Doctrine of Prayer

Prayer, Simply Defined

1. Prayer may be simply defined as a communication with God.

2. Because God is personal, all people can offer prayers.

3. However, sinners who have not trusted Jesus Christ for their salvation remain alienated from God. So while unbelievers may pray, they do not have the basis for a rewarding fellowship with God. They have not met the conditions laid down in the Bible for effectiveness in prayer.

4. Christians recognize their dependence upon their Creator. They have every reason to express gratitude for God's blessings. But they have far more reason to respond to God than this.

5. They respond to the love of God for them. God's love is revealed through the marvelous incarnation and life of Christ, His atoning provision at the Cross, His resurrection, as well as His continuing presence through the Holy Spirit.

6. Devout good works in a needy world cannot replace prayer. Important as service to others is, at times we must turn away from it to God, who is distinct from all things and over all things.

7. Neither should prayer be thought of as a mystical experience in which people lose their identity in the infinite reality. Effective prayer must be a scripturally informed response of persons saved by grace to the living God who can hear and answer on the basis of Christ's payment of the penalty which sinners deserved.

8. As such, prayer involves several important aspects.

   • Faith. The most meaningful prayer comes from a heart that places its trust in the God who has acted and spoken in the Jesus of history and the teachings of the Bible. God speaks to us through the Bible, and we in turn speak to Him in trustful, believing prayer. Assured by the Scripture that God is personal, living, active, all-knowing, all-wise, and all-powerful, we know that God can hear and help us. A confident prayer life is built on the cornerstone of Christ's work and words as shown by the prophets and apostles in the Spirit-inspired writings of the Bible.

   • Worship. In worship we recognize what is of highest worth--not ourselves, others, or our work, but God. Only the highest divine being deserves our highest respect. Guided by Scripture, we set our values in accord with God's will and perfect standards. Before God, angels hide their faces and cry, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts" (Isa 6:3).

   • Confession. Awareness of God's holiness leads to consciousness of our own sinfulness. Like the prophet Isaiah, we exclaim, "Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts" (Is. 6:5). By sinning we hurt ourselves and those closest to us; but first of all, and worst of all, sin is against God (Ps. 51:4). We must confess our sins to God.
to get right with Him. We need not confess them to another being. But we should confess them directly to God, who promises to forgive us of all our unrighteousness (1 John 1:9).

- Adoration. God is love, and He has demonstrated His love in the gift of His Son. The greatest desire of God is that we love Him with our whole being (Matt. 22:37). Our love should be expressed, as His has been expressed, in both deeds and words. People sometimes find it difficult to say to others and to God, "I love you." But when love for God fills our lives, we will express our love in prayer to the one who is ultimately responsible for all that we are.

- Praise. The natural outgrowth of faith, worship, confession, and adoration is praise. We speak well of one whom we highly esteem and love. The one whom we respect and love above all others naturally receives our highest commendation. We praise Him for His "mighty acts... according to His excellent greatness!" (Ps. 150:2), and for His "righteous judgments" (Ps. 119:164). For God Himself, for His works, and for His words, His people give sincere praise.

- Thanksgiving. Are we unthankful because we have not received what we deserve? But if we got what we "deserved," we would be condemned because of our guilt. As sinners, we are not people of God by nature. We have no claim upon His mercy or grace. Nevertheless, He has forgiven our sins, granted us acceptance as His people, and given us His righteous standing and a new heart and life. Ingratitude marks the ungodly (Rom. 1:21). Believers, in contrast, live thankfully. God has been at work on our behalf in countless ways. So in everything, even for the discipline that is unpleasant, we give thanks (Col. 3:17; 1 Thes. 5:18).

- Dedicated Action. Christ's example does not require us to withdraw from society, but to render service to the needy in a spirit of prayer. He wept over Jerusalem in compassionate prayer, and then He went into the city to give His life a ransom for many. Authentic prayer will be the source of courage and productivity, as it was for the prophets and apostles.

- Request. Prayer is not only response to God's grace as brought to us in the life and work of Jesus and the teaching of Scripture; it is also request for our needs and the needs of others. For good reasons God's holy and wise purpose does not permit Him to grant every petition just as it is asked.

9. Several hindrances to answered prayer are mentioned in the Bible:

- Iniquity in the heart. Psalms 66:18 If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.

- Refusal to hear God's law. Proverbs 28:9 He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination.

- An estranged heart. Isaiah 29:13 Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men:
Deliberate sinful separation of self from God. *Isaiah 59:2* But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.

A conscious prone to waywardness. *Jeremiah 14:10-12* Thus saith the LORD unto this people, Thus have they loved to wander, they have not refrained their feet, therefore the LORD doth not accept them; he will now remember their iniquity, and visit their sins. 11 Then said the LORD unto me, Pray not for this people for their good. 12 When they fast, I will not hear their cry; and when they offer burnt offering and an oblation, I will not accept them: but I will consume them by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence.

Offering unworthy sacrifices. *Malachi 1:7-9* Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar; and ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee? In that ye say, The table of the LORD is contemptible. 8 And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? offer it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the LORD of hosts. 9 And now, I pray you, beseech God that he will be gracious unto us: this hath been by your means: will he regard your persons? saith the LORD of hosts.

Praying to be seen of men. *Matthew 6:5-6* And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. 6 But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

Spiritual pride in fasting and tithing. *Luke 18:11-14* The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. 12 I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. 13 And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. 14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

Lack of faith. *Hebrews 11:6* But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

Doubting or double-mindedness. *James 4:3* Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.

10. More positively, God has promised to answer our requests

- God is pleased when the hungry are fed and the afflicted are comforted. *Isaiah 58:9-10* Then shalt thou call, and the LORD shall answer; thou shalt cry, and he shall say, Here I am. If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and
speaking vanity; 10 And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noontide:

- God is pleased to answer prayer when it is believe that what is asked for shall be received. 
  Mark 11:22-24 And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God. 23 For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith. 24 Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.

- God promises to hear the prayers of those who are forgiving of others. 
  Mark 11:25-26 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.

- God is pleased to answer prayer which is offered in the name of Christ. 
  John 14:13-14 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.

- God will answer prayer when Christ is honored and His Words are obeyed. 
  John 15:7 7 If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

- God hears those prayers offered in the Spirit. 
  Ephesians 6:8 Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.

- Prayers are answered following gospel obedience. 
  1 John 3:22 And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.

- Prayers asked in accordance to the will of the Lord are honored. 
  1 John 5:14-15 And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: 15 And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him. Until we have properly responded to God and His Word, He cannot entrust us with His powerful resources.

11. Prayer is request to a personal Lord who answers as He knows best. We should not think that we will always have success in obtaining the things for which we ask. In His wisdom, God hears and answers in the way that is best.

12. Effectiveness. Prayer has power over everything. God can intelligently act in any part of the universe or human history. Although some people think prayer is a waste of time, the Bible declares that "the effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much" (James 5:16).

13. Prayer meets inner needs. One who prays will receive
• freedom from fear (Ps. 118:5-6),
• strength of soul (Ps. 138:3)
• guidance and satisfaction (Is. 58:9-11),
• wisdom and understanding (Dan. 9:20-27),
• deliverance from harm (Joel 2:32),
• reward (Matt. 6:6),
• good gifts (Luke 11:13),
• fullness of joy (John 16:23-24),
• peace (Phil. 4:6-8),
• freedom from anxiety (1 Pet. 5:7).

14. Is prayer effective only in the inner lives of those who pray? No, prayer can make a difference in the lives of others.

15. Biblical writers believed prayer for others could result

• in greater wisdom and power (Eph. 1:18-19);
• inward strength, knowledge of Christ's love, filling with God's fullness (Eph. 3:16-19);
• discernment, approval of what is excellent, filling with the fruits of righteousness (Phil. 1:9-11);
• knowledge of God's will, spiritual understanding, a life pleasing to God, fruitfulness, endurance, patience, joy (Col. 1:9-12);
• a quiet, peaceable life (1 Tim. 2:1-2);
• love for one another and all people, holiness before God (1 Thes. 3:10-13);
• comfort and establishment in every good word and work (2 Thes. 2:16-17);
• love for God, steadfastness in Christ (2 Thes. 3:5);
• the sharing of one's faith, promotion of the knowledge of all that is good (Philem. 6);
• and equipment for every good work that is pleasing to God (Heb. 13:20-21).
16. Some people who think prayer can affect others question the ability of God to change His usual patterns in the physical world. But some prayers in the Bible changed nature and physical bodies. Jabez prayed for enlarged borders and protection from harm (1 Chr. 4:10). Other people in the Bible prayed for various things.

- deliverance from trouble (Ps. 34:15-22),
- deliverance from both poverty and riches (Prov. 30:7-9),
- deliverance from the belly of a great fish (Jon. 2:7-10),
- daily bread (Matt. 6:11),
- preservation and sanctification of spirit, soul, and body (1 Thes. 5:23), the healing of the sick (James 5:14-15), and the ending of the rain and its beginning again (James 5:17-18).

17. When the disciples prayed, the building around them shook (Acts 4:31) and an earthquake opened the doors of their prison (Acts 16:25-26). Our prayers do make a difference in how God acts in the world!
Doctrine of Prayer

The Promises, Purposes and People of Prayer

Matthew 6:5-8

1. The Promises of Prayer

- God promises to hear the prayer of the Christless unbeliever asking for salvation. Romans 10:13 says that, "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." This includes the thief on the Cross and the vilest sinner who ever lived, Saul of Tarsus. He said he was the chief of all sinners.

- God promises to hear the prayer of the Christian:
  - who confesses sin honestly and openly (1 John 1:9; Psa. 51:1-3).
  - who can pray for his enemies. Jesus said in Luke 6:28 that prayer was to be made for such people. "Bless them that curse you and pray for them which despitefully use you."
  - who is concerned enough for the pastor to pray for him as the saints in Thessalonica prayed for Paul (2 Thessalonians 3:1,2).
  - who desires the wisdom of heaven (James 1:5).
  - who draws upon Him for divine healing (James 5:15).
  - who delights in seeking the Lord for his needs (Phil. 4:6; Phil 4:19).

- All prayer should be offered in the name of Jesus (John 14:13,14). God will answer every true prayer that is offered in His name, in the right spirit, and according to His will.

2. The Purpose of Prayer

- We must pray in order to get things from God. Prayer is not window shopping but it is asking and receiving. Therefore, prayers are to be definite and specific.

- We must pray in order to get into the right attitude with God and man. When we are angry with someone, when we are upset, we do not want to pray for others. Usually, we do not want to pray at all. But when we are obedient to the will of the Lord and pray in spite of our feelings, a change comes into the heart. Prayer cleanses the heart.

- We must pray in order to keep from worrying. "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep..."
your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6,7). Dr. W. Hershel Ford writes in one of his many books, "Every preacher who has ever tried to do anything for the Lord has had those in his church who tried to hurt him and tear down his work. I have had my share, but God has always brought me out. I have learned to take my burden to the Lord, to thank Him for what His has done in the past and to ask for His help in the present. And I can testify that he does give a peace that no one can understand."

I guess every pastor has those who oppose his ministry. The tension comes when individuals rise up against the pastor according to an established pattern.

The pattern begins by simply meeting together on a regular basis to share "concerns."

Then recruiting takes place one by one of those who come into the select group. Time and secrecy and the spreading of fear become allies.

Finally, when the numbers have grown and the group feels bold enough, they move against the pastor who has been set up with labels.

There are doctrinal labels.
There are personal labels.
There are professional labels.

More often than not, the labels are unjustified as presented. Mostly the labels are not fully understood but they sound sinister. Labels sound full of substance though they are simply nothing but an empty note of sounding brass. The Psalmist wrote, "This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles." (Psalm 34:6).

- We must pray in order to keep in close communion with God. The song writer wrote, "What a fellowship, what a joy divine, Leaning on the everlasting arms; What a blessedness, what a peace is mine, Leaning on the everlasting arms."

3. The People of Prayer

- Hezekiah prayed. One day the great army of the Assyrians came down and encamped against Jerusalem. Sennacherib sent an insulting letter to King Hezekiah. "Your God cannot save you," he wrote. "We have destroyed other cities and we will destroy your unless you surrender immediately." When Hezekiah received the letter, he did not confer with court officials or advisers; he went into the house of the Lord. There, he spread the letter before God and he began to pray. In answer, that night, God sent His angel into the camp of the Assyrians and slew 185,000 Assyrian soldiers. The victory was won because of prayer.

During his days as President of the United States, Jimmy Carter tells that he had a small room next to the Oval Office where he would go often to pray. One of the many things
he prayed for were the safe return of the hostages held in Iran. The Lord was faithful. Though Ronald Reagan got the credit, all the hostages were returned home safe. From a human point of view, the hostages were returned in an act of political good will. From a divine point of view, the hostages came home because of prayer.

- Peter prayed. While he was in prison waiting to be executed the next day, Peter prayed. Sixteen soldiers guarded him and still Peter prayed. Then he went to sleep. Meanwhile, in the home of John Mark's mother, a group of Christians continued their prayer vigil and the Lord was gracious. An angel was sent to lead Peter out of prison and to the place where loving saints were crying out to God. God answered prayer in such a marvelous way it was too good to be true.

- George Muller prayed. In Bristol, England, this man of God prayed. During his lifetime, he took care of more than 2,000 children and raised more than seven million dollars. He never asked anyone for money or anything that he needed. He just told God. In addition to the children, George Muller supported hundreds of missionaries, gave away thousands of Bibles, and established many schools for poor children. Wonderful things happen when people pray.

We believe that and yet we do not pray. We are much like the slave who lived in the South after the Civil War. At the end of the Civil War a southern man's slaves had all been set free. But he had one servant whom he loved and who was devoted to him. He called him in and made a promise. "Samuel, if you will stay with me, and if you will care for me, I'll see that you are cared for even after I am gone." The faithful servant stayed. The years passed and the old man died. Then Samuel mowed lawns, chopped woods and ran errands until he was too old to work very much. He lived in a poor shack and could hardly find enough to eat.

One day a man said to him, "Samuel, your old master told me that he put $5,000.00 in the bank for you. God down and get what you need." So the next morning Samuel went down to the bank. He shuffled up to the teller's window and asked if it were true that Marse Tom had left him money. "How can I git it?" he asked. The teller knew that Samuel could not write, so he said, "I'll make out a check for the amount you want, then you make your mark on the check and I'll give you the money." "Can I have as much as fifty cents?" the old man asked. "Yes," answered the teller, "you can get any amount up to $5,000. "Then just make out the check for fifty cents," Samuel said. The check was made out. Samuel put his mark on the paper and got .50 cents leaving 4,999.50 in the bank. And that is the way it is with most of us. Either through ignorance or indifference we leave heaven's spiritual bank with very little. "We have not because we ask not." That can change as we learn the promises of prayer, understand the purposes of prayer and then become in the end, true people of prayer.

How Prayer Helps in the Christian Life
James 5:16-20

A group of preachers were on a train on the way to a convention. They talked about many things, and finally the discussion came around to the needs in the preacher of the life. Many needs were spoken of and finally one old preacher who had lived a long and useful life for the Lord said, "Our greatest failure is that we do not spend more time upon our knees."

1. Four Points About Prayer

- Prayer is an instrument in the process of salvation. "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Romans 10:13). One day, two men went into the Temple of Jerusalem to pray. One was a Pharisee, the other was a publican. Later, the Pharisee went home dignified but the publican went home justified for he cried out to God for mercy.

- Prayer is natural and necessary for Christian growth. When Paul was first converted, he was blinded for three days. Ananias was told to go and find Paul who was praying. Later, Paul would tell others to pray without ceasing. This is not difficult when our whole life is God conscious and we live moment by moment in a spirit of thanksgiving according to 1 Thessalonians 5:18: “In everything give thanks for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.” There is so much to be thankful for. God is the source of all blessings.

As we give thanks so we should pray in the spirit of penitence. "There is not a just man upon the earth, who doeth good and sinneth not." By being conscious of our weakness, we will honestly confess our sins.

- We need to pray more often for others. 1 Samuel 12:23 says, "God forbid that I should sin against the Lord by not praying for you."

- God answers prayers. Jeremiah 33:3 says, "Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and show thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not." Sometimes God says Yes, No, or, Wait. To our petition and to our motive God will say either

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2. Prayer helps.
Prayer helps in time of trouble. We all have trouble be it physical, financial, emotional, marital, job related, family related etc.

Prayer helps in time of sorrow. We sorrow but not as others who have no hope, no future, and no God.

Prayer helps us find God's will for our lives. Perhaps you have heard of the preacher who was called to a new church and how he said to his wife, "Honey, you pack up while I pray about this call." Peter Marshall felt that he was under sealed orders (Romans 12:1-2).

Prayer helps us to overcome temptation. We do not have to sin but we choose to sin. 1 Corinthians 10:13 teaches that, "There hath not temptation taken you but such is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape that ye may be able to bear it."

Prayer helps us to love Jesus more. The best friendships are based upon conversations. Intimate communion with Christ comes through prayer.

Prayer helps us in our Christian service. The great men and women of the Bible were great because of prayer and close communion with God. Martin Luther said, "I have so much to do that I could never accomplish it if I did not spend at least two hours a day in prayer." Time spent in prayer is never wasted. From nature come an illustration of the value of spending time with God.

The camel, at the close of day,
Kneels down upon the sandy plain
To have his burden lifted off
And rest to gain.

My soul, thou, too, shouldst to thy knees
When daylight draweth to a close,
And let the Master lift the load
And grant repose.

Else how canst thou tomorrow meet
With all tomorrow's work to do,
If thou thy burden all the night
Dost carry through?

The camel kneels at break of day
To have his guide replace his load,
Then rises up anew to take
the desert road.

So thou shouldst kneel at morning's dawn
That God may give thee daily care,
Assured that He no load too great
**Will make thee bear.**

**Power in Prayer**

1. We are living in an age of power. There is electric power. There is atomic power. There is nuclear power. There is rocket power. There is missile power. But the greatest power of all is the power of prayer for behind prayer is God who can harness or unleash all the other powers of the Universe. Jesus put the power of prayer at our disposal when He said in John 15:7 "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." John 14:4 says, "If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it."

2. Of course, other passages teach us that if we are to avail ourselves of prayer there must be a clean heart, a pure life, a surrendered will, a desire to know God's will, and the glory of God in view.

**Why Should Christians Pray?**

1. Because Jesus set the example. Many times we find Jesus praying. Sometimes He prayed the whole night through. In His prayers Jesus

   - prayed that His words and His works might glorify the Father.
   - prayed for the will of God to be done.

2. Because there is a devil. The Bible speaks of him as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour (1 Pet. 5:8). There is only one way to overcome the devil. He is to be resisted in prayer (James 4:7) in the name of Jesus. The song writer encourages us to,

   *Take the name of Jesus ever  
    As a shield from every snare;  
    If temptations round you gather,  
    Breathe that holy name in prayer.*

3. Because prayer is God's way for us to obtain His blessing according to Matthew 7:7.

4. Because our souls grow when we pray. When children are small we love the cute little things they do. But when the years pass and the body grows we expect signs of maturity. What a tragedy it is when the body grows but there are no signs of maturity of the mind. Spiritually we should grow in the spiritual grace of life.

**How Should Christians Pray?**

1. We should pray submissively. We do not tolerate the talk or whining of a disobedient child. Neither does God. We can start obeying the Lord in the more simple things such as:
• reading the Bible
• not forsaking the assembly
• sharing our faith
• supporting the work of the ministry financially and verbally
• praying for others on a regular basis
• meditating on the Bible
• looking for ways to serve others
• acting in a loving manner
• seeking to conquer known sin.

2. We are to pray with thanksgiving. Dr. M.E. Dodd, pastor of First Baptist Church of Shreveport gave his personal formula for prayer. First, he would shut his eyes, then he would try to think about the kind of Father, God is. Soon, he would be counting the blessings of God for the graciousness of the Lord would always be remembered. Soon he was in the right attitude to pour his heart out.

3. We are to pray with expectations. Jesus said we could move mountains if we had enough faith. We are to believe and we are to ask in faith. What was the last thing you asked God for believing He would answer?

4. We are to pray in a spirit of perseverance. Paul said we are to pray without ceasing. Jacob did not receive an answer in the first hour of his midnight struggle so he wrestled with God until the breaking of the day (Gen. 32:26). Even Jesus did not receive an answer the first time He prayed in Gethsemane. Three times He prayed in agony and heaviness and blood. The Bible tells us that the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

Three Conditions Concerning Prayer

1. The one who prays must have a vital connection with God. God has not promised His power and blessings to the sinner or to the man who has no connection with Him. The power of Elijah on Mt. Carmel came because he was connected with God. Fire fell and people cried out, "The Lord, He is God!" "The Lord, He is God!"

2. The channel of life must be pure. David said, "If I regard iniquity in my heart the Lord will not hear me." David knew from personal experience this spiritual truth for David knew a season of spiritual bareness. After his great sin with Bathsheba, David knew the fruitfulness of religion without vital godliness. Then God granted repentance. We must go deep into our lives and clean out all the sin, the malice, the hatred, the impurities. Only then can we have a clean heart.

3. Our prayers must be for God’s glory. Sometimes we pray and we have our glory in view. We are ashamed of looking badly in front of others. Preachers are ashamed of small crowds and so they give out an "evangelist estimate." Spouses are ashamed of having an unsaved husband or wife and so salvation is prayed for in order not to look bad. We do have to be careful of our motives and yet after taking care of the conditions, we must be people of prayer.