



To Pray Evangelistically 3

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1 Thessalonians 5:17

Pray without ceasing.

It is easy to preach and talk about prayer, but putting it into practice is a little more difficult. So I want to help us today learn how to pray, especially if we struggle with prayer. Prayer should become a part of our life just as eating lunch or breathing air. We should just do it without thinking.

So, let us look at something that may help. CHRIST.

The C can represent **Concentrate**. We are to concentrate on the Person you are praying to, and not on the prayer. Someone has said, "Don't pray hard. Pray easy. Prayer doesn't do it; God does it." Prayer is simply a way of tapping into God Himself. You need not be a spiritual type in order to pray. You may say, "Well, I don't feel like prayer." Think about the One you're talking to, the One who has promised to be available to you as you talk and listen in dialogue.

Psalms 34:15 *The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry.*

Suppose you were told that God was on the phone asking to speak to you. Can you imagine saying, "I don't feel much like prayer today"? You'd say, "Give me that phone!" The point is, if you concentrate on the Person you're talking to, you don't need to be an experienced pray-er. You can have real conversation with your heavenly Father.

Matthew 6:9 *After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.*

Jesus says we can call God "Father." Or, even more on a personal level.

Romans 8:15 *For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.*

We can call the king of the universe "Daddy." We can crawl up on His lap on good days or bad days and talk to Him. Jesus tells us, if your earthly father would not give you a stone if you asked for bread, how much more your heavenly Father will give you all things that you need.

Luke 11:11-13 *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?*

Jesus loves you whether you deserve it or not. He wants to give you the desires of your heart because He loves you. The first guideline Jesus gives us for prayer is to concentrate. Concentrate on the Person who is willing and eager to talk to you, who loves you, and whom you can call Daddy, and who wants to give you everything you need.

"H" is for Hallelujah. Jesus says, Hallowed be thy name, meaning, "Holy" be thy name. Hallowed defines the person of God.

Matthew 6:9 *Hallowed be thy name.*

Because God is a holy God, we can respond with "Glory, Hallelujah!" You can invent ways to celebrate His glory. Driving down the freeway, in the shower, or in your quiet time, try new ways of expressing praise. Take time through

the day to celebrate the fact that God is a person, holy and wonderful, and find ways to say "Hallelujah!" We read that "the joy of the Lord is my strength," and that "God dwells in the praises of His people."

Psalms 22:3 *But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.*

Psalms 68:4 *Sing unto God, sing praises to his name: extol him that rideth upon the heavens by his name JAH, and rejoice before him.*

Doctors affirm the verse in the Old Testament that "a merry heart is good medicine."

Proverbs 17:22 *A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones.*

The more time we spend praising God and saying, "Glory, Hallelujah," the better we will feel, physically and emotionally. That is one reason why it is an important thing to fill your heart with good Gospel music.

"R" stands for ruler. Jesus simply says, "Thy kingdom come."

Matthew 6:10 *Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.*

God is the ruler of that kingdom. He is going to rule all things some day. He rules the cosmos now. In this world, His kingdom is growing. We can extend the kingdom by our gifts and our prayers and by the sacrifice of our lives every day. The kingdom will come in fullness some day. Right now, it's here in part. Through our prayer, we say, "Let me be a part of building Your kingdom."

Ephesians 2:19-22 *Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; (20) And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; (21) In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: (22) In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.*

We also reiterate our belief that all things will ultimately be the Lord's. Therefore, we can believe in miracles.

Psalms 24:1 *The earth is the LORD'S, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.*

"I" is for I need and I feed. Jesus says, "Give us this day our daily bread."

Matthew 6:11 *Give us this day our daily bread.*

We are praying, "God, give me what I need. God, feed me." We feed on Him for the things we need. And apart from Him, we are impoverished.

Acts 17:28 *For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.*

John 15:4-5 *Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. (5) I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.*

So what do we need in our lives?

I need bread—daily sustenance. My family and friends need sustenance. God gives us bread. I need help, perhaps in some basic areas. I need money. I need a job. I need healing. I need strength. I need love.

Someone was asked the question, "What do you need most?" He said, "A friend. I don't have a single friend." I believe that's a basic need just like bread, and the two of us prayed that God might supply his need. We pray, "Give us this day the things we need," and God, being who He is, wants to give us those very things.

Psalms 115:13 *He will bless them that fear the LORD, both small and great.*

Matthew 7:11 *If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?*

2 Peter 1:3 *According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:*

He wants to meet all of our needs. He wants to give wisdom and guidance. All of these things comprise our basic daily needs.

We need to recognize as the chorus goes, "I need thee oh I need thee." We stand in His presence now and eternally, and He feeds us continually. And so we have the *I* of the Lord's Prayer—*I* need; *I* feed.

"S," the fifth letter, is for *Savior*. When you pray, affirm that God is your *Savior* in Jesus Christ.

Matthew 1:21 *And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.*

Jesus says in His prayer that God will forgive us for our sins.

Matthew 6:12 *And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.*

When we sin, we confess those in prayer and ask for forgiveness. By the blood of Christ, we are forgiven. But, the ultimate sin is our unwillingness to forgive someone who has sinned against us. Jesus is not suggesting we can make some sort of a trade-off. For example, "I have forgiven all those people who have hurt me God, so deal with me the same way." If that was my prayer, I would be in big trouble. When I'm aware of how much the Lord has forgiven me, I can only show generosity toward those who have misused me.

Matthew 6:14-15 *For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: (15) But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.*

There is a story told of a man during the great depression. The man ran a feed and grain store during the Depression, and he gave credit to so many customers who never did pay, that he eventually declared bankruptcy. It took him years to earn enough to repay all the liens against his business. But, on the day when the last creditor was finally paid, this old gentleman took his books, including all the records of the people who had owed him money, and burned them in a huge bonfire. Incidentally, the amount totaled \$40,000, a lot of money in those Depression years. With that \$40,000 bonfire, he forgave his debtors as he had been forgiven. A remarkable man.

"T" is for *triumph* over temptation. "Lead us not into temptation," says Jesus. In your prayers, you can ask God not to lead you into temptation—all and any kind of temptation.

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, forever. Amen.*

You can say, "Lord, I don't want to fail you anymore. I want to be your person. Thank You for forgiving my sins, but try to keep me from sinning so often." We need to remember the promise that Paul told us about.

1 Corinthians 10:13 *There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.*

But, the temptations of the flesh are minor, compared to the temptations of the spirit. The Holy Spirit calls us to some high-risk involvement at home and abroad for friends or strangers, and we are tempted to say "No." We are afraid to fail. We are timid. We do not trust God. Those are some of the temptations of the spirit. Jesus tells us to pray that God will not lead us into the temptations of the flesh or the spirit. Rather, we can claim boldly what He would have us be and do for the world.

We have triumph and victory in Jesus.

1 Corinthians 15:57 *But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

1 John 5:4 *For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.*

2 Corinthians 2:14 *Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place.*

Norman Vincent Peale had a sign on his wall that said: "I would rather attempt to do something great and fail than to attempt nothing and succeed."

Don't be tempted by the spirit of timidity and lack of trust. The Lord's Prayer reminds us we can triumph over temptation of the spirit, as well as of the flesh.

Prayer is at the very heart of the life of faith. Prayer is simply talking and listening to the voice of God.