

- What do men like Abraham, Moses, David, Nehemiah, Job, Jeremiah, Daniel, and Paul have in common? Besides being righteous and godly men, they were also great men of prayer. They all also had this in common with our Lord Jesus Christ. All throughout the Bible, from Genesis through the New Testament, we see these great men of God and our Lord devoting themselves to prayer. It is not hard for us to recognize why it is that all of these men were not just generally great men but also great men of prayer. We know that they were so devoted to prayer because they recognized the absolute importance of their communication with God. We, likewise, should recognize just how important prayer is in our lives as Christians. We are not only benefited by our constant and righteous communication with God, but He is also glorified by our devotion to prayer.
- This year, we have been focusing on the subject of glorifying God in our lives. We have recognized that we should be striving to glorify (praise, honor, respect) God in every aspect of our lives. This month we want to focus on how we can glorify God in our prayer lives. Prayer is the blood and lifeline of the Christian. If our prayers are not as they should be then we will suffer because of it and worst of all, our God will not be glorified. Let's consider Prayer that Glorifies this morning, and we'll do so by looking at 4 characteristics that we learn should be a part of our prayers from some of the men that were mentioned earlier.

4 Characteristics of God Glorifying Prayer

I. Prayer that is Sincere and Heart Felt

A. When I think of prayers of sincerity, my mind goes to King David and some of his prayers that we have recorded in Scripture. David poured his absolute heart into his prayers to our heavenly Father.

1. David prayed for God's guidance as he ruled God's people, Israel. **(Psalm 5)**
2. David prayed for the dying child that was born of Bathsheba. **(inquired of the Lord, fasted, and laid on the floor II Sam. 12:16)**
3. David spilled his heart out to the Lord for forgiveness for his sins with Bathsheba. **(Psalm 51)**
4. When David approached God in prayer, he left it all on the table for the Lord. His whole heart was poured out before Him.

B. Our prayers must be sincere and heart felt if we want God to be glorified.

1. A shallow prayer that is lacking any type of sincerity or heart does not please our God. That type of prayer is nothing but lip service and God is certainly not pleased with it.
2. Instead, our prayers should be poured out from our honest hearts. We must truly speak words from our heart that show our dependence, our love, and our faith and trust in God.
3. Paul poured his heart out to God in regards to the salvation of the Jews. He poured his "heart's desire" out before God in hopes that the Jews would come to obedience of the Gospel. **(Rom. 10:1)**
4. Therefore, our prayers must express to our God what is truly in our hearts. Obviously, a good and godly heart is required for this, so we should be focused on the right things. We can become better at this by taking the time to write out our prayers. That way we have to really think about what we are writing down and that can help us in make sure that it all comes from the heart.
5. We must also pray in such a way that we actually believe that God hears and will aid us. We can great confidence as children of God that He hears our faithful prayers to Him. **(I John 5:14,15)**

II. Prayer that is Selfless

A. Jesus, our perfect example in all things, was focused on others throughout His prayer in the garden before His betrayal.

1. Jesus begins His prayer by focusing on God and His mission for Jesus. **(John 17:1-6)**
2. Jesus then transitions to praying for His disciples for the rest of the chapter. **(John 17:7ff)**
3. It is also good to remember Jesus's words in **Luke 22:42**. Even when He does request something of Himself, He still keeps the focus on God and His Will for Jesus. *"not My will, but Yours be done."*
4. Even at His most difficult moment, our Lord was still focused on others.

B. We must give every effort to focus on others in our prayers, as well.

1. This doesn't mean that we can't pray for ourselves, Paul prayed for his own thorn in the flesh **(II Cor. 12:7,8)**, so therefore we can pray for our own needs.
2. However, we shouldn't allow the entirety of our prayers to be consumed by our our needs and desires.
3. Our focusing on others shows our love for others, and of course this fulfills God's desire for us to love our neighbors as ourselves. **(Matt. 22:39)**
4. God is certainly pleased when we are mindful of the needs of others, and He is glorified when we trust in Him enough to give the effort pray on the behalf of others.

III. Prayer that is Spiritually Focused

- A. Consider the ratio that is present within the model prayer that Jesus gave to His disciples. **(Matt. 6:9-13)**
1. There are 6ish different requests that Jesus makes during this prayer, and out of those 6 requests, 5 of them are spiritual in nature.
 2. The first two requests focus on God and His rule, authority, and will. **(v.10)**
 3. The 3rd request is the one that is physical in nature as Jesus prays for the daily physical needs of this life. **(v.11)**
 4. Number 4 is a request for forgiveness of sins. **(v.12)**
 5. Then numbers 5 & 6 focus on temptation and the overcoming of it. **(v.13)**
- B. I believe this should certainly speak to us concerning what we focus on in our prayers.
1. This isn't to say that we should pray for physical needs (including prayers for the sick and suffering) and blessings, but we must not get it mixed up in our minds and come to think that prayer is nothing but a Christmas wish list from God.
 2. He has promised that He will consider our physical needs and bless us **(Matt. 6:25-33)**, but Jesus told the people in **Matthew 6:19,20** that the spiritual blessings and needs are of the utmost importance.
 3. Therefore, we should focus our prayers upon the spiritual aspects of this life: strength against temptations, few temptations, forgiveness of sins, spiritual growth, stronger faith, etc. Writing down our request can help us see exactly what we're focused on and what we could do better.
 4. Our prayers often reveal our focus, and may our focus be on the spiritual and not the physical.

IV. Prayer that is Habitual

- A. Daniel, David, and our Lord Jesus are great examples of men who were dedicated to prayer.
1. Daniel had the habit of praying 3 times a day towards Jerusalem. **(Dan. 6:10)**
 2. Even though laws were enacted that prohibited the praying or petitioning to anyone except the king, Daniel did not break his custom and it continued. Daniel was dedicated and consistent in his prayer.
 3. David had a similar custom of praying morning, noon, and night. **(Psalm 55:16,17)**
 4. Jesus was also extremely dedicated to prayer during His time on earth. He was constantly sneaking away for some quiet time alone with God in prayer. **(alone on the mountain at evening to pray Matt 14:23; spent the whole night in prayer on the mountain Luke 6:12; He arose early in the morning to pray Mark 1:35)**
 5. Prayer was a part of the the daily lives of these great men. It was a part of their very character.
- B. Through our habitual and consistent prayer, God is pleased and glorified.
1. Our constant prayers show our dependence and focus on God.
 2. We fulfill the Apostle Paul's teachings that we should be people that pray without ceasing. **(I Thess. 5:17)**
 3. We can accomplish this by creating habits with our prayers. We might do as Daniel and David did and carve our special times throughout our day that are designated prayer times.
 4. We could even help the process by setting reminders on our phones or downloading apps to help us keep track of our prayers and their content.
 5. We are really without much excuse when it comes to having steady habits in our prayers.

We, as Christians, should be a people of prayer. A people whose heads are constantly bowed as we approach our mighty God in humble prayer before His throne. Our prayer before God has powerful effects in our lives if we are willing to offer up prayers that contain glorifying characteristics. May God help us all to be dedicated to Him through our prayers as we trust in Him in all that we do in this life. May He be glorified!