

## ***WE PRAY FOR YOU***

### **Colossians 1:3**

**By Andy Manning**

#### **I. INTRODUCTION**

1. Polls say 9 out of 10 Americans pray regularly. 75% of Americans pray daily. More people will pray next week than exercise or have sex. I'm skeptical about the polls. The polls also said that Trump had no chance of winning the presidency. I doubt that that many people are praying, or that that many people are praying effectively.
2. Today we are going some important lessons about prayer.

#### **II. TEXT**

1. **Colossians 1:3** "We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you"

#### **III. SIX LESSONS ON PRAYER**

##### **1. Prayer should be practiced.**

- i. "when we pray"
- ii. Most Christians do not pray.
- iii. The Bible commands us to pray:
  1. **Colossians 4:2** "Devote yourselves to prayer; stay alert in it with thanksgiving."
- iv. The heroes of the Bible were devoted to prayer:
  1. Daniel prayed three times a day, and he was willing to give his life for his devotion to prayer.
  2. David prayed in the morning, waking up before dawn. Ps 5:3; Ps 88:13
  3. Jesus woke up early in the morning, while it was still dark, to find time for prayer. Mk 1:35
  4. The early church devoted itself to prayer. **Acts 2:42** "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer."
- v. The heroes of the faith were devoted to prayer:
  1. **George Mueller** pastored a church in England for more than 60 years. He is best known for the several orphanages that he started. He intentionally never asked for money or

other resources to provide for the orphans. Instead he simply prayed and trusted God to provide. He had a prayer journal in which he recorded over 50,000 answered prayers in his life. He said, "The primary object of my life and work is to show before the whole world that even in these last, evil days, the living god is ready to prove himself as the living god by being ever willing to help and answer the prayers of those who trust in Him."

2. Martin Luther spent three hours a day in prayer.
3. **JC Ryle** wrote, "I have read the lives of many eminent Christians who have been on earth since the Bible days. Some of them, I see, were rich, and some poor. Some were learned, some unlearned. Some of them were Episcopalians, and some Christians of other denominations. Some were Calvinists, and some were Arminians. Some have loved to use a liturgy, and some chose to use none. But one thing, I see, they all had in common. They all have been men of prayer."

vi. The secret to becoming devoted to prayer:

1. Establish the habit of a daily quiet time.
2. You can pray any place and any time, but it probably will not happen unless you decide to pray at a specific place and time.

**2. Prayer should be shared.**

- i. "we pray"
- ii. Most Christians, if they pray, only pray alone. We should have times of corporate prayer with church family.
- iii. Examples of corporate prayer in the Bible:
  1. **Joel 1:14** "Announce a sacred fast; proclaim an assembly! Gather the elders and all the residents of the land at the house of the Lord your God, and cry out to the LORD."
  2. **Esther 4:15** "Esther sent this reply to Mordecai: 'Go and assemble all the Jews who can be found in Susa and fast for me. Don't eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my female servants will also fast in the same way.'"

3. **Acts 4:24** “they raised their voices together to God”
- iv. Hell’s best kept secret about corporate prayer:
  1. Something special happens when God’s people pray together.
  2. **Matthew 18:19-20** “19 Again, truly I tell you, if two of you on earth agree about any matter that you pray for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. 20 For where two or three are gathered together in my name, I am there among them.”
- v. **The Layman’s Prayer Revival of 1857:** In the middle of the nineteenth century, the United States had seen a great deal of moral and spiritual decline. In 1857 there was a bad recession that led to 30,000 workers in New York being unemployed. Only July 1, 1857, the Fulton Street Dutch Reformed church hired a businessman to do city missions work. He was a forty-year old man named Jeremiah Lanphier. He decided to start a noon prayer meeting every Monday. He handed out 20,000 fliers, and on the first Monday, six people showed up for prayer. The next Monday, 20 showed up. The next Monday, 40. Then they started meeting for noon prayer daily. Soon, 3,000 prayed daily at Jayne’s Hall. The prayer movement spread to other cities. 2,000 were meeting for daily prayer in Chicago’s Metropolitan Theater. A revival spread across the country that saw 1 million people converted.
- vi. **Thomas Watson** “Prayer is more powerful when many join and unite their forces.”
- vii. Take advantage of corporate prayer:
  1. Home Group.

### **3. Prayer should be balanced.**

- i. “We always thank God”
- ii. Most Christians, if they pray, only ask for things.
- iii. Prayer should be balanced:
  1. What if your child only talked to you when they wanted to ask for something? That is not a healthy relationship.
  2. Consider the Lord’s Prayer. It contains:

- a. Praise: Our Father in heaven, your name be honored as holy.
- b. Devotion: Your kingdom come. Your will be done.
- c. Petition: Give us today our daily bread.
- d. Confession: Forgive us our debts.

iv. How to Balance Your Prayers: A.C.T.S.

- 1. Adoration: **Psalm 150:6** "Let everything that breathes praise the LORD. Hallelujah!"
- 2. Confession: **Psalm 51:2** "Completely wash away my guilt and cleanse me from sin."
- 3. Thanksgiving: **1 Thessalonians 5:18** "give thanks in everything; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."
- 4. Supplication: **James 5:13** "Is anyone among you suffering? He should pray."

v. If you are starting your children off on prayer, use something simple:

- 1. Thank you God for...
- 2. Dear God, help...

**4. Prayer should include intercession.**

- i. "we pray for you"
- ii. Most Christians, if they pray, only pray for themselves and not others.
- iii. Examples of Intercessory Prayer:

- 1. **Colossians 1:9** "For this reason also, since the day we heard this, we haven't stopped praying for you. We are asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding"
- 2. **Colossians 4:3** "At the same time, pray also for us that God may open a door to us for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains"
- 3. **Colossians 4:12** "12 Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, sends you greetings. He is always wrestling for you in his prayers, so that you can stand mature and fully assured in everything God wills."

4. Peter's escape from jail was the result of intercessory prayer.

- a. Peter was in jail awaiting trial. He was bound with two chains, sleeping between two soldiers, while soldiers guarded the door.
- b. **Acts 12:5** "So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was praying fervently to God for him."
- c. **Acts 12:7-8** 7 Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared, and a light shone in the cell. Striking Peter on the side, he woke him up and said, "Quick, get up!" And the chains fell off his wrists. 8 "Get dressed," the angel told him, "and put on your sandals." And he did. "Wrap your cloak around you," he told him, "and follow me."

iv. How to get started with intercession:

- 1. Pray for a different person or group on each day.
- 2. Example:
  - a. Monday: I pray through the Connection Cards
  - b. Tuesday: I pray for my family.
  - c. Wednesday: I pray for the health and needs of the church.
  - d. Thursday: I pray for the lost.
  - e. Friday: I pray for political leaders, and the state of our country.
  - f. Sunday: I pray for Sunday morning church.

**5. Prayer should be addressed to God.**

- i. "We always thank God"
- ii. Some Christians pray to Mary, or to saints.
- iii. Nowhere in the Bible is there an example of prayer to anyone other than God; nowhere are Christians instructed to anyone other than God.

iv. Jesus was very clear about who we are to pray to:

- 1. **Matthew 6:9-13 (KJV)** "9 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. 10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in

heaven. 11 Give us this day our daily bread. 12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. 13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil”

- v. If you need something from Amazon, then you go to Amazon. If you need something from Walmart, then you go to Walmart. If you need something from Academy, you go to Academy. If you need something from God, then you go to God.
- vi. **Matthew 6:6** “But when you pray, go into your private room, shut your door, and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.”
- vii. Why should we pray only to God?
  - 1. For our prayers to be answered.
  - 2. Praying to anyone but God is like drinking saltwater when you are thirsty. It’s not going to help you.

## 6. Prayer should be in Jesus’ name.

- i. “God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ”
- ii. Paul is specifying which God he prays to. Not just to “god,” but to “God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Paul is praying in the name of Jesus.
- iii. We must pray in Jesus’ name.
- iv. **John 14:14** “If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it.”
- v. What does it mean to pray in Jesus’ name?
  - 1. We have faith in Christ. We are not just praying to a generic “god”.
    - a. When people pray on TV shows and movies, they almost never say “in Jesus’ name.” They always just use the generic term “god.” But which god are they addressing?
    - b. Some say that the god of the Jews, Muslims, and Christians is the same God. That’s not true. Our God’s name is Jesus Christ, and He is rejected by Jews and Muslims.
    - c. There is only one true God – the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. If you don’t pray to the one true God, then:

- i. You are sinning by praying to the wrong god.
  - ii. Your prayers will fall on deaf ears and go unanswered.
- 2. We believe our access to God is through the blood of Jesus.  
We know that we cannot approach God based on our own righteousness.
  - a. **Hebrews 10:19** “Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have boldness to enter the sanctuary through the blood of Jesus”
  - b. **Thomas Watson** “To pray in the name of Christ is not only to mention Christ’s name in prayer, but to pray in the hope and confidence of his merits.”
- 3. We pray according to the will of Christ.
  - a. **1 John 5:14** “This is the confidence we have before him: If we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.”
  - b. This is how **Thomas Watson** defines prayer. “What is prayer? It is an offering up of our desires to God for things agreeable to his will, in the name of Christ.”
  - c. **Robert Jeffress** said, “Prayer is not about getting my will done, but getting aligned with God’s will.”
  - d. **AW Tozer** said, “The hard work of prayer is getting yourself into a state of mind in which you prefer the will of God over your own.”
  - e. Why is it important to pray according to the will of Christ?
    - i. These are the only prayers God answers.
    - ii. These are the only prayers that are good for us. God’s will is always what is best for us. If it is not God’s will, then you do not want it.  
**Robert Jeffress** “God’s will is a fence not to keep us in, but to keep evil out.”
    - iii. To imitate Christ. **Matthew 26:39** “Going a little farther, he fell facedown and prayed, ‘My

Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.”

#### IV. CONCLUSION

1. Let me close with three challenges:

- i. Let prayer be your first response, not your last resort whenever you run into need and difficulty.
- ii. Devote the first hour of your day to prayer. Let prayer be your first order of business. It is impossible to face the day’s challenges unless you have first sought the face of God in prayer. Don’t just pray as you go, pray before you go.
  1. Bobby Bowden, the championship football coach at Florida State University, used to get up every day at 4 am to pray. He said, “I wouldn’t have a spiritual life right now if it were not for getting up at 4 am daily to pray.”
  2. Dr. Jeffress told the story of his accordion instructor of 16 years who said about performing in front of people, “As long as you get the first note right, and the last note right, everything else is just fluff.” How you begin a day and how you end a day really determines the success or failure of that day. Everything else is kind of fluff in between.
- iii. Pray about everything. Don’t just pray before meals, pray before deals. Some people are consistent with praying before they eat, but that is the only time they pray. “God is great, God is good. Let us thank Him for our food.” You should pray about everything. Pray about decisions. Pray about purchases. Pray about problems. Pray about worries. Pray for safe travels. Pray for healing. Pray for spiritual growth. Pray for each other. Pray for your family. Pray for your church. Pray for the country.
  1. Why pray about everything?
    - a. **James 4:2** “You do not have because you do not ask.”
    - b. **Thomas Watson** “The tree of promise will not drop its fruit unless shaken by the hand of prayer.”