

THE FIRST PURPOSE OF PRAYER

Luke 11:1-13

Introduction: Repeat The Lord's Prayer. Doesn't it seem a bit strange that the disciples wanted Jesus to teach them to pray? Just a year prior, they didn't need anyone to teach them about prayer and they could have quoted scriptures about prayer and given all arguments for or against prayer. However, after seeing and hearing Jesus pray, they realized that they didn't know the first thing about prayer. They saw how much time He gave to prayer. They saw Him go into prayer in one mood and come out in another. They saw things become different because of His prayers. They realized His prayers were quite different to what they were accustomed to. Jesus said to them:

I. "...WHEN YOU PRAY, SAY, 'OUR FATHER WHICH ART IN HEAVEN...'"

1. One must believe in God.
 - One must center his/her mind on God.
 - One must feel His presence.
 - One must receive the Spirit and power of God into his/her own mind and heart.
2. The beginning prayer is to receive God.
 - One must pray in a receptive mood.
 - Minds are very active, moods change.
 - To listen to music, to read a book, to see a movie, one must become receptive.
 - So, likewise, to pray, one must be receptive. *"...Be still and know..."*
3. One must change his/her mood from aggressive thinking to receptive thinking.
 - Just about everyone goes through life saying "This is what I want, This is what I'll do..."
 - Prayer is a type of "add-on," hoping God will agree with one's plans.
4. For many, prayer is nothing more than a "spare tire."
 - It is something used only in event of an emergency or failure of other methods.
 - We plan work and if we don't get our way or what we want, we then turn to God and tell Him to "get it for us..."
 - We try to make God our personal creator.

II. WHEN YOU PRAY WITH YOUR MIND CENTERED UPON GOD, THINGS HAPPEN

1. Prayers become positive instead of negative.
 - Ever said, "I prayed, but it didn't help?"
 - So many prayers are about some habit, temptation, weakness, or need.
 - An unanswered prayer in these areas sometimes does cause harm, sadly.
2. "Lord, I'm sick, feel my temperature, feel my pulse, see how weak I am. I don't even feel like sitting up. My nerves are shot. I can't eat, oh yes Lord, I'm sick, make me well."
 - This kind of prayer will make even a well person sick!
 - The same thing applies to harmful habits, the more we pray about them, the more fixed in our

minds they become until we become obsessed.

3. When we start with God, concentrate on His power INSTEAD of our sins, instead of fear, we find strength through our faith in Him.
4. With God in the center of our prayers we do not become discouraged.
 - We become discouraged, lose hope because we lose God.
 - Remember the 23rd Psalm? There are some nine petitions centering on the character and activity of God.
 - The Psalm closes with "tomorrow will be good" (surely goodness and mercy) and then "beyond tomorrow" (I shall dwell in the House of the Lord forever).

CONCLUSION:

1. The Lord's Prayer begins with God, looks on life with faith, believes God's kingdom can come and our daily physical needs can be met, our sins can be forgiven and we can have strength for the trials of life that lie ahead.
2. An old janitor made a remark when a man jumped off a roof to his death, "When a man who has done lost God, there aint nothing to do but jump..."
3. The first purpose of prayer is to know God and "*...to know God is to live!...*"