

INSTRUCTIONS ON PRAYER

John 14:12-14

By Andy Manning

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Imagine the following scenario. You are five years old. You and your family are driving at night on the interstate, and the car has a flat tire. So, your dad pulls over, turns to you, and tells you to fix the flat. That job is completely beyond your capabilities. You don't have the strength; the knowledge. Not only can't you fix the tire, but you might die trying.
2. The Christian life is like that. God has called you to things that you cannot do in your own strength. He has called you to become like Christ in your character. To love your spouse like Christ love the church. To raise your kids to follow Jesus. To live a holy life. And change your world for Christ. And in your own strength, you can't.
3. But God has given you a gift – the gift of prayer. He has called you to live for Him and to serve Him, but He has also said, "If you need anything, I'm only a prayer away. Ask, and it will be given unto you." He promises to give us everything we need to live a victorious Christian life if we would simply pray.
4. At five years old, you can't change the tire. But if your dad got out of the car with you and helped you with whatever you needed, then you could change the tire.
5. Our heavenly Father offers to be with us every step of the way and to help us with whatever we need, if we would just ask.
6. Unfortunately, many Christians try to change the tire by themselves. And they fail, and they get hurt. They try to live the Christian life without utilizing the most important resource at their disposal – prayer.
7. **E. M. Bounds** "We live shabbily because we pray poorly."
 - i. I wonder how many blessings we are missing out on, and have missed out on, simply because we did not pray.
1. **James MacDonald** "Praying is what confirms our true belief that we cannot succeed without God, and its absence confirms the exact opposite."
 - a. When you pray, it proves that you believe you need God's help. When you don't pray, it proves that you think you can change the tire all by yourself.
2. Today, we are going to be encouraged to pray, and receive some instructions about how to pray from Jesus Himself.

II. TEXT: John 14:12-14

1. 12 "Truly I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do. And he will do even greater works than these, because I am going to the Father.
13 Whatever you ask in my name, I will do it so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it.

III. FOUR INSIGHTS ABOUT PRAYER

1. **Prayer is how we reach the world for Christ.**

- i. **John 14:12** “Truly I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do. And he will do even greater works than these, because I am going to the Father.”
- ii. Jesus had just finished telling to His disciples to believe His word that He was one with the Father, or at least believe in the works. “Works” refers primarily to His miracles.
- iii. What did Jesus mean that the one who believes in Him will do the works (miracles) that He did? Exactly what He said. Not necessarily every Christian, but certainly the apostles were empowered to do the same type of miracles. They healed the sick and cast out demons.
 - 1. When the church was just getting started in Jerusalem, people would carry the sick out onto the streets and lay them on cots and mats so that when Peter passed by, his shadow would touch them and they would be healed. Acts 5:15
 - 2. In Acts 19:12, people were healed and demons were cast out simply by touching facecloths or aprons that had touched Paul’s skin.
- iv. What did Jesus mean by “And he will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father”? Did the disciples really do greater miracles than Jesus? He fed the multitudes, raised the dead, healed lepers; it is hard to top that. Most scholars believe Jesus is referring to the work of evangelism that the disciples accomplish after Jesus ascended. The key phrase is “because I am going to the Father.” During Christ’s earthly life, His ministry was restricted to Palestine. And most people rejected Him. He may have only gathered a few hundred true disciples. But after He ascended and returned to the Father, He sent the Holy Spirit to fill and empower His disciples for world evangelization. Then they were sent out to reach all nations for Jesus Christ (Mt 28:19-20; Acts 1:8). And within a few decades the disciples had spread the gospel all over the Roman empire and beyond, starting multiple churches, and reaching countless converts. In fact, on the first day that the Holy Spirit was given (Pentecost; Acts 2), 3,000 Jews were converted to Jesus Christ and were baptized in one day.
- v. **John MacArthur** “When the Lord spoke of His followers performing greater works, He was referring to the extent of the spiritual miracle of salvation. Jesus never preached outside of Palestine, yet His followers would spread the gospel throughout the world. Jesus had only a limited outreach to Gentiles (cf. Mark 7:26ff.), but the disciples (particularly Peter and later Paul) would reach the Gentile world with the gospel. The number of believers in Christ would also grow far beyond the hundreds (Acts 1:15; 1 Cor. 15:6) that were numbered during His lifetime.”
- vi. **Adam Clarke** “Perhaps the greater works refer to the immense multitudes that were brought to God by the ministry of the apostles. By the apostles was

the doctrine of Christ spread far and wide; while Christ confined his ministry chiefly to the precincts of Judea. It is certainly the greatest miracle of Divine grace to convert the obstinate, wicked heart of man from sin to holiness. This was done in numberless cases by the disciples, who were endued with power from on high, while proclaiming remission of sins through faith in his blood.”

- vii. The greatest miracle of all is the miracle of salvation, and many more converts were made through the ministry of the disciples than through the ministry of Jesus.
- viii. And these greater works, reaching the world for Christ, can be attributed to two gifts that Christ gave to disciples: The indwelling Holy Spirit to empower us, and prayer. Jesus was promising that we can reach our world for Christ because we have the Holy Spirit working through us, and the gift of prayer.
- ix. Prayer is the means by which we will reach our community. If we will be an effective church, it is because we are a praying church.
- x. **E. M. Bounds** “The gospel moves at a slow and timid pace when the saints are not at their prayers early and late and for a long time.”
- xi. **Francis Chan** “If prayer isn’t vital for your church, then your church isn’t vital.”
- xii. From now on, I am going to start putting specific prayer requests in the weekly newsletter so that you can be praying for the church. I would like for you to pray for these during your quiet time, when you pray as a family, and when you gather in Home Group.

2. Prayer is guaranteed to be effective.

- i. **John 14:13-14** “13 Whatever you ask in my name, I will do it so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it.”
- ii. This is a promise. A guarantee. Twice Jesus says, “I will do it.” If you pray, He will do it.
- iii. Can you ask for a better guarantee than the word of Jesus? Can you ask for a better encouragement to prayer than a guarantee from Christ that He will do it?
- iv. Why are we not praying more?
- v. Does it seem like God does not answer prayers? Remember the following:
 - 1. If you are wrong (in sin), God says grow.
 - 2. If the request is wrong, God says no.
 - 3. If the timing is wrong, God says slow.
 - 4. If all is right, God says go.
- vi. Look at verses 13-14 again, and notice that Jesus uses the word “ask.” This is what prayer is – asking. Requesting. Prayer is not demanding.
- vii. **Unknown** “Prayer is not giving God instructions, it is reporting for duty!”

- viii. When we pray, we must remember that God is in charge; He is the master, and we are the servants. He knows what is best, the best timing, and the best method. Often time we don't know any of those things. We shouldn't be surprised then when God doesn't answer our prayers exactly as we would like.
 - 1. You prayed for instant healing, but God's priority is your intimacy with Him, and He knows you will stay closer to Him if He doesn't immediately heal you.
 - 2. You applied for a job and asked God to give it to you, but God has something better in store for you.
 - 3. You prayed for a spouse, but God wants you to grow some before you get married.
 - 4. You prayed for your spouse to get pregnant, but God wants you to adopt.
 - 5. Prayer is asking, not demanding, which means we must always remember that God has the right to answer prayers when and how He wants to, and we have no right to resent Him for it.
- ix. Let me point out another observation. Jesus said, "I will do it," twice. Who listens to and answers our prayers? Jesus.
- x. In verse 14 Jesus tells us to pray to Him. "If you ask me..., I will do it." In the Lord's Prayer, Jesus taught His disciples to pray to the Father. Here He tells them to pray to Him. That means you can do both. Address your prayers to the Father or to Jesus.

3. Prayer exists to glorify God.

- i. **John 14:13** "Whatever you ask in my name, I will do it so that the Father may be glorified in the Son."
- ii. God takes care of us through prayer. We stay close to God through prayer. God speaks to us through prayer. But there is another purpose to prayer, perhaps the ultimate purpose: To glorify God.
- iii. To glorify God is to show God's glory – to display God's goodness and greatness. It is showing the world how good and great God is.
- iv. The Gospel of John indicates several ways we can glorify God:
 - 1. Produce much fruit. John 15:8 "My Father is glorified by this: that you produce much fruit and prove to be my disciples."
 - 2. Complete the work God has given you to do. John 17:4 "I have glorified you on the earth by completing the work you gave me to do."
 - 3. Suffer for Christ's name. John 21:19 "He said this to indicate by what kind of death Peter would glorify God."
 - 4. Prayer. John 14:13 "Whatever you ask in my name, I will do it so that the Father may be glorified in the Son."

- v. When you wear a Drew Brees jersey, you glorify Drew Brees. When someone puts a Yeti sticker on their car, they glorify Yeti. When you pray and God answers, you glorify God – especially when you give God the glory.
- vi. God’s purpose in prayer is to glorify Himself. When we pray to God, and He answers, He shows off His glory.

4. Prayer must be in the name of Jesus.

- i. **John 14:14** “If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it.”
- ii. What is it to pray in Jesus’ name? It is not a magical incantation, or a spell. It is not a magic word that forces God to move.
- iii. It means three things:
 - 1. To pray according to Christ’s will.
 - a. In the Lord’s Prayer, Jesus taught us to pray, “Thy will be done.”
 - b. Before Christ’s arrest and crucifixion, He prayed for escape from the suffering. But then He prayed, “But not my will, Yours be done.”
 - c. **1 John 5:14** “This is the confidence we have before him: If we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.”
 - 2. To pray in dependence upon Christ’s blood.
 - a. **John MacArthur** “It is to acknowledge one’s spiritual poverty, lack of self-sufficiency, and utter unworthiness to receive anything from God based on one’s own merits. It is to approach God based on the merits of Jesus Christ and to acknowledge one’s complete dependence on Him to supply every need.”
 - b. **D. A. Carson** “D. A. Carson It is “the recognition that the only approach to God those who pray enjoy, their only way to God, is Jesus himself.”
 - c. **John 14:6** “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”
 - 3. To pray for Christ to be glorified.
 - a. **John MacArthur** “It is to express a sincere desire that God would be glorified in His answer. It is to align one’s requests with the Father’s supreme goal of glorifying the Son.”
 - b. **Matthew Henry** “It is to aim at his glory and seek this as our highest end in all our prayers.”

IV. CONCLUSION

1. Three Steps to get Started With Prayer This Week:

- i. Set aside 30 minutes a day to read your Bible and pray. This is called a Daily Quiet Time.
- ii. Plan what you will pray for each day.

1. Sunday – Worship service
 2. Monday – Connection Cards
 3. Tuesday – Family
 4. Wednesday – Church Acadiana
 5. Thursday – Lost
 6. Friday – Community and Country
- iii. Pray through A. C. T. S.
1. Adoration: “Lord, I praise you because You are....”
 2. Confession: “Lord, please forgive me for....”
 3. Thanksgiving: “Lord, thank you for....”
 4. Supplication: “Lord, please help me with....”
2. There is a really cool story about the power of prayer in Acts 12:1-19. The early church was just getting started in Jerusalem, but they were being persecuted by the Jewish leaders. King Herod of the Jews had already executed James, the brother of John, and when he saw that it pleased the Jews, he also arrested Peter and placed him in prison under close guard – 4 squads of four soldiers. But verse 5 says that “the church was praying fervently to God for him.” When Herod was about to bring him to trial, that very night, Peter was sleeping between two guards, and bound with two chains. An angel appeared, struck Peter on the side and woke him up (he must have been a hard sleeper) and said, “Get up,” and the chains fell off his wrists. “Get dressed, and put on your sandals,” and he did. “Wrap your cloak around you and follow me.” And he did. Peter must have been in a daze, because the angel had to tell him everything he needed to do. They passed right by the guards (they were invisible), and when they came to the iron gate, it opened by itself. When they got outside, the angel left him. So, Peter went to the house of Mary, the mother of John Mark, where the church was assembled and praying.” He knocked on the door, and a servant girl named Rhoda answered. When she heard Peter’s voice, she was so excited that she didn’t let him in, but ran inside to tell everyone. But they didn’t believe her. They thought she was out of her mind. After she kept insisting, and Peter kept on knocking, they opened the door and saw him and were amazed.
3. The story reveals several truths:
- i. Prayer is powerful.
 - ii. We should pray as a church.
 - iii. Sometimes we doubt that prayer really works.
4. Starting today, make prayer a priority, and watch God move mightily in your life.