

PRAYER

Kingdom doctrine pertaining to prayer is included in the following verses. None of these verses contain the proper procedure for prayer in our dispensation of grace. You should notice that kingdom Jews prayed for physical things; in contrast, grace believers ought to submit prayers of thanksgiving and/or pray for spiritual blessings.

Matthew 7:

**7 Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:
8 For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.**

Matthew 21:

22 And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.

Mark 11:

24 Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.

25 And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.

26 But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.

Luke 11:

13 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

John 11:

22 But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee.

John 14:

13 And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

14 If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.

Matthew 6:

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: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

14 For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:

15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Question: How would you like to receive forgiveness from God based on how you forgive others? Thank God we live in the dispensation of grace during a time when God forgives us because Jesus died spiritually for our sins according to the scriptures. We are vindicated from our sins because God judged all our sins in Jesus while He was nailed to the cross. We are not under law, but under grace.

Acts 12:

5 Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.

1 Peter 3:

12 For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.

During the dispensation of grace the following verses from the epistles of Paul give insight into how, and for what we ought to pray. As you read the verses you should note that our prayers should fall into two main categories: #1 – giving thanks; #2 – petitions for strengthening and enlightening the inner man.

Romans 8:

26 Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

27 And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

These scriptures should tell us that there is no such thing as a “prayer warrior.” We don’t know what to pray for or how to pray as we should; therefore, God the Holy Spirit intercedes in prayer for us. He doesn’t straighten out our prayers, but actually prays in our behalf.

Romans 12:

2 Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer;

Ephesians 1:

16 Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers;

17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:

18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,

19 And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,

Ephesians 3:

14 For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

15 Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,

16 That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;

17 That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,

18 May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;

19 And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.

This is a prayer that Paul is praying for the Ephesians.

20 Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,

Since God is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, it should be obvious that we have no need to petition Him for physical blessings or things which we want or feel that we need.

21 Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

Ephesians 1:

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:

You should notice that "hath blessed us" is past tense. God has already blessed us with how many spiritual blessings in the heavenly places in Christ? **"ALL."**

Ephesians 2:

6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:

Jesus Christ is seated at the right hand of God the Father on His throne and positionally we have been seated in Jesus next to God the Father on His throne in heavenly places. This verse further defines the "every spiritual blessing" of Eph 1:3. Already blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenly places in Christ ought to eliminate the need for praying for more blessings.

Ephesians 6:

18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

19 And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel,

Colossians 1:

9 For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;

10 That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;

11 Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness;

12 Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:

1 Thessalonians 5:

17 Pray without ceasing.

18 In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

Our prayer without ceasing should consist of giving thanks in everything. Also an unceasing prayer requires the intercessory enablement of God the Holy Spirit. We humans are not capable of a continuous prayer of thanksgiving.

1 Thessalonians 5:

25 Brethren, pray for us.

The following verse reveals the kind of prayers Paul is soliciting.

2 Thessalonians 3:

**1 Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you:
2 And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith.**

In verse 2 above, Paul is not praying for personal safety. He is praying for deliverance from those who would interfere with the doctrine he is teaching.

Colossians 4:

**2 Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving;
3 Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds:
4 That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.**

Philemon 1:

**4 I thank my God, making mention of thee always in my prayers,
5 Hearing of thy love and faith, which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus, and toward all saints;
6 That the communication of thy faith may become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus.**

Let me submit just a few verses and words on prayer for healing during the dispensation of grace.

2 Corinthians 12:

**7 And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.
8 For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.
9 And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.
10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.**

By the time we get midway through the book of 2nd Corinthians, we find that the Apostle Paul does not have the gift of healing. He can't even heal himself; neither does he pray for the healing of others as indicated in the following verses:

1 Timothy 5:

23 Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities.

Obviously Timothy is having serious stomach problems. Paul recommends to his friend that he quit drinking water; instead, he told him to drink a little wine for medicinal purposes. He does not attempt healing; neither does he pray that God heal him.

Philippians 2:

27 For indeed he was sick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow.

Paul is writing to the church at Philippi concerning a mutual friend who was sick enough to die. Paul does not say anything about himself praying for the healing of his friend or soliciting the church's prayers on his

behalf. There is an indication of a divine healing in that God showed mercy to both men. God has always had the power to heal. The only point I am making is that healing is a sovereign choice made by God and is no longer influenced by prayer.

2 Timothy 4:

20 Erastus abode at Corinth: but Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick.

Paul mentions a sick friend he left behind. He does not solicit prayers for God's intervention. At this juncture in Paul's spiritual growth, he does not seek divine healing from God for either himself or others. We should follow his example.

The contrast between the writings of James to Jewish kingdom saints petitioning healing, and the failure for submitting prayer for healing in Paul's writings of grace doctrines couldn't be more apparent.

James 5:

14 Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord:

Anointing with oil is Jewish symbolism. It represents receiving the Holy Spirit. We, in the dispensation of grace should not be anointing people with oil. If we are believers we already have the Holy Spirit living within us. He never leaves. He will be in us for all eternity.

15 And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.

Also notice that during the dispensation of grace one's sins are not forgiven by praying over him while he is sick. In this dispensation our sins are forgiven by faith alone in Christ alone for everlasting salvation.

16 Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

Nowhere does our Apostle Paul even remotely suggest that we confess our sins to one another or to God. Why do it, since it's uncalled for? All sins have already been judged in Christ while on the cross. Furthermore, praying in this dispensation does not produce healing. Does this limit the power of God during this dispensation? No, not at all. God has always had, and always will have the power to heal all forms of sickness, deformity or disease. But in this dispensation healing is His sovereign choice and is not influenced by our prayers.

Concerning "effectual fervent prayer", during the dispensation of grace, how fervent, how long, how repetitive, how sincere, or how emotional our prayers are has nothing to do with their effectiveness. For our prayers to be effectual, they need to be submitted in the spirit of thanksgiving, for the promotion of God's will and plan for this dispensation, and for the spiritual growth and enlightenment of our inner man.

17 Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months.

18 And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.

Israel's Old Testament and kingdom doctrines contain prayers for almost everything. And along with those prayers came the assurance from God that their petitions would be answered. But, in contrast,

dispensation of grace prayer doctrine is extremely limited in scope. We shouldn't be making requests concerning the weather, personal physical needs or the physical needs of others such as health, healing, life, safety, wealth, the economy, etc.

Instead of fretting about sickness and pain and looking for a quick fix to the problems we have, we should have the attitude reflected by our Apostle Paul as put forth in the following verses:

2 Corinthians 12:

9 And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.

Paul does not pray for deliverance from infirmities (disease, feebleness, or sickness) or reproaches (rebuke, disapproval, or scorn). He does not pray for the necessities of life (food, clothing, shelter or the money to purchase such things). He does not seek deliverance from persecutions (to harass, injure, grieve, or afflict because of belief) or when he is in distress (a state of danger).

In the following verses you will notice that we ought to pray for all men. Our prayers should be submitted with humility and thanksgiving. We should be interceding with prayers that our fellow Christians grow in grace and understanding. Verse 4 tells us we should be praying for the salvation of the lost. Verse 2 tells us that we should pray for those in government who have authority over us. The extent of those prayers concerning government should be limited to providing us with an atmosphere conducive to our freedom to exercise faith as we see fit.

1 Timothy 2:

1 I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men;

2 For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.

3 For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour;

4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

In view of the scriptures we have covered, one should be able to come to the conclusion that today prayer is greatly misused and abused. There are people today that pray for everything they can imagine. For many the privilege of prayer has been reduced to pure superstition. Of course all of these errors result from an inability to rightly divide the word of truth. In regard to prayer, Kingdom doctrine has been erroneously applied to our dispensation of grace.

Many Americans believe that ours is a Christian nation and they pray inappropriately for it. God dealt with Israel as a nation during the dispensation of the Law. He will deal with them as a nation again after the dispensation of grace is finished. During our dispensation God deals with people, not nations. Only individuals can be Christians, not national entities. An accurate definition of a Christian is a person who has a family relationship with God through faith in His Son, Jesus Christ. Certainly no nation can do that. Furthermore, there are many religious citizens, but far fewer genuine Christians. The same applies to the

founders of our country. They were religious people but not necessarily believers in Jesus Christ for eternal salvation.

In reality, we are living in the devil's world. Sadly, our nation is included in this system of evil. Our government is a seat of hypocrisy; full of false human good, greed for money, and lust for power. Ultimately, this is a reflection of the character and standards of the wider population.

I love my country. I served in the military, own property, and pay taxes. I have an investment in America. Please don't misunderstand me; I'm not talking about patriotism. I'm talking about reality. Ronald Reagan's famous imagery notwithstanding, America never was (and never will be) that shining city on a hill. Putting away the poetry, this distinction can only belong to the New Jerusalem that John saw in Revelation.

As Christians we are not of this world; we are just passing through. Our citizenship is in heaven. We need to become more spiritually minded. We need to stop fretting about earthly things and get our minds wrapped around that which is eternal. We can begin by learning how to pray appropriately in God's present economy, the dispensation of grace.