

LESSON #22

PRAYER

TEXTS: Matthew 6:5-15; John 15:7; 16:23, 24; Colossians 4:2-4; 1 Thessalonians 5:17; James 1:5, 6; 5:13-18

INTRODUCTION:

1. Prayer is indeed a basic Bible subject. It is used in its various forms, over 520 times from Genesis to Revelation.
2. Prayer is vital to the greatest man; to the smallest child.
 - A. Christ was a man of prayer. (John 17)
 - B. The child Samuel talked with God.
3. Four parts of prayer: Commanded, Communion, Conditional, Comforting.

DISCUSSION:

I. PRAYER IS COMMANDED.

- A. Prayer is not a command of the old covenant even though God's devoted servants prayed to Him.
- B. Prayer is a New Testament command.
 1. The model given (Matthew 6:5-15).
 - a. Directed to the Father.
 - b. For the church, 'thy kingdom come.'
 - c. For the Father's will, not ours, to be done.
 - d. For our physical needs.
 - e. For forgiveness
 - f. For guidance
 2. In Christ's name (Colossians 3:17).
 3. Without ceasing (I Thessalonians 5:17).

II. PRAYER IS COMMUNION.

- A. It is our opportunity to talk to God.
- B. It is not available to the sinner (John 9:31).
- C. It is a constant relationship (I Thessalonians 5:17).

III. PRAYER IS CONDITIONAL.

- A. Paul links effective prayer with work (watchfulness) (Colossians 4:2-4).
- B. Forgiveness is based upon our willingness to forgive (Matthew 6:15).
- C. Prayer is not a substitute for work.
 - 1. We need to put our prayers in food baskets and not just on our lips. "He prayeth best who loveth best" (Coleridge).
 - 2. Those in "far and more difficult places" would be nearer and more fruitful if we shared with them more of our material gain.
- D. God is not "a cosmic bell boy" to be called upon only when we need Him. We must abide, i.e., permanently dwell in Him (John 15:7; 16:23, 24).

IV. PRAYER IS COMFORTING.

- A. In the hour of sorrow (Acts 20:36-38).
- B. In the hour of pain and sickness (James 5:13-18).
- C. In the hour of decision (James 1:5, 6).
- D. In the hour of accomplishment and victory (I Kings 8:22).

CONCLUSION:

- 1. Prayer is not a few well chosen words, but a well ordered life directed to and by God.
- 2. No one can have a full and rich life without prayer. Why be without this power?