



The Prayer Ladder

The Word of God teaches that there are different kinds of prayer. We see this in Ephesians 6:18 where we read, "Pray in the Spirit at all times. Pray with all kinds of prayers, and ask for everything you need."¹ Similarly, there are many different kinds of athletic events, soccer, baseball, football, to name a few, and each has different rules. You cannot win any sport without knowing the rules. This is also true about prayer. There are various kinds of prayer and each has different purposes and rules.

PRAYER OF FAITH

The prayer of faith can be compared to climbing the rungs of a ladder into the attic to retrieve an item for your own benefit. The attic, of course, represents the presence of God our Father because every prayer is voiced to Him in Jesus' Name.

In Mark 11:24, Jesus explained the prayer of faith, drawing our attention to the personal nature of this prayer. He said that whatever YOU desire when YOU pray that YOU believe YOU receive, YOU shall have. Notice, this prayer begins with your desire. It is not a "do something, do anything" prayer, but prayer based on the wisdom of God or on the mind of the Lord. In 1 John 5:14, the apostle John states clearly that we ask according to God's will.

This means that there are some prayers that God cannot and will not answer. In James 4: 3, we read, "You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures."² In other words, God will not answer an illegal, immoral or selfish desire. But, when we pray led by God's Word and His Spirit, our prayer is answered. Jesus said, "If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you."³ The Word of God is a sure and certain guide for every request, and the Holy Spirit always agrees with God's Word.

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After we have confirmed our desire, we ask God to fulfill it. We are sure of His answer because our desire is His desire or, we might say, His desire is our desire. Therefore, the moment we pray, we believe we have received. There may be no physical evidence of His answer, but we have His promise. Our faith declares that we *have* received.

This always reminds me of ordering from a catalogue. In the past, I ordered from catalogues frequently and after I called them and stated my need, the order clerk would say, "We have that in stock and we will send it to you." From that point, I believed I had received my order although I had not seen it. I just trusted her word.

God always keeps His Word. He has provided us with all things pertaining to life and godliness.⁴ Through Christ Jesus, He has given us every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realm.⁵ We access these blessings by faith in His Word.

PRAYER OF AGREEMENT

Sometimes when we climb the ladder of prayer into the presence of God, we need help. For years, I have quoted a very fine minister of the gospel who says, "If you need help, you need help." The prayer of agreement provides us with this help. I am so glad we do not have to stand alone.

You can imagine standing on a ladder and wishing someone was holding it steady for you. Through the prayer of agreement, this is possible. Together we ask God to meet the need. Together

And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive. (Mt 21:22)

we agree on our request and together we stand until faith in God's promise manifests our request.

In James 5: 14-15, we have a wonderful example of the prayer of agreement. Here, the Scripture declares that one who is sick can call for the elders of the church to pray for him. Because of his illness, his faith may be feeble, but the elders pray in agreement with him and through their prayer of faith, he is healed.

THE PRAYER OF INTERCESSION

Some time ago, my father (now gloriously with the Lord) was climbing into the attic when he fell off his ladder. He was frail, so he needed someone to climb up there for him. This is an apt picture of the prayer of intercession. In intercession we go before the throne of God on behalf of another.

The prayer of Abraham for Sodom and Gomorrah is a wonderful example of this kind of prayer. Abraham was not praying for himself, but

was burdened for the righteous people in these cities. He stood before God on their behalf, and God granted His request.⁶

It is interesting to note that no one in Sodom and Gomorrah had asked for Abraham's help. The same is true when Moses prayed for Israel. After Israel refused to obey God and enter the Promised Land, they decided to choose another leader and return to Egypt. No one was asking for help or trusting God except Joshua and Caleb.

Although God was provoked by Israel's disobedience, Moses asked Him to be merciful. In response to Moses' intercession, the Lord pardoned Israel.⁷ Psalm 106:23 records that God did not destroy Israel because Moses stood before Him on their behalf.

Today, we too can intercede for others. We can share the burden of intercession with Jesus who "always lives, asking God to help [others]."⁸ In prayer, we are united with Him as He prays according to God's will. This elevates prayer far beyond our understanding.

CONCLUSION

There are several other kinds of prayer. The PRAYER OF PRAISE, WORSHIP AND THANKSGIVING is essential to our success. Can we pray without thanksgiving? I am sure we cannot! To pray without thanksgiving is like mailing a letter without a stamp. Next, the PRAYER OF CONSECRATION AND DEDICATION prepares us for a life of service in God's kingdom. We pray this pray often as we walk with God. Lastly, UNITED PRAYER. In UNITED PRAYER every voice is raised to God for one purpose.

Together we pray with every kind of prayer and entreaty. We pray with our understanding and in the spirit. In the spirit, we pray by divine unction – the Holy Spirit guiding us in known and unknown languages - and our effectual fervent prayer will make "tremendous power available".⁹ Certainly, it is a privilege to pray!

¹ESV ²NKJ ³1Jn 15:7NKJ ⁴2Pe 1:3 ⁵Eph 1:3 ⁶Ge 18:23-32

⁷Nu 14:19-20 ⁸He 7:25NCV ⁹Jas 4:15 AMPC