

# PRAYER REFLECTIONS

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IT'S BEEN SAID THAT the average Christian spends less than ten minutes each day in prayer, even though they say it's important. It appears that prayer has become like a "pill" we pop when we need something instead of a relationship we have with someone we love. Jesus taught us to "always pray, and not to faint" (Luke 18:1). The disciples asked him to "teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1). Prayer as Jesus prayed was a whole different concept to them. After watching him for three and a half years, they observed his prayers were as if he were actually talking with the God who created them. This was foreign to them. They didn't have a clue and asked Jesus to teach them.

In the following are reflections on prayer that just might be lost to our present age.

## **MATTHEW 6:6**

When Jesus encouraged us to enter our closets to pray, he was making a contrast with the hypocrites who loved to be seen for their much praying. He was encouraging us to find a place away from others where it would be you and God without distractions and noise so that your thoughts, your emotions, your concerns, your desires, are all focused toward God. In this one-on-one with God, it's a time where we do not say words to an empty space but speak to an actual presence (God). It's a time when we quiet all our outward and inward noise to know God's presence (Psalm 46:10). Do you have pill popping prayer, or do you take God as your closest confidant?

## **1 PETER 5:7**

Jesus taught that even though our burdens and pressures will be many and heavy, because we are yoked together with him, he carries them with us, making our burdens light (Matthew 11:28-30). Therefore, Peter encourages us to "cast all our cares upon him; because he cares for you." A friend cannot help you if they do not know you want the help. Are your burdens heavy? Then maybe Jesus is not yet yoked with you.

## **LUKE 18:1,8**

How important is prayer? So important that it is merged with faith. Jesus begins this parable by stressing the importance of praying always and never giving up in verse 1. Then he ends this prayer in verse 8 by making the statement: "Nevertheless when the Son of man comes shall he find faith on the earth." Jesus began the parable on prayer and ends with a statement on faith. Why? To emphasize that prayer and faith are one. You cannot have the one without the other. Do you pray? Then you have faith. Do you have faith? Then you pray.

## **JAMES 4:3-10**

The Apostle James holds back no punches here. He blasted his readers on their prayer life because they were praying for God to give them their worldly desires (4:3-4). They were not focused on those things belonging to God (4:6). They were giving into the Devil and the offerings of this world and not the will of God (4:7). Prayers that are answered comes to those who draw near to God and His will; have removed their sin; have righteousness in their hearts; are not trying to live for God by taking pleasure in the things of this world and have truly humbled themselves before God (4:8-10).

## **Matthew 6:9-13**

What I want to emphasize here is when Jesus taught, "Give us this day our daily bread." When he taught the disciples to pray he instructed them to pray "daily." Pray daily recognizing who God is, for His kingdom to come, for His will to be done. Pray daily for God to take care of your needs for the day (not wants and desires). Pray daily that you will not give in to the temptations you will face. Pray daily to the God who created you because only His kingdom, His power, and His glory will last eternally.

## **CONCLUSION**

There is much more that can be said about prayer. These are key points I wonder if they have been lost to our present age. Consider them. Examine yourself to see if you are in the faith. Repent and return to the first works. Do you have faith? You will pray. Do you pray? You will have faith. When Jesus returns, will he find you in the faith?