

CHECK YOUR PRAYING STYLE

Matthew 6:7

(Not entirely original with me)

Introduction: Face it! There are times when you haven't prayed because you thought it'd do no good or that you have been so bad that God wouldn't hear your prayer anyhow. It is true that a proper attitude and motive is essential to have one's prayer heard. There is the "story" about a person who was driving around and around, trying to find a parking place and was just about to be late for an appointment but there just wasn't a place to be found, so in desperation, the person began to pray "Lord give me a place to park, Lord, give me a place to park" and suddenly, seemingly out of nowhere, there was a place to park. Quickly turning into the parking spot, the person said a quick prayer "never mind, I found a spot..." That may be a lot like most of us, not for a parking spot, but finally asking the Lord for this or that and when it does happen, we attribute it to something WE did.

When you pray, do you want to get approval from somebody? Think about it for a moment. The manner we pray might reveal the motive of our praying. So, why do we pray?

I. WE DON'T WANT TO CALL ATTENTION TO OURSELVES

1. If the soloist in the choir sings only to be heard, only to get compliments from others, then he/she is singing for the wrong reason.
2. If the choir sings for any other reason than for the glory of God and to help the congregation worship the Lord, then they are singing for the wrong reason.
3. If the preacher is preaching to hear "amens" and "that's right brother," "preach on," and to be complimented as the people leave after the service is over, then he is preaching for the wrong reason. He is to hide himself behind the cross of Jesus.
4. When a person puts his/her offering in, he/she should never expect to hear a compliment on how much he/she has given, for it should be between the person giving and the Lord.
5. When a person prays, it is a personal, private, very intimate conversation with the Lord and is nobody else's business. Never should prayer be anything else but a private, intimate conversation with the Lord.

II. CAUTION IS NEEDED WHEN PRAYING IN PUBIC

1. Public prayer is not making some "holy" speech for others.
 - If one says he/she cannot pray in public, then he/she has the wrong idea about praying in public for it is not making some sort of speech.
 - It is different from private, "closet" praying yet if one focus on what he/she is saying and to whom and that it is a prayer, not a speech, then the feeling of having to "impress" others will be less frightening.
2. If a person is ever complimented on his/her public prayer, then he/she needs to back up and take a look at what was said, why it was said and the manner in which it was said. Was it dramatic? Was it to gain approval of those listening?

III. GOD IS ALIVE, NOT SOME STONE IMAGE

1. Those who pray to images think they have to do dramatic things and speak in strange ways to gain their deity's attention.
2. Christians don't have to beg God and are to approach Him as His Children, not some foreigner begging audience and mercy.
 - God loves us and is more eager to please us than we are to ask Him for something.
3. God doesn't have to be yelled at, things left on the Church door steps, or His Children disfiguring themselves trying to get His attention.

CONCLUSION:

1. Why we pray, the motive behind our prayers matters. *"...And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son..." (John 14:13)*
2. The sole purpose, reason behind our praying should be to bring honor and glory to God rather than hoping to gain some sort of recognition for ourselves.
3. So, how is your praying? Are you sincere ALL the time? Do you have the right reasons behind your prayers? Do you enjoy your private time with the Lord? Is it a "one-sided" prayer where you do all the talking or do you give the Lord some time to get a word or two in?
4. Perhaps you need to make some changes you how you pray.