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✦ THE BASICS OF CHRISTIANITY | PART 6

# Knowing Jesus: Prayer



**T**HIS WEEK WE STUDY A BIBLICAL overview on prayer as we all need to be repeatedly challenged to develop this area of our lives. Most believers are very weak here, but effective prayer is the determinant factor in one's eternal accomplishments! How is this daily discipline in your spiritual life?

As this relates to me personally, like you, I commute into D.C. every week of Session, so my sleeping patterns, (given the three-hour time zone change for Danielle and me) are very erratic. I have learned to live with that. Accordingly, when I am awake sometimes in the early hours of the morning, I take that as my signal to get up and pray. I have turned a negative into a positive. I look forward to these precious hours with the Lord. My prayers tend to be consumed with a now 24-year-old, persevering, God-given objective: To plant 200 effective ministries in 200 capitals throughout the world.

As you read this study, consider how you can integrate consistent prayer into your life.

Ralph Drollinger

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**WEEKLY BIBLE STUDIES**

- CABINET: 7:00 AM Wednesdays, location undisclosed, refreshments served.
- SENATE: 8:00 AM Tuesdays, rotating offices, hot breakfast served.
- HOUSE: 7:45 AM Thursdays, The Capitol Hill Club, hot breakfast served.

*The views expressed in each Bible study are those of the author, and do not necessarily reflect the position of any individual Bible Study Sponsor.*



★ ENDORSEMENT

Dr. Gary Dull

Pastor and Radio Host
Stand in the Gap Today
Radio Program



Capitol Ministries' mission to reach government leaders with the life changing principles of the Word of God is "tremendous" and something Christians should be excited about, said Gary Dull on the Stand in the Gap Today radio program.

Ralph Drollinger, President of Capitol Ministries, and Jon Cassel, CapMin's Africa Director, were interviewed by telephone on a recent live show that is broadcast over 400 stations nationwide.

The national program is broadcast from Pennsylvania and hosted by Dr. Dull, Sam Rohrer, former Pennsylvania State Representative and President of the American Pastors' Network, and David Kistler of H.O.P.E. Ministries International.

"One of the problems we face today is that most of the time government officials do not understand what is good and what is evil from the basis of Scripture that is why God has raised up Capitol Ministries—this is something we should be excited about and want to learn more about." Dr. Dull said.

"Reaching those in government with the life changing principles of the Word of God—what you are doing is a tremendous thing."

The purpose of prayer is to express our submission to the sovereignty of God and our trust in His faithfulness. Prayer is the means by which we express all that is in our hearts to our loving and wise heavenly Father. Prayer is not to give God information, because God knows everything. Prayer brings us into reverent communion with our Creator, worshipping Him and acknowledging Him as the Giver of all things.

I. THE NATURE OF PRAYER

A. PRAYER IS A SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE

For the believer, prayer is a learning experience that must be developed into a spiritual discipline.

- 1. What did the disciples ask of Jesus in Luke 11:1?

"It happened that while Jesus was praying in a certain place, after He had finished, one of His disciples said to Him, 'Lord, teach us to pray just as John also taught his disciples.'"

- 2. According to the apostle Paul, who assists us in our prayers?

"In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words." (Romans 8:26)

- 3. In light of that, what should we do when we are not sure what to pray for?

B. PRAYER IS A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP

Remember: Christianity is not just a bunch of Bible knowledge; it is personal relationship with God! Prayer then is an exchange of intimacy with God. Learn to relish in it—not drudge it! Scripture tells us God is very interested in our personal struggles.

- 1. What does Psalm 34:15 say about the Lord?

"The eyes of the LORD are toward the righteous and His ears are open to their cry."

- 2. What did David bring before God in prayer in Psalm 142:2?

"I pour out my complaint before Him; I declare my trouble before Him."

- 3. How are we encouraged to approach God per Hebrews 4:16?

"Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

- 4. Though we have the privilege of ac-



cess, what caution does Ecclesiastes 5:1–2 advise?

*“Guard your steps as you go to the house of God and draw near to listen rather than to offer the sacrifice of fools; for they do not know they are doing evil. Do not be hasty in word or impulsive in thought to bring up a matter in the presence of God. For God is in heaven and you are on the earth; therefore let your words be few.”*

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5. What comfort does 1 Peter 5:6–7 offer believers?

*“Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.”*

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## C. PRAYER IS EFFECTIVE

Prayer can change situations—and people. We are encourage to prayer expecting results.

1. For whom and for what purpose did the Church pray in Acts 12:5?

*“So Peter was kept in the prison, but prayer for him was being made fervently by the church to God.”*

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2. How did God answer their prayers according to Acts 12:7?

*“And behold, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared and a light shone in the cell: and he struck Peter’s side, and woke him up, saying, ‘Get up quickly.’ And his chains fell off his hands.”*

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3. Besides answers, what else does God grant to those who pray?

*“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”* (Philippians 4:6–7)

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*“The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.”* (James 5:16)

What is *effective* (*energeo*) prayer? It is energetic, passionate prayers of believers that *accomplish much*; those are the kinds of prayers that are heard by the Lord. Are you a passionate prayer warrior or are your prayers reminiscent of cold mush? Reflective of this serious form of prayer is crying. No less than seven times in Scripture is crying associated with answered prayer (cf. Psalm 18:6; 34:6; 102:1; Isaiah 24:14; Lamentations 2:19; Joel 1:14 and Matthew 15:22).

## II. THE PRACTICE OF PRAYER

### A. PERSEVERANCE

Throughout the Bible, God encourages and commands believers to persevere in

 VERSE OF THE WEEK

## Philippians 4:6–7

*“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”*



Surrender your requests to God’s wise and loving plan.





James Kent



“My children, I wish to talk to you. During my early and middle life I was, perhaps, rather skeptical with regard to some of the truths of Christianity. Not that I did not have the utmost respect for religion and always read my Bible, but the doctrine of the atonement was one I never could understand, and I felt inclined to consider as impossible to be received in the way Divines taught it. I believe I was rather inclined to Unitarianism; but of late years my views have altered. I believe in the doctrines of the prayer books as I understand them, and hope to be saved through the merits of Jesus Christ.... My object in telling you this is that if anything happens to me, you might know, and perhaps it would console you to remember, that on this point my mind is clear: I rest my hopes of salvation on the Lord Jesus Christ.”

— James Kent, judge; law professor; ‘Father of American Jurisprudence.’

William Kent, *Memoirs and Letters of James Kent*, (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1898), pp. 276-277.

prayer. Luke 18:1 states, “Now He was telling them a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart.”

1. The disciples were taught that they should always pray, and not:

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2. What is God’s will for believers in Christ Jesus per 1 Thessalonians 5:17?

“Pray without ceasing.”

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3. When should believers pray?

“With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints.” (Ephesians 6:18)

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### B. GOD’S HANDBOOK

In the Bible you will discover many guidelines to help you develop the practice of prayer.

1. What did Jesus teach His disciples to expect if they persisted in prayer?

“Then He said to them, ‘Suppose one of you has a friend, and goes to him at midnight and says to him, ‘Friend, lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine has come to me from a journey, and I have nothing to set before him’; and from inside he answers and says, ‘Do not

bother me; the door has already been shut and my children and I are in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything.’ I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will get up and give him as much as he needs. So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives; and he who seeks, finds; and to him who knocks, it will be opened.”(Luke 11:5–10)

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2. What does Jesus teach as a requirement for answered prayer?

“If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.” (John 15:7)

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3. According to 1 John 5:14, what is our confidence as we pray?

“This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.”

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4. List some of the hindrances to answered prayer.

“If I regard wickedness in my heart, the Lord will not hear.” (Psalm 66:18)

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# THE LORD'S PRAYER

*Jesus' Pattern for Prayer: Matthew 6:9–13*



Pray to God ... *Our Father who is in heaven*

Exalt Him saying ... *Hallowed be Your name*

Submit to Him praying ... *Your kingdom come, Your will be done*

Look to Him seeking ... *Our daily bread* (Sustenance)

Confess to Him pleading ... *Forgive us our debts* (Sins)

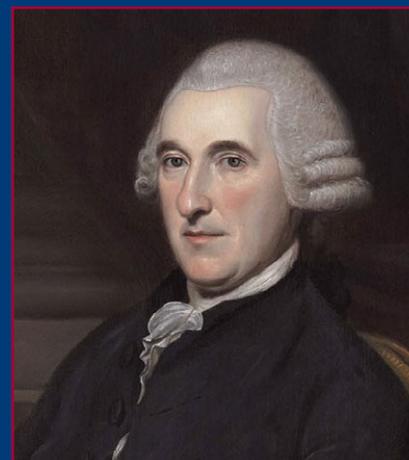
Depend on Him asking ... *Do not lead us into temptation*

Trust in Him requesting ... *Deliver us from evil*

*“You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures.”* (James 4:3)

*“You husbands in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered.”* (1 Peter 3:7)

*Thomas McKean*



“In the case *Respublica v. John Roberts*, John Roberts was sentenced to death after a jury found him guilty of treason. Chief Justice McKean then told him:

You will probably have but a short time to live. Before you launch into eternity, it behooves you to improve the time that may be allowed you in this world: it behooves you most seriously to reflect upon your past conduct; to repent of your evil deeds; to be incessant in prayers to the great and merciful God to forgive your manifold transgressions and sins; to teach you to rely upon the merit and passion of a dear Redeemer, and thereby to avoid those regions of sorrow—those doleful shades where peace and rest can never dwell, where even hope cannot enter. It behooves you to seek the [fellowship], advice, and prayers of pious and good men; to be [persistent] at the Throne of Grace, and to learn the way that leadeth to happiness. May

*Continued next page*



Continued from previous page

you, reflecting upon these things, and pursuing the will of the great Father of light and life, be received into [the] company and society of angels and archangels and the spirits of just men made perfect; and may you be qualified to enter into the joys of Heaven—joys unspeakable and full of glory!”

— Thomas McKean, signer of the Declaration of Independence; president of Congress; ratifier of the U.S. Constitution, chief justice of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania; governor of Pennsylvania; governor of Delaware.

A. J. Dallas, *Reports of Cases Ruled and Adjudged in the Courts of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: P. Byrne, 1806), p. 39, *Respublica v. John Roberts*, Pa. Sup. Ct. 1778.

### III. THE STRUGGLE OF PRAYER

#### A. SACRIFICE

Prayer can be hard work. That should not keep us from prayer, even when it requires sacrifice.

- 1. How long did Jesus pray before he selected the twelve apostles?

*“It was at this time that He went off to the mountain to pray, and He spent the whole night in prayer to God.”* (Luke 6:12)

- 2. Describe the intensity of Jesus as He prayed in the garden.

*“And being in agony He was praying very fervently; and His sweat became like drops of blood, falling down upon the ground.”* (Luke 22:44)

- 3. What should believers be careful to do when we devote ourselves to prayer?

*“Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving.”* (Colossians 4:2)

#### B. DISCOURAGEMENT

Even when we are frustrated or dis-

couraged, we can still approach God in prayer.

- 1. Why was David discouraged according to Psalm 13:1–2?

*“How long, O LORD? Will You forget me forever? How long will You hide Your face from me? How long shall I take counsel in my soul, having sorrow in my heart all the day? How long will my enemy be exalted over me?”*

- 2. What was David’s complaint in Psalm 22:2?

*“O my God, I cry by day, but You do not answer; and by night, but I have no rest.”*

#### C. GOD’S PURPOSES

Prayer is governed by God’s sovereignty, and His purpose determines His answer to our prayers.

*“Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me—to keep me from exalting myself! Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me. And He has said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.’ Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.”* (2 Corinthians 12:7–9)



# THE “ACTS” PRAYER

*Four important areas of prayer*

**A****Adoration**

Reflect on God Himself. Praise Him for His attributes, His majesty, His gift of Christ.

**C****Confession**

Admit to God you have sinned. Be honest and humble. Remember, He knows you and loves you.

**T****Thanksgiving**

Tell God how grateful you are for everything He has given you, even the unpleasant things. This will help you see His purposes.

**S****Supplication**

Make specific requests. Pray for others first, then for yourself.

**Notice the first letters of these four words: ACTS.**  
Use them as a mental guide to maintain balance as you pray.

1. What did Paul pray for?

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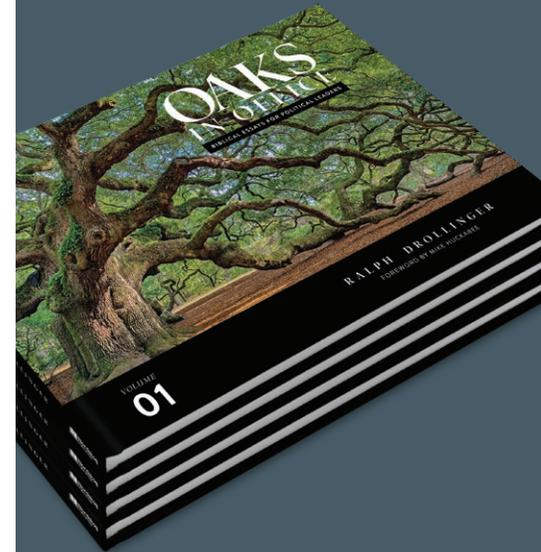
2. How many times did he pray for it?

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3. Did he receive what he asked for?  
Why or why not?

*“And He went a little beyond them, and fell to the ground and began to pray that if it were possible, the hour might pass Him by. And He was saying, ‘Abba! Father! All things are possible for You; remove this cup from Me; yet not what I will, but what You will.’”* (Mark 14:35–36)



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4. What did Jesus ask of the Father concerning His "hour" of suffering?

5. Yet, what was He willing to do?

IV. APPLICATION

Compose a simple prayer following the ACTS model on page 7.

Blank lines for writing a prayer following the ACTS model.

Surrender your requests to God's wise and loving plan, acknowledging your willingness to receive His answer with thankfulness.

2 Corinthians 4:16 states:

"Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day."

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