

LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY

by Robert Hatfield

“And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.” (Luke 11:1)

Each child of God would do well to imitate the attitude represented by the unnamed disciple in Luke 11:1. He desired to learn, and Jesus was willing to teach about one of the most important privileges that the Christian may enjoy — the privilege of prayer. Please consider the following observations concerning this disciple’s attitude and our Lord’s response.

The disciple believed in the power of prayer. The very fact that he asked to be taught how to pray indicates that he was convicted of its power. This was not some useless exercise to make one feel good; it was something that was useful! James said, “The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much” (James 5:16). Some Christians seldom pray to their Father. Is not this reflective of their view of the power of prayer? To doubt the power of prayer is to doubt God’s ability to keep His promises! Every Christian should manifest the same respectful attitude toward prayer as is portrayed by this disciple in Luke 11.

The Lord took time to teach. Jesus seriously dealt with this request. The very fact that Jesus paused to spend time teaching this disciple how to pray shows the value of prayer. One can also note the reverent attitude of Jesus’ prayers. The Lord prayed, “... Hallowed be thy name...” (Luke 11:2); that word “hallowed” refers to that which deserves reverence, honor and homage. Additionally, from Jesus teaching his disciple how to pray, one may learn that it is good and proper to meditate beforehand on that which one will bring to the throne of God, lest we approach His throne thoughtlessly.

The Lord emphasized that God answers prayer! Following his prayer, Jesus said, “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened” (Luke 11:9-10). The verbs “ask,” “seek” and “knock” are in the present tense, indicating a continuous action on the part of the inquirer. Notice how, in each case, God’s answer is clearly shown. The one who asks, “shall receive;” the one who seeks “shall find;” to him who knocks, “it shall be opened.” God always answers. Sometimes the answer is “no,” sometimes it is “yes;” in every case God answers according to that which is best (Isa. 55:9; Jer. 10:23). In every case, man is taught to pray as is in accordance with the Will of God (1 John 5:14-15).

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