**WHAT DOES THE BIBLE TEACH - PRAYER**

***LUKE 11:1 – TEXT***

**INTRODUCTION** – It is a basic premise that an important part of our life as a Christian is prayer. The bible is full of godly people involved in fervent prayer. Even though we acknowledge the importance of prayer it is a subject that is often misunderstood, misapplied or neglected.

We need to ask some questions about prayer just as the disciples did in the first century – **READ – LUKE 11:1** - The disciples of the Lord requested for him to teach them to pray. Do you need to learn how to pray? How is your prayer life? Do you pray as often as you should? Are your prayers acceptable to God? Sure we all need to be better equipped so we can become more effective in our prayer life. Do you want to become more effective in your ability to pray?

The purpose of this lesson is to examine what the Bible teaches about prayer so we can be more effective in our prayer life.

***WHAT DOES THE BIBLE TEACH - PRAYER:***

1. **WHAT IS PRAYER?** –
2. **PRAYER DEFINED –** It is the general term which refers to us addressing God. It is the way God has provided for us to communicate with him. It is how we ask, make a request or beseech, an entreaty or supplication, a wanting or a need.
3. **PSA. 61:1 –** Prayer is a crying out to God
4. **1 KINGS 8:28 –** Example of Solomon
5. **MATT. 7:7-11** – It is asking, seeking, knocking. If we really want what God has to offer us as his children then we must ask, we must make a request. I.E. – Children. We must seek – what is involved in seeking? **HEB. 11:6** – Faith.
6. **LUKE 18:1-7 –** Men ought always to pray. Be persistent. We must continue to seek and knock to have the door opened.
7. **WHAT MAKES PRAYER UNACCEPTABLE?** –
8. **WICKEDNESS –** 
   1. **PSA. 66:18 –** If I regard iniquity in my heart the Lord will not hear.
   2. **PROV. 15:8, 29 –** If I am. far away from God
   3. **ISA. 1:15 –** If our hands are full of blood
   4. **PSA. 128:9 –** If we turn our ear away from hearing the Law….if we refuse to obey the teachings of Christ we are living in rebellion and God will not hear our prayers.
   5. **JAMES 4:7-8 –** If we are filled with pride and will not submit to the will of the Lord
9. **SUBSTITUTING PRAYER FOR OBEDIENCE –** 
   1. **MATT. 7:21 –** There are many who reason that as long as they pray it really does not matter what they do…i.e. keep sinning and plan to later on pray for forgiveness.
   2. **HEB. 5:8-9** – The problem with that line of faulty reasoning is that our salvation depends on our willingness to obey.
10. **SELFISHNESS -** 
    1. **JAMES 4:3** – Many are teaching that God will give you whatever you want in this life Their appeal is totally toward materialism and worldliness. Just interested in physical success and prosperity. James by inspiration rebukes those with this type of selfish thinking. Those who only desire to ask for things that bring them pleasure are not acceptable to God.
11. **IMPROPER ATTITUDE** –
    1. **MATT**. **6:14-15** – Unwilling to forgive
    2. **MATT**. **5:23-24** – If you refuse to work out differences with brethren God will not listen to you.
12. **VAIN REPITITIONS** –
    1. **MATT. 6:5-7** – Do not pray long prayers and use meaningless repetition. Pray from the heart. Let God know what you are feeling; what problems you are facing; the areas that you are weak and the strength you need to grow in faith and love. I.E. – Husbands - as you talk to your wife each day is it always about the same thing? No, the conversation changes in accordance with the circumstances you are faced with on that particular day.
    2. **MATT. 23:14** – Speaks of those who for pretense made long prayers
    3. **LUKE 18:10-14** – Describes the Pharisee praying in the temple. He was praying to be heard by those around him and he was but God was not impressed.
    4. **There are other reasons that could be added to the list but these are sufficient to warn us that it is possible for our prayers not to be heard**!!!
13. **WHAT IS INVOLVED IN ACCEPTABLE PRAYER?** –
14. **GODLY LIFE** –
    1. **JAMES 5:16** – Prayer of the righteous avails much.
    2. **1 PET. 3:12** – Quotes from Psalm 34:12-16 which says the Lord hears the righteous. So am I righteous? Does God hear my prayers? Are we striving to truly submit to his will and obey him? Are we putting forth any effort to serve him in his kingdom? If not should we expect him to listen to our prayers?
15. **GODLY ATTITUDE** – Is needed for God to accept our prayers
    1. **MATT. 6:9** – Jesus begins his teaching about how to pray by telling them to address God in a reverent manner “Our Father”
    2. **JAMES 1:5-7** – We need faith. We must ask without Lord? Do we doubt the power of God? Do we doubt the providence of God?
    3. **HEB. 4:16** – How do we approach God? We must come boldly before the throne of his grace!
    4. **LUKE 18:13-14** – We need sincerity and humility of heart. The tax collector bowed his head and beat his breast saying “God be merciful to me a sinner” We need to express the attitude of gratitude in our prayers.
16. **PROPER AUTHORITY**  –
    1. **EPH. 5:20** – Paul instructs the Christians at Ephesus to give thanks to God in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ
17. **ACCORDING TO GOD’S WILL –** 
    1. **LUKE 22:42** – Example of Christ praying in the Garden of Gethsemane.
    2. **MATT. 8:1-3** - The leper realized if it was the will of the Lord he could be made clean. If it is the Lord’s will even though you may have a bad report form the doctor or be diagnosed with a dreaded disease you can be made whole. Jesus who had the power to create heaven and earth still sits on the throne and is able to deliver his people if it is his will. We do not pray to God with a personal agenda but that everything we request be granted if it is according to his will. We should have confidence because we know when we ask according to his will he hears us!!!

**CONCLUSION** –

The privilege of prayer belongs to God’s children.

How is your prayer life?

Are your prayers acceptable to him?

Do you pray as you ought to?

Make your life right with the Lord today!!!