grace?
9. How does God view you?
10. How do people miss out on what Christianity is all about?
11. What have people equated God's love and acceptance to?
12. What can your acts of service never replace?

Scriptures

JOHN 3:16

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

JOHN 3:36

He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

JOHN 17:3

And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

GENESIS 4:1

And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the LORD.

DEUTERONOMY 28:2

And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God.

MATTHEW 6:11

Give us this day our daily bread.

REVELATION 4:11

Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

1 CORINTHIANS 13:1-3

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. [2] And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. [3] And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.

Outline

I. Psalm 103 instructs us to bless the Lord:

Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name.

PSALM 103:1

- A. But merely saying the words “Bless the Lord” doesn’t necessarily bless the Lord.
- B. We can bless the Lord by ministering to Him and loving Him back.
 - i. The prophets and teachers in Antioch showed us an example of ministering to the Lord in Acts 13:2 when they praised, worshiped, and loved Him.
- C. God wants us to bless Him, because it’s the purpose we were originally created for.

II. It’s good to praise God in all circumstances.

- A. Some Christians discipline themselves to “praise” God in tough situations, but they don’t really mean it from their hearts.
- B. Since praise drives out demons (Ps. 8:2), they exercise themselves to “praise” those problems right out of their lives.
- C. Paul and Silas genuinely praised God from prison.
- D. They didn’t just praise Him to escape their problem; they really loved Him!
- E. Likewise, the disciples left the Jewish council after being beaten, thanking the Lord and praising Him that they had been counted worthy to suffer shame for His name (Acts 5:41).
- F. Most Christians love self too much and don’t recognize that Christianity is all about loving God.

- III. Prayer is primarily for loving and worshiping God.
- A. If we would seek first His kingdom and just fellowship with Him, we'd find our needs already provided for.
 - B. We wouldn't have any "problems," because nothing would bother us.
 - C. Being depressed means that we're not in the presence of the Lord and that something else has us occupied.
 - D. In God's presence, we'll find fullness of joy (Ps. 16:11).
 - i. Because Andrew was living in God's presence, he was able to continue praising and worshiping God and believe for a miracle when he learned his son had died.
 - E. Intimacy with God will keep us from worrying.
 - i. Worry is blasphemy against God's promises.
- IV. Our main focus should be loving God.
- A. It takes effort, though, to set aside self and focus on loving Him.
 - B. Our best results will come from loving, thanking, praising, blessing, and worshiping God as our highest priority in life and staying in communication with Him all day long.
 - C. This approach to prayer shrinks problems down so small that they're no big deal.
 - D. Nothing this world has to offer can even compare to experiencing God's pleasure.
 - E. God doesn't just love us; He also likes us and appreciates us.
 - F. We must make it our hearts' commitment to stop being primarily dedicated to ourselves in prayer and instead make it our priority to love and worship God.

Discipleship Questions

1. Read Psalm 103:1 and Acts 13:2. What are some good ways to bless the Lord?
2. Why is it important for you to bless the Lord?
3. What do some Christians discipline themselves to do?
4. How was the disciples' approach to praise different than many Christians?
5. What is prayer primarily for?
6. Read Psalm 16:11. What are the benefits of being in God's presence?
7. What will happen when you make God your highest priority in life?
8. Nothing this world has to offer can even compare to experiencing what?

Scriptures

PSALM 103:1

Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name.

ACTS 13:2

As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.

1 JOHN 4:8

He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

ACTS 16:9

And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us.

PSALM 8:2

Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.

ACTS 5:41

And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.

PSALM 16:11

Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.

PHILIPPIANS 4:6

Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

2 TIMOTHY 1:12

For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.

Outline

- I. Mark 11:12-14 paints a perfect picture of what happens when we pray.
 - A. When Jesus spoke to the fig tree and cursed it because it had no fruit, it died immediately at its roots, but it didn't appear dead until the following day (Mark 11:20).
 - B. God responds immediately to our prayers as well, but it often takes a period of time before what God has done in the spiritual world manifests in the physical world.
 - C. Even though Mark 16:18 declares "*They shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover,*" we may not see our healing manifest immediately because many things affect the timing of our healing.
 - D. Just because we can't discern with our five senses that anything's happened doesn't mean God hasn't answered our prayers.
 - E. There's a lot happening beneath the surface that we do not see.

- II. The Lord used this incident with the fig tree to illustrate how prayer works (Mark 11:22).
 - A. Faith is a powerful force, but we must believe in order to reap its benefits.
 - B. Faith is governed by law (Rom. 3:27).
 - C. God has set spiritual laws in motion just like He did natural laws, and both must be obeyed to receive the desired results.
 - D. God controls Himself and the universe He created by the laws He spoke into existence—these laws govern how He works.

- III. God follows His own laws.
 - A. He will never violate His own Word (Ps. 89:34).
 - B. Because God has given us His authority, we are the ones who must exercise that authority or it won't work—He won't do it for us.

- C. Another law is that we will have what we say (Prov. 18:20-21, Matt. 12:34, Mark 11:23, and James 3:2-12).
 - D. What we speak out will come to pass—for good or bad.
 - E. God will not suspend His laws—natural or spiritual—just because we mean well!
- IV. The Lord commands us to speak to our problems (Mark 11:22-23).
- A. A lot of people speak to God about their mountains (problems) instead of speaking to their mountains about God.
 - B. Most Christians pray, “God, I have this mountain. Would You please move it for me?”
 - C. The Lord told us to talk to the mountain, not to Him about the mountain.
 - D. This means that whatever it is, we can speak to it.

ANDREW'S RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

I have a great teaching entitled “What to Do When Your Prayers Seem Unanswered.” It'll encourage and instruct you on how to actively stand in faith during the time between when you pray and when the answer manifests in the physical realm.

Discipleship Questions

1. What happened when Jesus spoke to the fig tree?
2. If you don't see your healing manifest immediately after you pray, does that mean it didn't happen? Why or why not?
3. Read Mark 11:22. What did Jesus use the incident with the fig tree to teach?
4. How are spiritual laws like natural laws?
5. Read Psalm 89:34. What won't God do?
6. What happens if you do not exercise the authority God has given you?
7. Read Mark 11:22-23. What has the Lord commanded you to speak to?
8. What do a lot of people do concerning their problems?

Scriptures

MARK 11:12-14

And on the morrow, when they were come from Bethany, he was hungry: [13] And seeing a fig tree afar off having leaves, he came, if haply he might find any thing thereon: and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves; for the time of figs was not yet. [14] And Jesus answered and said unto it, No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever. And his disciples heard it.

MARK 11:20-23

And in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots. [21] And Peter calling to remembrance saith unto him, Master, behold, the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away. [22] And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God. [23] For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.

MATTHEW 21:19

And when he saw a fig tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And presently the fig tree withered away.

MARK 16:18

They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

ROMANS 3:27

Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith.

PSALM 89:34

My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips.

JAMES 4:7

Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

PROVERBS 18:20-21

A man's belly shall be satisfied with the fruit of his mouth; and with the increase of his lips shall he be filled. [21] Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof.

MATTHEW 12:34

O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.

JAMES 3:2-12

For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body. [3] Behold, we put bits in the horses' mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body. [4] Behold also the ships, which though they be so great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth. [5] Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth! [6] And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell. [7] For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind: [8] But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. [9] Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God. [10] Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be. [11] Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter? [12] Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? so can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh.

Outline

- I. When Jesus prayed over the fig tree, there was never any type of petition or request made to God (Mark 11:14 and 24).
 - A. Instead, taking His authority, believing, and speaking to the problem is what He called “prayer.”
 - B. The purpose of prayer is not to inform God of our needs.
 - C. Our heavenly Father already knows what we need (Matt. 6:8).
 - D. Let’s not just sit there griping and complaining; the Lord has already done it!

- II. Jesus has already healed us (1 Pet. 2:24), but we need to bring our healings from the spirit realm into the physical realm where we need them.
 - A. We can start by entering His gates with thanksgiving (Ps. 100:4).
 - B. Then, we praise and magnify Him for the fact that it’s already done.
 - C. Finally, we must talk specifically to whatever the issues are in our bodies.
 - D. We should praise the Lord for what His Word says He’s already done and speak directly to our problems.

- III. Sometimes our problems may try to return.
 - A. If that happens, it’s not that God didn’t heal us, but the devil is knocking on our doors to see if we’ll open back up again.
 - B. We can open to him by saying that we haven’t been healed or that we’ve lost our healings.
 - C. But God’s gifts and callings are without repentance, so if we stand firm and say “No! By His stripes I have been healed,” we’ll keep our healings.

- IV. The Bible says, “Speak to those problems!”
- A. We have faith, but it needs to be directed.
 - B. We must use it in cooperation with the laws that govern how it works.
 - C. We can direct our faith with our words by resisting the devil, talking directly to him, and speaking to our problems to command them to change.
 - D. We also need to make our actions consistent with our faith.
 - E. If we believe one way and act another, we’ll cancel our faith.
- V. We must cooperate with God’s spiritual laws governing faith in order to receive (Rom. 3:27).
- A. Just because God loves us and wants us healed, we still must receive by faith.
 - B. We must do what the Word says.
 - C. Our job is to discover the laws and cooperate with them—not pick and choose which ones we’ll obey, or make them up!
 - D. Jesus wanted to bless, minister to, and comfort Jerusalem, but the people wouldn’t receive from Him (Luke 13:34).
 - E. In His own hometown of Nazareth, unbelief kept Jesus from doing more (Mark 6:5-6).
- VI. If we believe we receive when we pray, we shall (future tense) have what we prayed for (Mark 11:24).
- A. More than we realize, we have a larger degree of control over how long it takes between “amen” and “there it is.”
 - B. The very moment we pray and believe, God moves and releases His power.
 - C. Apart from a hindrance inside or outside of ourselves, we should be able to see an immediate manifestation when we use God’s power correctly.

- D. We don't have to passively wait for the healing to come; we can take control and bring about the manifestation.

ANDREW'S RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

To find out more about Niki's awesome miracle, be sure to check out our *Niki Ochenski: The Story of a Miracle!* DVD. This will bless you tremendously!

Discipleship Questions

1. Read Mark 11:14, 24; and Matthew 6:8. How did Jesus “pray”?
2. Why should you not use prayer to inform God of your needs?
3. You need to bring your healing from where to where?
4. What do you do after praising the Lord for what His Word says He’s already done?
5. How do you open the door to the devil when your problems try to return?
6. How can you keep your healing?
7. Your faith must be used in cooperation with what?
8. How do you direct your faith with your words?
9. Read Romans 3:27. You must cooperate with God’s spiritual laws in order to what?
10. Read Luke 13:34. What happened when Jesus wanted to bless Jerusalem?
11. When does God move and release His power?
12. Instead of passively waiting for healing to come, what can you do?

Scriptures

MARK 11:23-24

For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith. [24] Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.

MARK 11:14

And Jesus answered and said unto it, No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever. And his disciples heard it.

MATTHEW 6:8

Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.

1 PETER 2:24

Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

PSALM 100:4

Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name.

LUKE 13:34

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not!

MARK 6:5-6

And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them. [6] And he marvelled because of their unbelief. And he went round about the villages, teaching.

Outline

- I. God is a Spirit (John 4:24)—when He moves, He does so in the spirit realm.
 - A. When we ask for healing, God gives it to us in spiritual form inside our spirits the very instant we believe Him for it.
 - i. The moment we pray and believe, God releases His power in our spirits.
 - ii. He gives the command and releases His power, and it's a done deal!
 - B. Faith is the bridge from the spiritual realm into the physical—it transfers what has happened in the spirit to the natural.
 - C. It gives substance to things hoped for and evidence to something unseen (Heb. 11:1).
 - D. Just because something is unseen doesn't mean it's nonexistent!

- II. The spiritual world is the parent force (Col. 1:16 and Heb. 11:3).
 - A. It created everything we see and will still be in existence long after this physical world is gone (2 Cor. 4:18).
 - B. There's a reality within our spirits that we can't come into contact with through our five senses.
 - C. But we can draw out God's supernatural power and cause it to manifest through faith by speaking to things and commanding them to work.

- III. We can use our words to speak life instead of death (Prov. 18:21) and direct them specifically toward our problems (Mark 11:23).
 - A. Jesus Himself answered the fig tree (Mark 11:14).
 - B. Our bodies will even respond to us when we speak to them.

- C. If we can move the devil an inch, we can move him a mile—an inch at a time if we must!
- D. Since Jesus has to use imperfect vessels like us, sometimes His power doesn't come through into manifestation as quickly (Matt. 13:58).
- E. We'd all see greater and quicker manifestations if we weren't so full of unbelief!

Discipleship Questions

1. Where does God's healing first take place when you pray?
2. How does faith connect the spirit realm to the natural realm?
3. What is the spiritual world?
4. How can you draw out God's supernatural power?
5. Read Proverbs 18:21; Mark 11:14, and 23. How can you use your words?
6. If you're not seeing God's power manifest in your life, what's the problem?
7. How long should you keep praising and thanking God for what has already happened in the spirit realm?
8. What do you need to do once you begin praying over your situation?
9. What should your attitude in prayer be?
10. Why doesn't God's power always manifest quickly?

Scriptures

JOHN 4:24

God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

HEBREWS 11:1

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

COLOSSIANS 1:16

For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him.

HEBREWS 11:3

Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.

2 CORINTHIANS 4:18

While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.

MARK 11:23-24

For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith. [24] Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.

PROVERBS 18:21

Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof.

MARK 11:14

And Jesus answered and said unto it, No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever. And his disciples heard it.

ISAIAH 26:3

Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.

COLOSSIANS 2:7

Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.

1 JOHN 4:18

There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.

MARK 8:22-26

And he cometh to Bethsaida; and they bring a blind man unto him, and besought him to touch him. [23] And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town; and when he had spit on his eyes, and put his hands upon him, he asked him if he saw ought. [24] And he looked up, and said, I see men as trees, walking. [25] After that he put his hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up: and he was restored, and saw every man clearly. [26] And he sent him away to his house, saying, Neither go into the town, nor tell it to any in the town.

MATTHEW 13:58

And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief.

Outline

- I. God's Word will work for everyone, but we come up with excuses for why it won't work for all people, all the time.
 - A. Luke 11:9-10 tells us that we will receive if we ask and that everyone who asks does receive.
 - B. But experience carries more weight in most people's lives than the Word of God does.
 - C. We must believe that God means what He says—if we ask, we will receive.

- II. We must ask according to God's Word (James 4:3).
 - A. We have to make sure that what we ask for is part of Christ's atonement.
 - i. If we asked for something promised in God's Word, then He has already given it to us.
 - ii. But if something isn't part of Christ's atonement, then God hasn't provided it for us.
 - iii. In His atonement, the Lord provided all kinds of good things: joy, peace, restored relationships, healing, prosperity, and much, much more.
 - B. Just because we don't see what we ask for doesn't mean God hasn't provided them.
 - C. We can't perceive with our five senses what God does or doesn't do, because He moves in the spiritual world (John 4:24).
 - D. Whether or not we see it manifest in the physical realm depends much more on if we know how to receive than if God answered our prayers.

- III. God answers every prayer that's according to His Word.
 - A. If our prayers don't get answered, it's not God who missed it.

- i. God is always faithful.
 - ii. Knowing that God is faithful should bless us.
 - iii. In His faithfulness, the Lord has a perfect plan for each and every one of us that includes health, prosperity, joy, blessing, peace, and happiness.
- B. It's just that not everybody receives from Him.
- C. This isn't because God is not faithful to give but because not everyone knows how to receive.

ANDREW'S RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

For additional information on the baptism in the Holy Spirit and praying in tongues, please refer to my teaching entitled *The New You & The Holy Spirit*.

Discipleship Questions

1. Read Luke 11:9-10. Although God tells you that you will receive when you ask, what carries more weight in most people's lives?
2. What must you believe about God more than your experiences?
3. If you ask for something promised in God's Word, what can you be sure of?
4. What does the manifestation of your answer in the spiritual realm depend on?
5. If your prayers don't get answered, how can you know that it's not God who missed it?
6. Why doesn't everyone receive from God?

Scriptures

LUKE 11:9-10

And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. [10] For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

1 CORINTHIANS 12:30

Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?

JAMES 4:3

Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.

JOHN 4:24

God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

Outline

- I. While Daniel was still praying about Jeremiah's prophecy, the angel Gabriel showed up and gave him God's answer.
 - A. Daniel 9:23 says that as soon as Daniel started praying, God's commandment to answer the prayer came forth.
 - B. Daniel 9 gives us an example of God's faithfulness to always answer prayer.

- II. God will do the same with us, but our answer may take some time to get from the spirit realm to the physical realm.
 - A. Most people assume God did not answer their prayer if they can't see or feel anything right away, but things are always happening in the spirit realm.
 - B. It's arrogance to think that nothing happened if we can't immediately see, taste, hear, smell, or feel our answers.

- III. Later, Daniel prayed again, and it took him three weeks to receive an answer.
 - A. The same man prayed two different times and received two different results.
 - B. It didn't take God longer to answer one prayer over another; He answered both prayers instantly.
 - C. God always instantly answers every prayer that's based on a promise in His Word.
 - D. But things happen in the spiritual world that determine how fast the answers make it into the physical realm.
 - E. For instance, the manifestation of our answers is affected when we become discouraged or depressed, or if we give up.
 - F. God's Word reveals that it's according to the power that works in us (Eph. 3:20).

- IV. In Daniel 10, God had instantly responded to Daniel's prayer, but demonic opposition held up the answer (Dan. 10:13).

- A. God's messenger needed Michael the archangel's help to break through the demonic opposition.
 - B. God is greater than the devil, but Satan can hinder Him if a physical person cooperates and gives the Enemy authority to do so.
 - C. Things don't work automatically just because they're God's will and we prayed for it.
 - D. Unbelief can keep our answers from coming to pass.
- V. Just because people sound and look like they're in faith to receive healing doesn't mean they really are.
- A. We don't always know what's going on inside someone else's heart.
 - B. We can't blame God for not answering our prayer for someone when it is up to that person.
 - C. God is always constant!
 - D. According to His Word—which is all we can base our lives on—God declares, “By His stripes, we were healed” (1 Pet. 2:24).
 - E. We must go by what the Word says!
- VI. God answered both of Daniel's prayers instantly, but Satan opposed and delayed the answer from manifesting the second time.
- A. Many people erroneously believe that the devil is infallible and always faithful to strike at the right time.
 - B. Satan blows it lots of times, yet Christians sometimes have more faith in the devil than in God.
 - C. Satan can't attack everyone at once.
 - D. Not everyone has a personal devil; Satan has to pick and choose whom he personally afflicts.

Discipleship Questions

1. Read Daniel 9:23. What happened to Daniel while he was still praying?
2. What is Daniel 9 an example of?
3. Just because you don't always see an answer to your prayers immediately, what can you know for sure?
4. When people don't see or feel an answer to their prayers, what do they usually assume?
5. If you pray according to a promise in God's Word, what does He always do?
6. How can you affect the manifestation of your prayers being answered?
7. Read Daniel 10:13. Why did it take Daniel three weeks to receive the answer to his prayer?
8. How can Satan hinder God?
9. Why can't you go by how people look and sound to determine whether or not they're in faith?
10. Why can't you blame God when your prayers for someone else don't get answered?
11. What was the variable in Daniel's prayers getting answered?
12. What do many people erroneously believe about Satan?

Scriptures

DANIEL 9:1-4

In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans; [2] In the first year of his reign I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem. [3] And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes: [4] And I prayed unto the LORD my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments.

JEREMIAH 25:11-12

And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years. [12] And it shall come to pass, when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the LORD, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations.

DANIEL 9:19-27

O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for thine own sake, O my God: for thy city and thy people are called by thy name. [20] And whiles I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the LORD my God for the holy mountain of my God; [21] Yea, whiles I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation. [22] And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding. [23] At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to shew thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision. [24] Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy. [25] Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. [26] And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. [27] And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause

the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

LUKE 1:19

And the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to shew thee these glad tidings.

LUKE 1:26-27

And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, [27] To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.

DANIEL 10:2-3

In those days I Daniel was mourning three full weeks. [3] I ate no pleasant bread, neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth, neither did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled.

DANIEL 10:12-13

Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words. [13] But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia.

LUKE 11:9-10

And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. [10] For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

EPHESIANS 3:20

Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.

JUDE 9

Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.

REVELATION 12:7

And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels.

1 PETER 2:24

Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

Outline

- I. Most Christians doubt God when they pray and don't instantly see their answers.
 - A. But sometimes, answers to prayer may take time to manifest.
 - B. One reason is that the devil may be hindering them.
 - C. If we remember that it can take time for things to happen and that demons can hinder our answers, it'll help when we pray and don't see the manifestation instantly.
 - D. Instead of immediately doubting God, we'll either doubt ourselves or the devil.
 - E. A multitude of factors can enter in and hinder, or slow down, the manifestation of God's power.

- II. Sometimes other people are involved in the manifestation of our answers to prayer.
 - A. God will speak to individuals and meet our needs through them.
 - B. That's why all Satan has to do to hinder our finances is hinder those people God wants to use to help us.
 - C. Sometimes people wrongly assume that God just supernaturally provides for us without using others.

- III. Daniel, an Old Testament saint, didn't have authority over the devil, so even if he had known that his problem was demonic, he wouldn't have been able to do anything about it.
 - A. However, as New Covenant believers, we do have authority over the devil (Luke 9:1) and can keep him from hindering us.
 - B. When our answer delays in manifesting, it's our faith wavering and/or the devil hindering.

- IV. When we know in our hearts that God has already given us our answer in the spirit realm, we don't have to hold on for three weeks, like Daniel did, for the manifestation in the physical realm.
- A. As believers in Jesus Christ, we can take our authority and command the devil to leave.
 - B. Instead of telling God about it, we can speak directly to the problem.
 - C. We can use our spiritual weapons to shorten the time until our answers manifest—the time between “amen” and “there it is.”
 - D. Instead of just sitting idly by, waiting, let's do something!
- V. Even though God always answers prayers instantly, we don't always immediately know what the hindrance might be.
- A. We should use wisdom and pray in the Spirit until God leads us in a certain direction.
 - B. Then, we can take our authority and deal with it.
 - C. It's basically up to us how quickly our answers to prayer manifest.
- VI. When Jesus prayed for a blind man (Mark 8:22-26), the man only manifested a partial healing.
- A. Jesus perceived that the man still had unbelief so He asked him what he saw, then He prayed for him again.
 - B. The Lord didn't ask for anything twice—He believed and received it the first time.
 - C. The second time, He took His spiritual power and authority and used it to overcome the hindrance.

Discipleship Questions

1. What happens when Christians pray then don't immediately see answers to their prayers?
2. What can hinder, or slow down, the manifestation of God's power?
3. By what means does God typically provide for you?
4. All Satan has to do to hinder your finances is what?
5. Read Luke 9:1. If Daniel realized that his problem was demonic, what could he have done about it?
6. As a New Covenant believer, what do you have that Daniel didn't?
7. As a believer in Jesus Christ, what can you do to shorten the time it takes for your answers to prayer to manifest?
8. What should you do instead of telling God about it?
9. What should you do until God leads you in a certain direction concerning what the hindrance to your prayers may be?
10. Who is it up to as to how quickly your answers to prayers manifest?
11. Read Mark 8:22-26. What did Jesus do when the man manifested only a partial healing?
12. What did Jesus do the second time He prayed for him?

Scriptures

LUKE 6:38

Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.

DANIEL 10:13

But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia.

LUKE 9:1

Then he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases.

MARK 11:24

Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.

MARK 8:22-26

And he cometh to Bethsaida; and they bring a blind man unto him, and besought him to touch him. [23] And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town; and when he had spit on his eyes, and put his hands upon him, he asked him if he saw ought. [24] And he looked up, and said, I see men as trees, walking. [25] After that he put his hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up: and he was restored, and saw every man clearly. [26] And he sent him away to his house, saying, Neither go into the town, nor tell it to any in the town.

LUKE 10:13

Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which have been done in you, they had a great while ago repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes.

Outline

- I. When we hear teaching from God's Word concerning healing, deliverance, prosperity, or anything else Jesus provided in His atonement, our faith is strengthened to receive:

So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

ROMANS 10:17

- A. Once we know we've already got it (in the spiritual realm), manifestation (in the physical realm) comes swiftly.
 - B. As our knowledge and understanding of something increases from the Word, we can release our faith and see it manifest more quickly.
 - C. Those we pray for play a large role in whether or not they receive.
 - D. Sometimes people are just ignorant of how faith works—even though they love God—and that will keep them from receiving.
- II. Faith works by knowledge of the Word.
- A. God has already healed every person.
 - B. When we ask and believe, the power is instantly released.
 - C. If we don't see it manifest, it's not that God hasn't given—either we haven't yet received, or there's a demonic obstacle preventing the manifestation.
 - D. It's not God's fault, but ours, if we don't see something come to pass.
 - E. God is always faithful.
 - F. If God's faithfulness ever comes into question, then all of us are in trouble.

- III. God moved 2,000 years ago in the death, burial, and resurrection of His Son.
- A. He instantly answers our prayers as soon as we pray, but sometimes those prayers need to be properly directed.
 - B. We may not be Jesus, but we're the best God has to work through at the moment!
 - C. Our perseverance in prayer could mean the difference between others receiving their miracles or not.
 - D. It might take us a while, but let's adopt this attitude: If we can move the devil an inch, we can move him a mile—an inch at a time if we have to!
 - E. We can receive from God!

Discipleship Questions

1. Read Romans 10:17. How is your faith strengthened to receive?
2. When will manifestation come in the physical realm?
3. How does faith work?
4. When is God's power released?
5. Why do you need to persevere at prayer?
6. What attitude should you adopt concerning prayer?

Scriptures

ROMANS 10:17

So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

MARK 6:5-6

And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them. [6] And he marvelled because of their unbelief. And he went round about the villages, teaching.