

HOW TO PROFIT IN PRAYER AS TAUGHT BY GOD'S WORD

Luke 11:1-4; Matthew 6:5-13

(Not entirely original with me)

Introduction: To "pray" is to entreat, to implore, to ask earnestly for something and in all probability everyone has "prayed" at one time or other. However for a Christian to NOT pray is devoid of spiritual life. Prayer is the breath of the new nature in a born again person, a true, genuine Christian. The Bible teaches a lot about prayer and one can benefit/profit greatly but following what God's Word has to say about prayer.

I. NOT ALL "PRAYER" IS REALLY PRAYER

1. Christian's probably sin more in their efforts to pray than in any other thing in their lives.
 - There are demandings where there should be submissiveness.
 - There is formality where there should be a broken heart.
 - How little many really feel the sins they confess and what little sense of deep need for mercy.
 - There is much unbelief, self-will and self-pleasing in so many Christians' prayers.
2. Christians need to take God's Word as a guide to prayer.
 - The Bible has been given "*...that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works...*" (2 Timothy 3:17)
 - The Bible teaches that one is to "pray in the spirit" and therefore prayers are to be according to the Word of God, seeing that God is the divine author.
 - Depending upon how deeply Christ dwells within a person reveals how much or less one's petitions will be in harmony with the mind of the Holy Spirit.
 - *Matthew 12:34*
 - Hiding the Word of God in one's heart brings cleansing and moulds and regulates one's inner person and his/her prayers will be more acceptable in God's sight.

II. ONE CAN BENEFIT/PROFIT FROM HIS/HER PRAYER LIFE

1. The Scriptures/Word helps bring one to realize the deep importance of prayer.
 - Many who read their Bibles have no really deep convictions of just how important a daily walk and commune with God can be.
 - If one really believed that fellowship with God can deliver him/her from Satan, sin and the temptations of the world wouldn't he/she spend far more time on his/her face before God?
 - People take time for "important" things, but what could be more important than God? Yet most don't find the "time" for prayer.
 - God said, "*...MY HOUSE shall be a house of prayer...*" (Matthew 21:13)
 - Not a house of singing or preaching or fellowship, but PRAYER.
 - God's Word teaches: *Mark 14:38; Philippians 4:6; Colossians 4:2*
 - One can indeed benefit from God's Word in learning how important prayer is.
2. The Scriptures/Word causes one to feel that he/she doesn't really know how to pray.
 - *Romans 8:26*
 - Mistakenly, most Christians think they know how to pray, yet Paul remarked that he didn't know what to pray for and neither did anybody else.
 - No one can pray properly without the direct enabling of the Holy Spirit than he/she can create a world.
 - Real prayer is a felt need brought on within one's heart by the Holy Spirit.
 - *1 John 5:14*
 - To ask for something which is not in God's will is not praying, but assuming.

3. The Scriptures/Word makes one aware of his/her need of the Holy Spirit's help.
 - The Holy Spirit makes known to a person what he/she really needs.
 - Most are ignorant, dull and don't know what God really wants.
 - God has called the petitions from some as "howlings" and not cries from one's heart.
 - Heavenly wisdom is needed to teach a person what he/she really needs and how to make them a mater of prayer according to what God has in mind.
 - Some temporary things can be prayed for but not as primary, most important things and in seeking material things from God it should NOT be that one might be gratified but as an aid in pleasing God better and not in a dictating attitude, assuming that God will "obey" and grant one's requests.
 - There are inward as well as outward wants and most people are confused as to what/which is the most spiritual and therefore the Holy Spirit is needed to clarify what needs to be prayed for.
 - Christians should definitely seek the Holy Spirit's help in order to pray and be heard by God.
 - **1 Corinthians 2:10-12**
4. The Scriptures/Word reveals that the Holy Spirit teaches one the right end in praying.
 - God wants His Children to pray that He might be honored for praying is an act of worship, paying homage to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.
 - God wants His Children to pray in order to humble the heart for prayer is meant to bring one into the place of dependence upon God, a sense of helplessness and that without the Lord, one can do nothing.
 - God intends for prayer to be the means or way of obtaining for one's self the good things for which he/she asks.
 - One of the main reasons why so many prayers remain unanswered is because one has a wrong and unworthy reason in mind.
 - Jesus said, "**...Ask and it shall be given you...**" (**Matthew 7:7**)
 - James writes, "**...Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts...**" (**James 4:3**)
 - To pray for anything which God has not designed is to "ask amiss."
 - Unless the Holy Spirit restrains the flesh within a person, his/her own natural and wrong affections get confused with what is really needed and therefore his/her prayer is in vain.
 - "**...Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God...**" (**1 Corinthians 10:31**)
5. The Scriptures/Word teaches one how to plead God's promises.
 - Prayer must be in faith or God will not hear it. (**Romans 10:14**)
 - Faith considers God's promises and if one does not understand what God has promised to give, he/she cannot pray at all.
 - What God has promised, all that He has promised, and nothing else, one is to pray for.
 - There is nothing one will ever need that God has not already promised to supply it.
 - The better one is acquainted with God's promises, the more he/she is able to understand the goodness, grace and mercy of God and the better equipped one is for acceptable prayer.
 - **1 Corinthians 2:11-12**
 - Some may think that if so much is required to get answered prayers, then few will continue long in prayer, but if one knows not what to pray for, nor does that person want to learn from the Scriptures/Word, then so be it - a life of unanswered prayers.
6. The Scriptures/Word teaches one how to be brought to complete submission unto God.
 - The bowed knee before the Lord God is an outward recognition of one's helplessness and a looking to Him from whom all help comes.
 - It is a making known of one's requests, spreading one's case before God but leaving it to God's wisdom in knowing how to deal with it.
 - There is no dictating nor claiming anything from God.

- Faith is needed for answered prayer, but it must accept God's answer.
 - Remember how many times Paul asked God to remove the "thorn in his flesh?" but instead of doing so, God gave him the grace to endure it.
 - Many of God's promises are indefinite and general than precise and absolute or universal.
 - ***Ephesians 6:2-3***
 - However God chooses to answer one's prayer is for that person's own good and the good of others.
7. The Scriptures/Word shows how prayer can become a real and deep joy.
- Saying morning and nightly ritual prayers brings one relief ("There, I've prayed today") but to really come into the conscious presence of God, to behold His glorious light, to commune with Him at the mercy seat, there is nothing like it and it is but a taste of what awaits one in heaven.
 - Drawing near to God is good for the heart as it quietens it and it is good for one's faith for it is strengthened and good for the soul as it is blessed.
 - ***"...Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart..."***
Psalms 37:4
 - It delights one's heart to recognize and realize God as his/her Heavenly Father.
 - It brings joy to one's heart as he/she finds him/herself at the throne of Grace.
 - It brings joy and delight to one's heart that through Jesus Christ, God is willing and ready to dispense grace and mercy and there is no reluctance in Him to do so.
 - God is more ready to give than people are to receive.
 - ***"...Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith..."*** (***Hebrews 10:22***)
- Philippians 4:6-7

CONCLUSION:

1. The Scripture, God's Word is supernatural for it was given by almighty God and is explained by the Holy Spirit with God's Son, Jesus Christ coming to earth and completing God's plan of redemption for sinful man.
2. Prayer is the God-given manner in which His Children are to approach Him but in the way described in God's Word.
3. God's Children must use God's Word to help them understand how to pray and what to pray for in accordance with God's plans for their lives.
4. Any Christian who "prays" as he/she wills and not according to the teachings of God's Word will never have prayers answered.
5. Christian, get into God's Word and find out what God requires in order to have your prayers answered.