

Why Do We Pray?

Matthew 6:7–8 (NKJV)

⁷And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words.

⁸“Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him.

- *If we don't have the right perspective of prayer we can end up praying like the heathens do with a mixture of superstition and meaningless repetition.*
- *Why Do We Pray?*
- *Pray deepens our intimate relationship with God.*
- *Pray allows us to understand the heart of God.*
- *But another important element of prayer is that prayer enables us to come into agreement with the will of God.*

Genesis 1:26 (NKJV)

26 Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

- *God has given dominion over the earth to man.*
- *There is a difference between authority and power.*
- *God gave to man authority to choose whose plan will be manifest on the earth.*
- *But God did not give man unlimited power to create or do anything he wants.*
- *The first time we see the importance of agreement is in Genesis Chapter 3.*
- *In this story we can see the spiritual battle that takes place as Adam and Eve must decide whom they will agree with.*
- *Adam and Eve initially chose to give Satan building rights.*
- *We can see the importance of agreement and how that one choice changed the course of history for mankind.*
- *For Satan to get Eve to turn away from God's Word and agree with his lie he had to distort the word of God in Eve's mind.*
- *We don't have the power in our words to change our lives but we do have the authority by prayer and our words to choose whose power will be manifest in our lives and on the earth.*

Joshua 24:15 (NKJV)

¹⁵And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.”

- *The message through out the Bible from Genesis to Revelation is choose whom you will believe and serve.*
- *Why did Christ have to come in the flesh?*
- *There are many important reasons why Jesus Christ had to come as a man but one important one deals with the authority over the earth that God gave to man.*

- *God needed one man to come into full agreement with Him so that His plan of salvation could be manifest on the earth.*
- *Jesus Christ came in the flesh as the Son of Man so that He could exercise the authority given to man and come into full agreement with the Father.*
- *Because Jesus Christ came as a man He was able to fulfill God's will on the earth as it is in Heaven.*
- *Confess – Greek word- homologeo – to say the same thing as another*
- *The concept of confession means that we come into agreement with what God says.*
- *Is it any wonder that the enemy's greatest attack upon Christians' personal lives starts in the area of prayer.*
- *In prayer our relationship with Christ grows.*
- *The power of God is released in our lives and upon the earth as we agree with God's will in prayer.*

1 John 5:14 (NKJV)

14 Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.

- *When our confession lines up with God's will then we see God's will released in our lives.*
- *When we pray according to God's will, our prayers will be like well placed arrows hitting their intended target and bring forth eternal results.*
- *If we do not come into agreement with God's will then we will not see God's will done in our lives.*

Matthew 6:10 (NKJV)

10 Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

- *This aspect of the Lord's prayer is not a theological statement but a request to God, as one having authority on the earth to see God's Kingdom and will established on the earth as it is already perfectly manifest in Heaven.*
- *God will not change us unless we come into agreement with Him.*
- *Jesus Christ's message and the message through out the Bible and the message of the Gospel is about agreement, "repent and believe."*
- *Repent - stop agreeing with the sin nature and the lies of satan.*
- *Believe – come into agreement with God and His Word.*
- *The Biblical concept of faith is really the concept of agreement.*
- *The concept for faith in both the Old and the New Testament conveys the idea of trust, confidence, believing.*
- *Faith has the nuance of obedience because true heart faith always will result in action and change.*
- *Agreement has two elements:*
- *What or whom we choose to agree with.*
- *What or whom we choose not to agree with.*
- *Agreement is much more than tacit approval but actually a conscious choice where we join ourselves with a person, cause or idea.*

Matthew 9:9 (NKJV)

9 As Jesus passed on from there, He saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, "Follow Me." So he arose and followed Him.

- *The Greek verb "to follow" has the connotation of agreement.*
- *The Greek word "to follow" comes from a combination of the word "union" and "road" and thus to join with someone.*
- *Matthew left all that he valued and came into agreement with Christ.*

Matthew 16:24 (NKJV)

24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.

- *Deny himself = not agreeing with our wishes.*
- *Follow Me = agreeing with Christ.*
- *The cost of discipleship is to come into agreement with the will of God even when His will is contrary to what we would desire.*

Matthew 18:19–20 (NKJV)

¹⁹"Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven.

²⁰For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them."

- *Agreement in the Body of Christ releases God's will on the earth.*
- *Many times revival is hindered or fails to come at all because of disunity and factions.*

1 Corinthians 14:4 (NKJV)

⁴He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church.

- *Speaking in tongues is our willingness to yield to the Spirit of God and come into agreement with whatever He says even if we do not understand it.*
- *Why do we pray for people if God cannot change someone unless they are in agreement with Him?*
- *As we pray for a person God is working in their hearts and in the circumstances of their lives so that they will choose to come into agreement with God.*

1 Timothy 4:10 (NKJV)

10 For to this end we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe.

- *Jesus Christ is the Saviour of all men but that does not mean all men will be saved.*
- *People perish not because of God's unwillingness but because of man's unwillingness.*
- *Why do we pray for favour from those in authority if their hearts only can be changed with their agreement?*

Proverbs 21:1 (NKJV)

1 The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, Like the rivers of water; He turns it wherever He wishes.

- *Through our prayers God can cause even the ungodly to make godly decisions but it does not mean that they have become godly.*
- *We are going to look at two examples of agreement found in Luke Chapter 1.*

Luke 1:5-25 (NKJV)

5 There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah. His wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth.

6 And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.

7 But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both well advanced in years.

- *Both Zacharias and Elizabeth walked righteously before God but Elizabeth was barren.*

8 So it was, that while he was serving as priest before God in the order of his division,

9 according to the custom of the priesthood, his lot fell to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord.

10 And the whole multitude of the people was praying outside at the hour of incense.

11 Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing on the right side of the altar of incense.

- *“while he was serving as priest before God”*
- *When things are easy or difficult we are to continue to serve the Lord.*
- *“his lot fell to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord.”*
- *When we are seeking to serve God what may appear as random chance can really be the hand of the Lord positioning us to be in the center of His will.*
- *“Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing on the right side of the altar of incense.”*
- *During what appeared as another typical day of service to God turned out to be a life changing experience.*

12 And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him.

13 But the angel said to him, “Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard; and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John.

14 And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth.

15 For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb.

- *“when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him.”*
- *When we have an encounter with God it can be exciting but also overwhelming when the full reality of God impacts us.*

- “But the angel said to him, “Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard”
- *Zacharias and Elizabeth’s prayers over many years were not in vain.*
- *Their prayers were in agreement with God’s will, they just didn’t understand God’s perfect timing.*

Galatians 4:4 (NKJV)

4 But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law,

- *For us to pray in agreement with God we must also realise that He has a very specific timetable.*
- *In the case of Elizabeth they had to wait many years and endure much disappointment, however their years of sorrow were not in vain and God had a very specific purpose that would be used in His plan of salvation.*

16 And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God.

17 He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, ‘to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,’ and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.”

- *John the Baptist’s ministry was like no other before because he was preparing the way for the Messiah.*

18 And Zacharias said to the angel, “How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is well advanced in years.”

- *Zacharias’ question was rooted in years of disappointment.*
- “How shall I know this?”
- *Zacharias did not ask “how is God going to do this” but “how can I know this is really going to happen?”*
- *His response was one that reflected his reluctance to come into agreement with the Word of the Lord.*

19 And the angel answered and said to him, “I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and was sent to speak to you and bring you these glad tidings.

20 But behold, you will be mute and not able to speak until the day these things take place, because you did not believe my words which will be fulfilled in their own time.”

- *The sign that Zacharias would have, to know this was the word of the Lord, was that he would be mute until the birth of his son.*

21 And the people waited for Zacharias, and marveled that he lingered so long in the temple.

22 But when he came out, he could not speak to them; and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple, for he beckoned to them and remained speechless.

23 So it was, as soon as the days of his service were completed, that he departed to his own house.

24 Now after those days his wife Elizabeth conceived; and she hid herself five

months, saying,

25 “Thus the Lord has dealt with me, in the days when He looked on me, to take away my reproach among people.”

- *Elizabeth’s years of disappointment concluded in God’s faithfulness being manifest and the desires of her heart being fulfilled.*
- *This next portion of Scripture describes Mary’s encounter with the angel Gabriel and her response.*

Luke 1:26-38 (NKJV)

26 Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth,

27 to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin’s name was Mary.

28 And having come in, the angel said to her, “Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!”

29 But when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was.

30 Then the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.

- *Mary was also overwhelmed with the appearance of the angel.*

31 And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus.

32 He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David.

33 And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.”

34 Then Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I do not know a man?”

- *Mary’s response to the words of the angel, like Zacharias’, was also a question.*
- *The difference between Zacharias’ question and Mary’s was the motivation.*
- *Mary’s question was simply trying to understand what the Lord was saying to her and what was required of her.*
- *Mary asked the question out of an honest heart of faith while Zacharias asked the question out of a heart of unbelief and disappointment.*

35 And the angel answered and said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God.

36 Now indeed, Elizabeth your relative has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren.

- *The angel told Mary that by the power of the Holy Spirit this will be accomplished.*
- *One woman was too old and one was too young, but God visited both of them.*

37 For with God nothing will be impossible.”

Luke 1:37 (ASV)

37 For no word from God shall be void of power.

- *Through the birth of Jesus Christ the Word was made flesh.*
- *Mary's agreement with the will of God brought forth the Living Word of God.*
- *Being in agreement with God's Word releases the power of God.*

38 Then Mary said, "Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

- *Mary's word of agreement is what God was looking for and therefore once she said yes the angel immediately departed.*

Luke 1:45 (NKJV)

45 Blessed is she who believed, for there will be a fulfillment of those things which were told her from the Lord."

- *Because Mary was willing to believe, then God was able to fulfill His plan of salvation.*
- *Through one woman's agreement with satan, sin entered the world.*
- *Through one woman's agreement with God, the Saviour entered the world.*

Luke 1:48 (NKJV)

48 For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant; For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed.

- *Was it more difficult for Elizabeth or for Mary to come into agreement with the will of God?*
- *The promise to Elizabeth would remove the reproach she felt from people.*
- *The promise to Mary would bring reproach upon her.*
- *"Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word."*
- *Mary's response was "Here I am, do with me as is pleasing in Your sight.*
- *God entered history as the Son of Man through Mary's sacrifice of agreement.*

Mark 3:33-35 (NKJV)

33 But He answered them, saying, "Who is My mother, or My brothers?"

34 And He looked around in a circle at those who sat about Him, and said, "Here are My mother and My brothers!

35 For whoever does the will of God is My brother and My sister and mother."

- *When we agree with the Word of God we manifest the life of Jesus Christ into the world through us.*
- *We must come into line with God's will with our words, our prayers, our thoughts and our actions.*

John 15:14 (NKJV)

¹⁴You are My friends if you do whatever I command you.

- *The reward of agreement with God is intimacy and deep friendship with Him.*

Points of Prayer:

1. *Some here may never have come into agreement with God's plan of salvation for their lives and today is an opportunity to receive Christ as Lord and Saviour.*
2. *Some here may have resisted God plan for their lives and instead of agreeing with God they have been unthankful but today we can make a fresh step to repent and begin to really agree with God's will.*
3. *Some here may be just plain lazy and have neglected to spend that time in prayer to come into agreement with God's will, but today we can make a step to begin to pray daily in agreement with God's will.*
4. *Some here have had the joy of agreeing with God and have seen God doing wonderful things and today we can give thanks to God and also ask Him to bring us to a greater degree of consecration.*