

May God bless you on His Sabbath day!

You want to go to the store but cannot find your car keys. While searching you mutter under your breath, “God, please help me find my keys.” I imagine everyone has prayed such things. Some might think to themselves, what is wrong with that? I have faith and look to God for everything. But in many ways, this is like bursting into the throne room of the Most High God and interrupting by asking the Almighty God to stop everything and find your car keys. So, is that kind of prayer appropriate? Does it honor the Great King of the universe or is it disrespectful? Or is it like a small child running up to his or her parents to interrupt them and demand they go look for their toy? Would you, as the Creator of the heavens and earth, be entreated by a seven-word prayer for an inconvenience (not an emergency), giving no heed to His immeasurable greatness, glory, and eternal works? Those of us old enough will remember parents teaching children not to interrupt adults but to be respectful and address them properly. That has gone by the wayside and prayers, too, seem to lack a basic respect for God. Maybe it is time to take a new look at prayers.

Prayer is, I believe, the most important part of the life of a Believer. Through prayer comes the power and mind of God; without it, there is confusion and ignorance. So HOW should we pray? Do we pray to God alone or can we pray to Christ? What are the roles of God the Father and Jesus Christ in our prayers?

Prayer is a connection that grows as a relationship with God matures. The same was true of the disciples. As their awareness of God the Father increased, they desired to have a deeper relationship with Him. Once, after Jesus finished praying to the Father, the disciples asked Him to teach them to how pray to God. This was a milestone because, throughout His ministry, the disciples simply spoke with Jesus; they did not need to petition God:

LUKE 11:1 Now it came to pass, as He [*Jesus Christ*] was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, *that* one of His disciples said to Him, “Lord, **teach us to pray**, as John also taught his disciples.”

Like all interactions with God, there are rules for prayer—a framework that governs acceptable prayers to God. Jesus taught:

LUKE 11:2 So He [*Jesus Christ*] said to them, “When you pray, say: **Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.**

Jesus said to begin a prayer by hallowing God’s name, seeking God’s Kingdom, and desiring God’s will to prevail in our lives. God the Father is the Most High God and Great King<sup>1</sup> over all creation and all living beings<sup>2</sup>, including Jesus Christ, so acknowledging His preeminence is important. Hallowing or revering God’s *name* is required; in fact, He DEMANDS it:

LEVITICUS 10:3 Then Moses said unto Aaron, this *is it* that the LORD spake, saying, **I will be sanctified in [or by] them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified.** And Aaron held his peace.

<sup>1</sup> Ps. 47:2; 48:2; 95:3; Matt. 5:35.

<sup>2</sup> Eph. 4:6.

LEVITICUS 22:32 “**You shall not profane My holy name, but I will be hallowed** among the children of Israel. I *am* the LORD who sanctifies you,

MALACHI 1:11 For from the rising of the sun, even to its going down, **My name shall be great** among the Gentiles; in every place **incense shall be offered to My name, and a pure offering**; for **My name shall be great** among the nations,” says the LORD of hosts.

All who come NEAR to God shall regard Him as holy and glorify His name. Anything less is unacceptable. Next, we are to “seek the Kingdom of God”<sup>3</sup>—nothing is more important. Focus on the things above that will not vanish<sup>4</sup> when the Kingdom comes. The greatest of all “**the gifts of God** is eternal life”<sup>5</sup> and “your Father who is in heaven **give[s] good things to those who ask Him!**”<sup>6</sup> If “it is your Father’s good pleasure **to give you** the kingdom,”<sup>7</sup> why would He withhold the small things needed in this life? God the Father KNOWS you need them and will provide them if you put His Kingdom above all else.

Also beseech God for His WILL to prevail in your life, especially in the things you ask of Him. It is by His will that any will be in the Kingdom or receive anything in this life. Epaphras once prayed that the Colossians “stand perfect and complete **in all the will of God.**”<sup>8</sup>

So, the beginning of a prayer to God, aside from dire emergencies, shall hallow, honor, and praise God’s NAME, seek God’s KINGDOM, and ask for God’s WILL to prevail in your life. Only after this did Jesus say to offer petitions for yourself or others:

LUKE 11:3 **Give us** day by day our daily bread. 4 And **forgive us** our sins, [as] we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And **do not lead us** into temptation, but **deliver us** from the evil one.”

These four requests—**give us** (those things we need), **forgive us** (as we forgive others), **lead us** (into righteousness and love), and **deliver us** (from all evil)—are beautiful lead-ins for all petitions of the Father, whether they are for ourselves or others.

Finally, as time for His death grew near, Jesus told the disciples He was going to the Father and, when that happened, they would no longer ask Him for anything but would pray to the Father—and then He told them to pray in His **name**:

JOHN 16:23 “And in that day **you will ask Me [Jesus Christ] nothing**. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you **ask the Father in My name He will give** you.

That was a major pronouncement because, as Jesus Christ acknowledged, God the Father was Lord of heaven and earth:

MATTHEW 11:25 At that time Jesus answered and said, “I thank **You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth**, that You have hidden these things from *the* wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes.

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<sup>3</sup> Matt. 6:33.

<sup>4</sup> 1 Cor. 13.

<sup>5</sup> Rom. 6:23.

<sup>6</sup> Matt. 7:11.

<sup>7</sup> Luke 12:32.

<sup>8</sup> Col. 4:12.

So, what changed? The fulfillment of the prophecy<sup>9</sup> of a promise God the Father made to Jesus that bestowed upon Him the title of Lord with all authority over heaven and earth after He was born of flesh and blood:

LUKE 1:31-32 “And behold, you [*Mary*] 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.

God the Father anointed<sup>10</sup> Jesus as The Messiah and established Him as Lord of heaven and earth when He became His Son. The latter apparently happened on the day of the Wavesheaf Offering after His resurrection because Jesus announced it shortly afterward:

MATTHEW 28:18 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “**All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.**”

A *lord* (G2962 = *kurios*) is someone with power and authority; a master or ruler. Why pray in the name of “Lord” Jesus? Because He has the authority over the heavens and earth! Supplications are directed toward God the Father because He is supreme; however, petitions are done in the name of Jesus Christ—He is Lord, Master, and Ruler of heaven and earth—because He has the authority and power to carry out the works that fulfill God’s will. Prayers are directed toward God the Father to influence His will and gain favor but asked in the name of Jesus Christ<sup>11</sup> whom God appointed as Lord to fulfill those petitions:

JOHN 14:13-14 “And **whatever you ask [of God the Father] in My [Jesus Christ] name, that I will do**, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 “**If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.**”

Some (Protestants) pray to the ‘Lord God’. Even though God the Father was Lord over all and will be once again<sup>12</sup>, Jesus Christ is currently Lord of the heavens and earth, not God the Father. So, praying to the ‘Lord God’ is confusing because there is one God the Father and one Lord Jesus Christ<sup>13</sup>:

1 CORINTHIANS 8:6 yet for us *there is* **one God, the Father**, of whom *are* all things, and we for Him; and **one Lord Jesus Christ**, through whom *are* all things, and through whom we *live*.

Perhaps one reason prayers have become so casual is a misunderstanding of one particular Scripture:

HEBREWS 10:19 Therefore, brethren, **having boldness to enter the Holiest** by the blood of Jesus,

In English, *bold* means everything from *daring* to *reckless*. It should be obvious that approaching God with such an attitude is dangerous. Verse 19 describes those with the Holy Spirit coming into the Holy of Holies; that is, in the presence of God. In contrast, under the Old Covenant, the Temple veil prevented direct access to the Holy of Holies

<sup>9</sup> Ps. 132:11; Isa. 9:6-7; 16:5; Jer 23:5 et al.

<sup>10</sup> Ps. 2:2; 23:5; 45:7; Isa. 61:1; Dan. 9:24 et al.

<sup>11</sup> Also John 15:16; 16:23, 26; Eph. 5:20; Col. 3:17; Jas. 1:5.

<sup>12</sup> 1 Cor. 15:24-25.

<sup>13</sup> Also 2 Cor. 1:2-3.

where God's Mercy Seat was located. Once a year, the High Priest only was allowed to enter but even he had to burn incense on the altar so that a cloud hid the Mercy Seat<sup>14</sup>. NO ONE could be in the direct presence of God, not even the High Priest! Anyone daring to do so would DIE.

That changed with the sacrifice of Jesus Christ because there is now complete remission of sin<sup>15</sup> through His blood, making people SINLESS! People who are without sin can actually be in the PRESENCE of God! This is why people can have "boldness" coming into the presence of God—they are sinless and will not DIE. Coming boldly into the Holy of Holies is not talking about coming to God with a particular attitude, but with the assurance that we will not die in His presence. Coming in sinlessness through the blood of Christ is the "new and living way":

**HEBREWS 10:20-22 by a new and living way** which He [*Jesus Christ*] consecrated for us, **through the veil**, that is, His flesh, 21 and *having* a High Priest over the house of God, 22 **let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil [*wicked*] conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.**

Even though we can enter into His presence, God still demands the reverence, respect, and honor that Jesus taught the disciples. This is coming before God in TRUTH (without lies), with the fullness of FAITH in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ (making us sinless), and hearts CLEANSED from wicked thoughts.

As for the car keys, if instead of the 3-4 second prayer, what if you stopped everything, paused, took a deep breath, and then prayed:

"God of all mercies. You are above all in might and power, wisdom and intelligence, mercy and love. To you belong all the honor, praise, and worship my lips can utter. I offer thanksgiving to you for all the blessings in my life. I desire always to be an instrument of your goodness and kindness toward others, so help me proclaim your awesome and wondrous works to an undeserving world. I come before you, Holy Father, your humble and contrite servant, in a moment of frustration and exasperation for I have lost my car keys and have need of them. Please restore the peace of my Lord and King, Jesus Christ, unto me and guide my search for them. In His blessed name I pray. Amen!"

This prayer, lasting only about a minute, is a far cry from the first one. It hallows God's name and honors the Most High Creator and His lovingkindnesses. It acknowledges Jesus as Lord who does the works that fulfill God's will to establish children in His Kingdom. And it is submitting to the will of our God and His Lord with a heart and mind that respects, honors, and glorifies Them!

May God's grace and peace be upon you!

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<sup>14</sup> Lev. 16:13.

<sup>15</sup> Matt. 26:28.