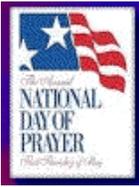




The Role of Prayer in an Age of Grace

Ephesians 6:18 (KJV)

“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;”



Thursday, May 3rd, was the National Day of Prayer in America. This is an annual event established by an act of Congress which encourages Americans to pray for our nation, its people and its leaders. Billy Graham is the Honorary Chairman for 2001 and he has written a Prayer for the Nation for this year's NDP.

Our Father and Our God,

We praise You for Your goodness to our nation, giving us blessings far beyond what we deserve. Yet we know all is not right with America. We deeply need a moral and spiritual renewal to help us meet the many problems we face.



Convict us of sin. Help us to turn to You in repentance and faith. Set our feet on the path of Your righteousness and peace. We pray today for our nation's leaders. Give them the wisdom to know what is right, and the courage to do it.

You have said, "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord." May this be a new era for America, as we humble ourselves and acknowledge You alone as our Savior and Lord.

This we pray in Your holy name, Amen.

1 Tim 2:1-6 (KJV)

- 1 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;
- 6 Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

Whether it's the National Day of Prayer or just any other day, one of the fundamental privileges that a Christian has is their ability to talk to God through prayer. In the Bible there have been many examples of prayer offered to God in all different situations. What kind of prayers should a Christian offer up to God that are approved in His sight? What is God obligated to do with our prayers? Is prayer a "secret power" to tap into to provide the "prayee" the ability to claim whatever you want?

The Bible has a lot to say about prayer and as a workman, "prayer" needs to be handled with the same care for right division as any other doctrine in scripture. Let's look at some of the popular trends about prayer and then discuss the role of prayer in today's Age of Grace.

1 Chr 4:9-10 (KJV)

- 9 And Jabez was more honourable than his brethren: and his mother called his name Jabez, saying, Because I bare him with sorrow.
- 10 And Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, Oh that thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, and that thine hand might be with me, and that thou wouldest keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me! And God granted him that which he requested.



The Role of Prayer in an Age of Grace

Ephesians 6:18 (KJV)

“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;”

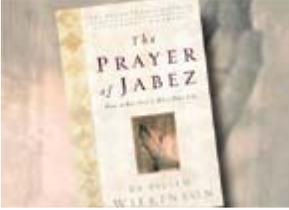


The Prayer of Jabez, Bruce Wilkinson

By The 700 Club

"The prayer is not the self-centered act it might appear."

(source http://www.christianity.com/partner/Article_Display_Page/1,1183,PTID1000%7CCCHID74%7CCIID320550,00.html)



CBN.com - Bruce Wilkinson, PH.D., founder of Walk-Thru The Bible Ministries, will share on The 700 Club about the prayer of Jabez. The Little Book That Wasn't

When Wilkinson was a freshman in seminary, the chaplain challenged the students to get a bigger vision for God. "When the chaplain said Jabez was more honorable, I wanted to know what made this man more honorable," says Wilkinson. After reading 1 Chronicles 4:9-10, Wilkinson realized that Jabez's prayer obviously caught God's attention because, the Bible says, God granted him what he requested. In his senior year, the prayer of Jabez became Wilkinson's senior sermon. "I've been praying the prayer of Jabez for 30 years and telling others about it," says Wilkinson.

In 1975, he made his first attempt at publishing his sermon. The result: a 278-page book that Wilkinson decided was still not getting the message across. Then in 1999, Shirley Dobson was listening to an audiotape of Wilkinson's Jabez sermon. She called him asking him to be the keynote speaker for the 2000 National Day of Prayer, which he accepted. Wilkinson called his publisher to make a little book out of his 278-page manuscript to give out as a memento to those in attendance. Today, there are over 4 million copies of his little book in print. "It's definitely a God-thing," says Wilkinson.

Why Not Ask?

There is no other information on Jabez in the Bible than those two brief verses. What we do know is that his life started out badly (his mother named him Jabez because she bore him in pain), he prayed an unusual, one-sentence prayer but things ended extraordinarily well. There is something about Jabez's simple, direct request to God that changed his life and left a permanent mark on the history books of Israel.

God has unclaimed blessings for us but we fail to ask Him for them. Oh that You would bless me indeed. Many Christians are uncomfortable praying such a prayer. They feel greedy if they ask God for too many blessings. "The prayer is not the self-centered act it might appear," says Wilkinson, "but a supremely spiritual one and exactly the kind of request our Father longs to hear." Before we can ask for God's blessing, we need a clear understanding of what the word means. To bless means to ask for or impart supernatural favor. When we ask God for His blessing, we are crying out for the wonderful, unlimited goodness that He has the power to give us. Jabez left it entirely up to God what the blessings would be and where, when and how he would receive them.

The next part of Jabez's prayer is a plea for more territory. And that You would enlarge my territory. "That is where you ask God to enlarge your life so you can make a greater impact for Him," says Wilkinson. Enlarging our territory would be a significant opportunity to touch individual lives. Right away, people may show up on our doorstep saying things that surprise even us! They'll ask for something and wait for our reply. Wilkinson calls these encounters "Jabez appointments."

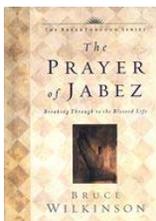
Oh that Your hand would be with me. With that, we release God's power to accomplish His will and bring Him glory through all those seeming impossibilities. When we ask for God's hand on us, we do not become great. Instead, we become dependent on the strong hand of God. Our surrendered need turns into His unlimited opportunity. And God becomes great through us.

When our life transcends the ordinary and starts to encroach on new territory for God, we are invading the enemy's territory. The further along in a life of supernatural service we get, the more we need to ask for the protection of God.

Oh that You would keep me from evil. In the same way God wants us to ask for more blessing and more territory, He longs to hear us plead for safekeeping from evil.

As we pray the prayer of Jabez, we set into motion a cycle of blessing that will keep multiplying what God is able to do in and through us. We'll soon find ourselves steadily moving into wider spheres of blessing and influence. The only thing that can break this cycle of abundance is sin because sin breaks the flow of God's blessings. Pray the prayer every morning and keep a record of all the changes that begin to happen.

Book Description (found at <http://commerce.parable.com/cbn/item.asp?sku=1576737330>)



Dr. Bruce Wilkinson, president of Walk Thru the Bible Ministries, takes readers to 1 Chronicles 4:10 to discover how they can release God's miraculous power and experience the blessings God longs to give each of us. The life of Jabez, one of the Bible's most overlooked heroes of the faith, bursts from unbroken pages of genealogies in an audacious, four-part prayer that brings him an extraordinary measure of divine favor, anointing, and protection. Readers who commit to offering the same prayer on a regular basis will find themselves extravagantly blessed by God, and agents of His miraculous power, in everyday life.



The Role of Prayer in an Age of Grace

Ephesians 6:18 (KJV)

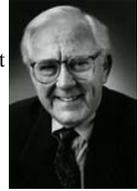
“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;”



Just Be Quiet and Say, 'Hello, Jesus'

(Source: [http://www.christianity.com/CC/article/1,1183,PTID2546\(CHID\)CIID136628,00.html](http://www.christianity.com/CC/article/1,1183,PTID2546(CHID)CIID136628,00.html))
CBN.com - GOOD MORNIN', AMERICA, HOW ARE YA'? By Bob Slosser

-- People tell me they have trouble getting started praying in the morning, trouble realizing the presence of the Lord, trouble knowing He's there and hearing Him. It's a serious problem, and we all have it to some extent. Its importance is found in Johns first letter near the end of the Bible. He says, If we know that He hears us we know that we have what we asked of Him.



The tricky part comes in the sentence just before that where he says we can have real confidence in approaching God because if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us (1 John 14-15). We suddenly hit the rub! It's His will again. We can't seem to get away from it.

Yes, beloved, and we don't want to. God's will is everything. And all this is do-able.

First off, you have the assurance (don't ever forget it) from the end of Matthews Gospel and other places, in which Jesus says, Surely I am with you always. That's the warmest, most assuring sentence in Scripture. And it is so laid back! Jesus is very cool.

So, get up in the morning. As soon as you can, sit down and stop looking at the things you're putting into your mind; that is, your things. Look into the Holy Spirit and into your heart, where Jesus is, among other places. You know He's there assuming you at some time invited Him into your heart and you became Gods. He doesn't depart unless you tell Him to (Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age, Matt. 28:20, NIV).

You should say, Good morning, Jesus.

Don't be afraid of Him, just pray the things you have on your mind, and work to stay concentrated. Zero in on Jesus. You probably wont see Him, although you might have a vision, which would be great. Many people do.

You're moving toward silence before the Lord - fellowship, communion, silent conversation.

It helps to use your prayer language if you've been baptized in the Holy Spirit. If you haven't, make sure you're serious about your commitment to the Lord and the Great Commission and ask Him to fill you and anoint you with His Spirit. He will. He wants you empowered more than you want to be.

Concentrate as much as you can and look deep into your own heart. Simply override the thoughts that keep coming into your mind. Think about Jesus and what He's already done for you. Keep your inner eyes there. Pray bits of the Lords Prayer slowly, quietly, continuing to look inwardly. Open your Bible and pray a short passage of Scripture, slowly, silently. You will learn more about it than you thought possible.

Keep pressing in. Its work. You're looking with your spiritual eyes, looking at the Lord. He's there. Don't get weird and spooky, just matter of fact, matter of faith, matter of grace. He's not spooky. He let you be made in His image, in His likeness. You will see and feel and know Love, for He not only loves you more than anyone has ever loved you, but He also IS Love. Don't say anything even when He says He loves you.

Continuing with all your might to capture every thought, ease into pure silence and stay there. Focus within your soul; rest in the Spirit, the Comforter. Jesus knows He can trust you with His plans when the Spirit of Truth comes, He will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on His own; He will speak only what He hears, and He will tell you what is yet to come. He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you (John 16:13-14, NIV).

You will never be the same. You will know His will and you will ask according to His will .. and you will get what you asked for and you will do His will and you will learn more of His will and suddenly His will is not all that intimidating.

Can we take the prayer of Jabez and expect God to increase our borders? What about having a prayer language and saying bits of the traditional "Lords Prayer" to get what we ask for? Is Prayer the way to tap into God's power and wield it at your desires?

It's important to know what God wants in our prayers lest we offend Him. Prayer can either be pleasing unto God or it can be an abomination. For example:

Matt 23:14 (KJV)

14 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.



The Role of Prayer in an Age of Grace

Ephesians 6:18 (KJV)

“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;”



Prov 15:8-9 (KJV)

- 8 The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD: but the prayer of the upright is his delight.
 9 The way of the wicked is an abomination unto the LORD: but he loveth him that followeth after righteousness.

Prov 15:29 (KJV)

- 29 The LORD is far from the wicked: but he heareth the prayer of the righteous.

As you approach any topic in scripture, it's important to remember that all scripture is for us (2 Tim 3:16) and our learning but not all scripture is to us (2 Tim 2:15). Consequently, you cannot just take a prayer in scripture out of context and apply it your walk without the rules of right division being jeopardized! You must check the context of a prayer to fully understand how God used it in His purpose at that time.

Isa 1:15 (KJV)

- 15 And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood.

If there is any formula for prayer today it needs to be according to the Word of God – rightly divided. A prayer pleasing unto God should contain some fundamental characteristics of a relationship between you and your Savior.

Adoration

ad-o-ra-tion (d-rshn)

n. The act of worship. Profound love or regard.

Source: The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Third Edition

Exod 34:14 (KJV)

- 14 For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God:

Luke 2:36-38 (KJV)

- 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 God with fastings and prayers night and day.
 38 And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.

Confession

con-fes-sion (kn-fshn)

n. The act or process of confessing.

Something confessed, especially disclosure of one's sins for absolution.

A written or an oral statement acknowledging guilt, made by one who has been accused or charged with an offense. An avowal of belief in the doctrines of a particular faith; a creed. A church or group of worshipers adhering to a specific creed.

Source: The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Third Edition

Ps 51:1-5 (KJV)

- 1 Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.
 2 Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.
 3 For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.
 4 Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.
 5 Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.



The Role of Prayer in an Age of Grace

Ephesians 6:18 (KJV)

“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;”



Thanksgiving

thanks-giv-ing (thngks-gvng)

n. An act of giving thanks; an expression of gratitude, especially to God: a hymn of thanksgiving.

Source: The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Third Edition

Psalms 95 & 96

Phil 4:6-7 (KJV)

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

7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Col 4:2-3 (KJV)

2 Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving;

3 Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds:

1 Tim 4:4-5 (KJV)

4 For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving:

5 For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.

Supplication

sup-plic-ate (spl-kt)

v. sup-plic-at-ed, sup-plic-at-ing, sup-plic-ates.

To ask for humbly or earnestly, as by praying. To make a humble entreaty to; beseech.

v. intr. To make a humble, earnest petition; beg.

suppli-cation n. suppli-ca-tory (-k-tôr, -tr) adj.

Source: The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Third Edition

Eph 6:17-18 (KJV)

17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

Phil 4:6-9 (KJV)

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

7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

8 Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

9 Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.

Phil 1:9-11 (KJV)

9 And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment;

10 That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ;

11 Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.

1 Tim 2:7-8 (KJV)

7 Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity.

8 I will therefore that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.



The Role of Prayer in an Age of Grace

Ephesians 6:18 (KJV)

“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;”



In conclusion, there is no specific formula for saying your prayers... but the scriptures do tell us what the proper attitude of the Christian should be when praying to The Lord. Prayer isn't a power to wield for getting what you want but rather a way to build your relationship with God. Prayer isn't about being the longest, or most eloquent. Prayer is something you do always... with the right attitude... as an act of worship and a way to show Adoration for Him, to Confess of your sins, to be Thankful for what He has done, and to Supplicate for others. Even if we don't know what to pray for or how... the Bible tells us that God has taken care of it!

Rom 8:22-28, 34-39 (KJV)

- 22 For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.
23 And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.
24 For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?
25 But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.
26 Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.
27 And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.
28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.
34 Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.
35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?
36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.
37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.
38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,
39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.