

Lesson THREE



introduction

Since we have covered some of the correct ways to pray, it is important to discuss how prayer might be done incorrectly. The way we pray can have a direct impact on how our prayer is answered. In fact, the possibility of a prayer not being fulfilled exactly as we expect is the subject of our next lesson. First, we need to see what ways the scripture show are the wrong ways to pray.

got a mood ring?

Although we are no longer in the sixties, our emotional state can have a strong effect on our prayers. Heartfelt prayers can be more true to what Yahweh expects of us. However, anger, pride, or hate can interfere with our request.

Job 6:8-10

8 Oh that I might have my request; and that Elohim would grant me the thing that I long for!

9 Even that it would please Elohim to destroy me; that he would let loose his hand, and cut me off!

10 Then should I yet have comfort; yea, I would harden myself in sorrow: let him not spare; for I have not concealed the words of the Holy One.

Isaiah 7:10-12

10 Moreover Yahweh spake again unto Ahaz, saying,

11 Ask thee a sign of Yahweh thy Elohim; ask it either in the depth, or in the height above.

12 But Ahaz said, I will not ask, neither will I tempt Yahweh.

Jeremiah 11:14

14 Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up a cry or prayer for them: for I will not hear them in the time that they cry unto me for their trouble.

Lamentations 3:8

8 Also when I cry and shout, he shutteth out my prayer.

Micah 3:4

4 Then shall they cry unto Yahweh, but he will not hear them: he will even hide his face from them at that time, as they have behaved themselves ill in their doings.

Ezekiel 14:3-4

3 Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their heart, and put the stumblingblock of their iniquity before their face: should I be enquired of at all

by them?

4 Therefore speak unto them, and say unto them, Thus saith Yahweh Elohim; Every man of the house of Israel that setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumblingblock of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to the prophet; I Yahweh will answer him that cometh according to the multitude of his idols;

Discussion Questions:

1. How might anger affect what we pray for?
2. Is it better to pray immediately when angry or to wait a while to calm down?
3. How would pride affect your prayer?

three wishes

Much too often, our prayers become a long trail of “gimme, gimme, gimme”. However, what we ask for is just as important as how we ask.

Psalms 78:18-22

18 And they tempted Elohim in their heart by asking meat for their lust.

19 Yea, they spake against Elohim; they said, Can Elohim furnish a table in the wilderness?

20 Behold, he smote the rock, that the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed; can he give bread also? can he provide flesh for his people?

21 Therefore Yahweh heard this, and was wroth: so a fire was kindled against Jacob, and anger also came up against Israel;

22 Because they believed not in Elohim, and trusted not in his salvation:

Psalms 106:13-15

13 They soon forgot his works; they waited not for his counsel:

14 But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted Elohim in the desert.

15 And he gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul.

James 4:3

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

Discussion Questions:

1. Someone may pray that they win the lottery. Do they have the right attitude to get what they want?
2. What other things might be the wrong thing to request in prayer?

how you pray

Now, the combination of the previous two creates some real interesting results. Sometimes, we get what we ask for and are ashamed of the answer. There was a minister who once had a bad incident with his boss and prayed that Yahweh exact vengeance on the man. In a few months, the man's wife died. The minister was quite shocked by this occurrence and was certain that his prayer was a direct cause. He learned right then that you must be careful for what you pray, you just might get it.

Mark 9:28-29

28 And when he was come into the house, his disciples asked him privately, Why could not we cast him out?

29 And he said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting.

Luke 18:9-14

9 And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others:

10 Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican.

11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, Elohim, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.

12 I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.

13 And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, Elohim be merciful to me a sinner.

14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

Matthew 6:5

5 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.

1 Peter 3:7

7 Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why would fasting in the first scripture example be necessary in having the demon cast out of the child?
2. In the last example, why should a man honor his wife so that his prayers are not hindered?

have patience

Sometimes we want the answer right then. This is especially true when we are in danger or trouble. In some cases, there is no choice. However, in others, Yahweh may pause to reflect since it may have been our own foot that stepped into trouble heedless of the warnings that Yahweh gives us.

Psalms 69:1-3

1 Save me, O Elohim; for the waters are come in unto my soul.

2 I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing: I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me.

3 I am weary of my crying: my throat is dried: mine eyes fail while I wait for my Elohim.

Daniel 9:21-23

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.

Luke 2:36-38

36 And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity;

37 And she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served Yahweh with fastings and prayers night and day.

38 And she coming in that instant gave thanks

likewise unto Yahweh, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.

Discussion Questions:

1. What kind of prayer might be a good example of one where the person does not want to wait?
2. Exactly how long did Anna wait, praying to see the Messiah?
3. Can we also get an answer quicker than we expect?

to whom it may concern

Who we pray to matters just as much as what we pray about. Just as we might expect Yahweh to answer a prayer whereas we would not expect the same of a pagan deity, Yahweh wants us to call on Him by name.

Acts 8:22-24

22 Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray Elohim, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.

23 For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity.

24 Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye to Yahweh for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me.

Psalms 91:14-16

14 Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name.

15 He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him.

16 With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation.

Discussion Questions:

1. Are prayers answered when they are asked of "God" and not Yahweh?

2. Is there a difference in asking Yahweh instead of "God"? Why?

gotta have faith

Finally, having faith that our prayers will be answered is also key. Expecting our prayer to go unanswered may result in our expectations coming true.

Mark 9:21-24

21 And he asked his father, How long is it ago since this came unto him? And he said, Of a child.

22 And oftentimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us.

23 Yahshua said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.

24 And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Master, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.

Mark 11:22-24

22 And Yahshua answering saith unto them, Have faith in Elohim.

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.

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

Discussion Questions:

1. What kind of faith is needed when we pray? Faith in what?
2. If we pray for our enemies because we're told to, but we don't really mean it, does that mean the prayer is done without faith?