

21-DAY FAST AND PRAY JANUARY 17, 2019

John Piper said, *"Prayer is the open admission that without Christ we can do nothing. Prayer is an expression of faith in God's power, fueled by a desire for more of Him."*

A study of the recorded prayers in Scripture reveals quickly that the vast majority of prayers are both brief and simple. The prayer of the publican is short and to the point.

'God, be merciful to me a sinner!' (Luke 18:13 NKJV)

The prayer of the thief on the cross is equally as succinct. "Jesus, remember me when You come in Your kingdom!" (Luke 23:42).

Likewise, Peter's cry for help as his adventure of walking on water turned to sinking in water is equally as concise and direct. *"Lord, save me" (Matthew 14:30)*. (This is often cited as the shortest prayer in the Bible.)

While listening to Jesus pray, His disciples developed an appetite for prayer. So they asked Him, *"Lord, teach us to pray"*. He responded by repeating the very same model prayer He gave in the Sermon on the Mount. We call it the Lord's Prayer. As you can see, in this prayer there is not a wasted word, not a hint of vain repetition, and not a single note of ceremony or pretense in the entire prayer.

Luke 11:2-4 NKJV

"So He said to them, "When you pray, say: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us day by day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one."

21-DAY FAST AND PRAY *JANUARY 17, 2019*

Far more than a mantra to be recited without engaging our minds or a declaration to be made without passion, this prayer is given as a pattern for the disciples and us to follow. The elements of Jesus' prayer are all reminders of what our praying should include.

Tonight, let's practice using these same elements in our own prayers.

1. A prayer of praise. Make it Personal. What better way is there to spend your life than revealing through your life the glory of our God. Have you ever fully comprehended God's intention to use you to reflect the glory of His Son for the entire world to see? When you fully see God's 'intention' toward you. Praise will become spontaneous and very personal.

2. The power of petition. This element of prayer, is stated three ways: A. "Give us day by day our daily bread." B. "forgive us our sins." C. "do not lead us into temptation."

The Prayer of petition should be intentional on our part for the purpose of appropriating God's gifts and resources in order for us to fulfill His purposes by working in and through us. If our motives for asking are wrong, we won't receive. This is the essence of what James meant when he said we ask and don't receive because we ask "amiss" (improperly, wrongly), namely for selfish reasons (James 4:2-3).

Petition is a privileged element of prayer; therefore, we must be mindful that what we're making a request of God and it must be in accordance with His will and purpose. The prayer of petition is a privilege that comes with being in relationship with a loving and caring Father.

21-DAY FAST AND PRAY JANUARY 17, 2019

3. A time of penitence. Psalm 51 is a perfect example of a prayer of penitence, it would be worthwhile to read the entire chapter in your prayer time tonight.

"Have mercy upon me, O God, According to Your lovingkindness; According to the multitude of Your tender mercies, Blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, And cleanse me from my sin." - Psalms 51:1, 2 NKJV

Beautifully, these are not only the key elements of prayer, they are also the principal features of authentic worship. Amen.