

# PRAYER



100 PRINCIPLES ABOUT  
PRAYER FROM THE BIBLE

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# Introduction

My assumption is that the prayers and teaching about prayer offered in the Bible describe proper, good, and correct prayer. This is, therefore, not a study of prayer developed throughout history or the prayers of godly people throughout history. It is not prayer according to church councils or prayer used in liturgy. It is not a study of the prayers of saints or missionaries or monks or pastors or priests or other leaders, no matter how charismatic, sincere, or mature they may be or may have been. This is a study of the subject of prayer as, and only as, it is revealed in the pages of the inerrant verbally inspired Word of God—the Bible.

***A definition of prayer—  
Biblical prayer is communicating a message to God  
when He is not specifically manifested***

In other words, in the Bible ...

- (a) Prayer is communication, not conversation
- (b) Prayer is a message, not just a feeling
- (c) Prayer is when God is not bodily, verbally, or visually observable

(a) As we think through the biblical examples and commands about prayer, it is important to understand that we are not discussing answers to prayer. Admittedly, the two subjects are close together in our thinking, but it's also important to separate the two. The reason is this—Prayer is our job, answering prayer is God's job. And it is our job to do our job. It is not our job to do God's job. So prayer is not conversation. God certainly speaks to us through His Word, but that's not prayer. God answers prayer in our lives. But that's not prayer either. This study focuses only on prayer—our communicating a message to God.

(b) Prayer is a message. It's not an abstract or inexpressible feeling, like pantheistic meditation claims to be. For them, prayer is a meditative oneness with the universe which does not need to be expressed in any rational way. Judeo-Christian prayer is not like that. It's a message—a logical, rational, thought-through communication of some rational thought-through communication of some clear concept, offered to a real personal, rational God.

(c) Finally, prayer is disconnected from revelation. It is not like Abraham, Moses, the prophets, or the apostles, talking to and receiving instructions from God, who has materialized in some form. Prayer is a message delivered to God via His omnipresence and omniscience, when He is not materially observable.

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***This study contains 100 principles about prayer. The last 90 points (numbers 11–100) trace through the Bible, isolating various passages, looking for some instruction about prayer. The first ten points are general observations about prayer throughout the Bible. The Psalms will be used as interpretations of some of these ten observations. After each point, there is an application exercise where you can choose one best answer. Be sure and read not just the answer (in Appendix A) but also the reasons for the answer. Feel free to disagree, and please discuss and think through your own applications of each passage.***

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## **#1 Prayer and the Omnipresence of God**

**Observation**—Biblical prayer is not “coming into the presence of God.”

**Interpretation**—Since God is omnipresent, we are always in the presence of God. David assumed the omnipresence of God (Psalm 139:7-12). He did not need to go somewhere to find God or come into His presence.

**Application**—Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.

- A. God hears all prayers.
- B. God is interested in all prayers.
- C. God responds to all prayers.

## **#2 The One-Way Nature of Prayer**

**Observation**—Biblical prayer is not conversing with God.

**Interpretation**—David did not have conversations with God. His prayer was all one way. Only David was doing the talking. As a matter of fact, David often prayed when he felt “forsaken” by God because God did not answer him (Psalm 10:1). Answers to prayer are answers, not prayers.

**Application**—Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.

- A. When you pray, do more talking than listening.
- B. When you pray, do more listening than talking.
- C. When you pray, focus on speaking to God.

## **#3 The Natural Expression of Prayer**

**Observation**—Biblical prayer is not a supernatural act of God.

**Interpretation**—The Psalms were not part of a vision initiated by God. Often the reason for the prayer was that God did not specifically act in a situation. Consider Psalm 22:1-2. The biblical application of this prayer is by Jesus Christ on the cross (Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34). The situation was not viewed as out of God's control but outside of God's actions. In other words, God did not involve Himself to stop the action of the evil doers. To the one praying, there was no experiential evidence that God was involved. That knowledge came only from an accurate theology of who God is, a knowledge of the history of what God does, and an incurable dependence on God. Psalm 22 is a natural expression. God Himself is the recipient of the person's prayer. Other than that, prayers are a normal message, using the most regular, author-intended, meaning of regular words.

**Application**—

Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.

- A. We should feel God working when we pray.
- B. We should look for God to reveal Himself when we pray.
- C. We should depend on God when we pray.

## **#4 Biblical Prayer Is Unique**

**Observation**—Prayer is a function of spirituality.

**Interpretation**—Neither animals nor angels pray. Obviously, animals do not pray, because prayer is a function of spirituality. Angels do not pray, because apparently they can communicate directly with the personalized presence of God and have a conversation (1 Kings 22:19-22). Conversation is not prayer. Of course, angels might pray, but there is no example of it in the Bible.

**Application**—Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.

- A. Prayer is divine.
- B. Prayer is good.
- C. Prayer is human.

## #5 Prayer Is Universal

**Observation**—All humans pray.

**Interpretation**—It is unlikely that there has ever been an adult human being who has not prayed. Studying prayer means learning what any human might do. Studying biblical prayer means learning what every human who believes in the God of the Bible should do.

**Application**—

Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.

- A. Biblical prayer is universal.
- B. Prayer is universal.
- C. All humans should pray.

## #6 Biblical Prayer Is Earthly

**Observation**—There is no mention of prayer in heaven.

**Interpretation**—Prayers of believers on earth are brought to heaven, but there is no prayer in the Bible that begins in heaven.

**Application**—

Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.

- A. Biblical prayer is spiritual.
- B. Biblical prayer is heavenly.
- C. Biblical prayer is earthly.

## #7 Good Prayer

**Observation**—Biblical prayer is good, by definition, but prayer itself is not always good.

**Interpretation**—Prayer is not a virtue, for example, when it is done to be noticed by other people (Matthew 6:5), when prayer is offered to false gods (1 Kings 18:25-29), or with unconfessed sin (Isaiah 1:10-17). So there is biblical prayer (good prayer), unbiblical prayer (bad prayer) and extra-biblical prayer (offered to the Holy Spirit, to saints, or to the Virgin Mary, all of which are not mentioned in the Bible and, therefore, are not studied here).

**Application**—

Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.

- A. Biblical prayer is always good.
- B. It is always good to pray.
- C. All prayer in the Bible is good.

## #8 Prayer Reveals Our Beliefs about God

**Observation**—Biblical prayer assumes many things about God.

**Interpretation**—Biblical prayer assumes God exists, He is involved in the affairs of the world, and He is omnipresent, knowledgeable, powerful, personal, moral, and spiritual.

**Application—**

*Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.*

- A. Biblically, you must know many things about God in order to pray.
- B. Biblically, you must know something about God in order to pray.
- C. There are no biblical prerequisites to prayer.

## **#9 Prayer Reveals the Nature of Humans**

**Observation**—Biblical prayer assumes many things about humans.

**Interpretation**—Biblical prayer assumes humans are spiritual, moral, and significant. They have free will, are dependent, needy, faithful, and hopeful.

**Application—**

*Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.*

- A. Biblical prayers are spiritual.
- B. Spiritual prayers are significant.
- C. All people are spiritual.

## **#10 The Example of Prayer**

**Observation**—Biblical prayer is taught by example more than by command.

**Interpretation**—There is no recorded teaching about prayer from Adam, Noah, or Abraham. There is nothing about prayer in the Ten Commandments or the Law. The prophets and kings prayed but rarely taught about prayer. Jesus taught His disciples about prayer, but most of His impact with respect to prayer was by example. The same is true for the Apostles.

**Application—**

*Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.*

- A. We should learn about prayer from how other godly people have prayed.
- B. We can learn about prayer from how other godly people have prayed.
- C. We can learn about prayer from how godly biblical characters prayed.

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***Now that we have discussed the basic definition of prayer, we shall go back and work our way through the Bible, to see what we can learn about prayer.***

## **#11 The Vow of Jacob**

**Observation**—Genesis 28:20-22 [See also Psalm 61; and James 5:12]

**Interpretation**—Jacob seemed to start thinking and ended up praying. His prayer was a if-then vow. If God would take care of him and return him to his father's house, then (1) the Lord (*Yahweh*) would be his God, (2) the stone he set up would be God's house, and (3) he would tithe to God.

**Application—**

*Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.*

- A. Biblical prayer should include an if-then statement.
- B. Biblical prayer can occasionally be a vow.
- C. Biblical prayer should be done in God's house.

## **#12 Praying for What God Promised**

**Observation**—Genesis 32:9-12 [See also Genesis 48:15-16; Exodus 2:23-25; Numbers 11:11-12; 2 Samuel 7:19, 29; and Psalm 132]

**Interpretation**—Jacob clearly identified who God was from the revelation God gave his ancestors. Jacob stated his unworthiness and made a specific request, based on God doing what He had already promised to do.

**Application—**

*Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.*

- A. Biblical prayer may ask God to help us make disciples.
- B. Biblical prayer may ask God to bless our country.
- C. Biblical prayer may ask God to give us success in business.

## **#13 The Israelites Cry Out to God**

**Observation**—Exodus 2:23-24; 3:7 [See also Job 10; Psalm 31:9-13; 79; 80; 86; Lamentations 3:43-54; and James 5:13]

**Interpretation**—The Israelites cried out to God because of their bondage to the Egyptians. They were suffering, asked for relief, and “God heard their groaning.” God said, “I ... have given heed to their cry.” God responded to their prayer because they were His people.

**Application—**

*Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.*

As God's people, it is good to pray

- A. That we never suffer.
- B. That we do not experience significant suffering.
- C. That we be freed from continual suffering.

## **#14 God's Attributes Admired through Prayer**

**Observation**—Exodus 15:1-18 [See also Judges 5:1-5; Psalm 18:1-6; 66:1-4; 81:1-5; and 144:9]

**Interpretation**—After crossing the Red Sea on dry land and seeing the water return to drown the entire Egyptian army, Moses prayed a song, praising God, by specifically listing the attributes of God which He displayed in the deliverance of Israel. He described God as a warrior who produced terror in His enemies, with majestic power, excellent greatness, burning anger, and awesome holiness.

**Application—**

*Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.*

The words of a song should praise God for Who He is, not what I want Him to be. For example,

- A. “Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty”
- B. “At the End of Broken Dreams, He's the Open Door”
- C. “Majesty, Flow from His Throne unto His Own ...”

## **#15 Asking for Help**

**Observation**—Exodus 17:4 [See also Psalm 18:4-6; 20:1-3; and Acts 4:29-30]

**Interpretation**—Biblical prayer may ask God for help with problems caused by following God, which cannot otherwise be solved. Moses asked for God's help because he couldn't supply the Israelites with the water they demanded.

**Application—**

*Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.*

- A. It is good to pray for solutions to problems I cannot solve.
- B. It is good to pray, expecting a miracle, when someone has a need I cannot meet.
- C. It is good to expect a miracle, even when I do not pray for one.

## **#16 Sincerity in Prayer**

**Observation**—Exodus 34:8 [See also Joshua 7:6; 1 Kings 8:54; 2 Chronicles 16:9; Daniel 6:10; Luke 22:41; Acts 21:5; and Ephesians 3:14]

**Interpretation**—The acts of kneeling and bowing in prayer are common in both Testaments of the Bible. *And Moses made haste to bow low toward the earth and worship* (Exodus 34:8).

**Application—**

Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.

- A. We can prove our sincerity to God by kneeling or bowing.
- B. We can express our sincerity to God by kneeling or bowing.
- C. We should spend our daily prayer time kneeling or bowing.

## #17 The Basis of Requests

**Observation—**Exodus 34:9 and Numbers 12:3, 13 [See also Isaiah 1:15; 2 Thessalonians 1:11; 1 Timothy 2:8; and Hebrews 13:18-19]

**Interpretation—**Moses made a request for the forgiveness of Israel based on his own favor with God. He said, *If now I have found favor in Thy sight, O Lord, I pray, let the Lord go along in our midst, even though the people are so obstinate; and do Thou pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us as Thine own possession.*

**Application—**

Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.

- A. The basis for my prayer is my favor towards God.
- B. The basis for my prayer is God's favor towards me.
- C. The basis for my prayer is reverence towards God.

## #18 Prayer Concerning God's Enemies

**Observation—**Numbers 10:35 [See also Judges 5:31; Psalm 68:1-4; 83; and 1 Corinthians 16:22]

**Interpretation—**Moses prayed, *Rise up, O LORD! And let Thine enemies be scattered, And let those who hate Thee flee before Thee.* Moses, David, and men of God throughout the Bible prayed for God to destroy those who hate Him.

**Application—**

Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.

- A. We should ask God to destroy His own enemies.
- B. We should ask God to love His own enemies.
- C. We should ask God to show patience toward His enemies.

## #19 Joshua's Prayer of Frustration

**Observation—**Joshua 7:7 [See also Job 10; Psalm 44:9-16; 74; and Isaiah 63:15-19]

**Interpretation—**After the defeat at Ai, Joshua, unaware of the sin of Achan, prayed expressing confusion and frustration about the defeat at Ai.

**Application—**

Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.

- A. We should ask for the sins of others to be revealed.
- B. We may express confusion and frustration in prayer.
- C. We should ask for future success while in the midst of current failure.

## #20 A Public Prayer

**Observation—**Joshua 10:12

**Interpretation—**As part of the battle, in order to make the victory complete, Joshua asked God to stop the sun from setting so the Israelites could wipe out the enemy. And he did so *in the sight of Israel* not privately.

**Application—**

Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.

- A. Prayer should usually be public.
- B. Prayer may sometimes be public.
- C. Public prayer should be saved for special occasions.

## #21 Prayer for Relief

**Observation**—Judges 2:18. [See also Judges 3:15; 4:3; 10:10, 15-16; Psalm 25:16-21; Jeremiah 14:7-9; 2 Chronicles 32:24-26; Daniel 9:3-19; and Jonah 2]

**Interpretation**—The book of Judges describes a cycle of sin, bondage, despair, prayer, and relief. Then the cycle begins over again. Nonetheless, God heard His people's cry for help, which was caused by their sin.

### **Application**—

*Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.*

- A. Biblical prayer includes requests for God's help even when our sin caused the need for help.
- B. It is more biblical to ask for God's help when we're desperate.
- C. God will only respond to our prayers after a cycle of sin is broken.

## #22 Deborah's Prayer

**Observation**—Judges 5:9, 24, 31

**Interpretation**—Deborah wrote a prayer of praise to God, thanking Him, while recognizing those who volunteered to fight. The woman Jael is specifically praised with a phrase similar to the one describing the virgin Mary.

### **Application**—

*Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.*

- A. We may praise God for the courageous acts of godly people.
- B. We may praise God for the noble acts of godly people.
- C. We may praise God for the righteous acts of godly people.

## #23 Samson's Prayer

**Observation**—Judges 16:28-30

**Interpretation**—Samson was captured and blinded by the Philistines because of his foolish and sinful relationship with the woman Delilah. Now blind and weak, he asked God to give him the strength to do what God raised him up to do—destroy the Philistines—even though it required his committing suicide.

### **Application**—

*Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.*

- A. It's good to pray for what we want if it's also what God wants.
- B. It's good to ask for the lesser evil in a situation of conflicting moral issues.
- C. It's good to expect God to answer our prayer when we are spiritually blind and weak.

## #24 Hannah's Prayer

**Observation**—1 Samuel 2:1-10 [See also Psalm 90; 139; and Acts 4:28]

**Interpretation**—After Hannah presented her son Samuel to live in the temple, she prayed, recognizing the complete sovereignty of God.

### **Application**—

*Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.*

- A. We should pray for the strength to dedicate our kids to God.
- B. We should pray that our kids would live for God.
- C. We should pray, recognizing the attributes of God.

## #25 Praying When We Disagree with What Is Going On

**Observation**—1 Samuel 8:5-6 [See also Jonah 4:1-3]

**Interpretation**—The people wanted a king, and it displeased Samuel, so he prayed about it. Samuel was open to God's decision, even if it meant that the people were rejecting God as their only true leader.



**Application—**

*Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.*

- A. We should ask God to help us deal with things which we do not like.
- B. We should ask God to help us change things we do not like.
- C. We should ask God to help us tolerate things we do not like.

## **#26 Prayer Over Sin**

**Observation**—1 Samuel 12:17-18

**Interpretation**—The people made Saul king over Samuel's objections. Saul was successful in his first military campaign, and the people rejoiced. But Samuel prayed for God to send rain on the harvest to show them their sin.

**Application—**

*Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.*

- A. We should ask God to show other believers that they are sinning.
- B. We should pray that sinning people not be successful.
- C. When our country sins, we should pray that God would send a sign, like a natural disaster, to show them their sin.

## **#27 David's Request Denied (A)**

**Observation**—2 Samuel 7:18-19b

**Interpretation**—After David desired to build a temple and God denied him that request, David prayed. Rather than mourn or complain, David rejoiced in the sovereignty of God and His promise of future blessings.

**Application—**

*Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.*

When God says “no” to our prayer requests,

- A. We should continue to pray without ceasing.
- B. We should praise God for what He has already done and for who He is.
- C. We should rejoice when God says “no” to our requests.

## **#28 David's Request Denied (B)**

**Observation**—2 Samuel 12:16-23 [See also Matthew 26:39 and Habakkuk 3:16-19]

**Interpretation**—The child Bathsheba conceived, through David's adultery with her, became sick. David prayed, fasted, and lay all night on the ground. But God denied David's request for the child to live. When the child died, David's prayer and fasting ended. David always made himself content with the will of God.

**Application—**

*Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.*

- A. We should expect God to respond with grace and mercy, since these are attributes of God.
- B. We should ask for the grace and mercy of God, even though God doesn't always grant it.
- C. If your child is sick, you should fast and pray.

## **#29 Hezekiah's Prayer Recognizes God as the Creator**

**Observation**—2 Kings 19:14-19 [See also Acts 4:24 and Revelation 4:11]

**Interpretation**—Hezekiah, King of Judah, *did right in the sight of the Lord* (2 Kings 18:3). When attacked by Assyria and given an ultimatum for surrender, Hezekiah took it to God. Most biblical prayers begin with a theological statement about the person of God. This one, like many, begins with His being the Creator of heaven and earth.

**Application—**

*Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.*

- A. It's always good to pray, even if you don't believe God is the Creator.
- B. When life backs you into a corner, pray.
- C. If you believe in evolution, don't pray.

### #30 Singing and Prayer

**Observation**—1 Chronicles 16:1, 7-36 [See also Psalm 96; 105; and 106]

**Interpretation**—The day David brought the Ark of the Covenant into the tent he had put up for it in Jerusalem, he assigned Asaph and his relatives to be in charge of thanking God. Asaph was an outstanding musician in David's court (1 Chronicles 16:4-5; Ezra 2:41; Psalm 50; 73-83). In 1 Chronicles 16, David instructs him and his family to: (1) sing praise [v. 9], (2) speak of all His wonders [v. 9], (3) glory (be glad) in His holy name [v. 10], (4) seek His face [v. 11], and (5) remember His wonderful deeds [v. 12].

**Application**—

*Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.*

- A. Our prayers may be in the form of singing praises to the Lord.
- B. We should put outstanding musicians in charge of community prayer.
- C. Someone should always lead in singing prayers.

### #31 Solomon's Long Prayer

**Observation**—1 Kings 8:22-54 and 9:1-9

**Interpretation**—Probably the most glorious and formal public ceremony Jerusalem ever experienced was the movement of the Ark of the Covenant into the Temple Solomon built. This is Solomon's prayer at the close of the ceremony. Interestingly, his prayer was longer than his sermon. In it he asked God to hear the prayers of both Israelites and foreigners who came to or faced Jerusalem and repented of their sin.

**Application**—

*Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.*

- A. When we pray, we should emphasize holy places.
- B. When we pray, we can pray for the prayers of others.
- C. When we pray, it should be long.

### #32 Prayer in the Temple

**Observation**—2 Chronicles 6:12-42 [See also Deuteronomy 12:5; Psalm 28:2; Isaiah 56:7; Jeremiah 7:11; Matthew 21:13; Mark 11:17; Luke 19:46; and Ephesians 2:19-22]

**Interpretation**—When the ark was in the Temple Solomon built, he prayed that, although God was in heaven and not contained in this building, that God would honor prayers made from this Temple or facing toward it.

**Application**—

*Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.*

- A. We should ask God to honor prayers from a Christ-centered church.
- B. When we pray, we should face heaven.
- C. We should pray from the temple of God on earth to the presence of God in heaven.

### #33 Praying for a Sign

**Observation**—1 Kings 18:36-37 [See Psalm 67:1-2; 115:1-8; and Isaiah 64:1-2]

**Interpretation**—After Ahab and Jezebel had filled Israel with idols and prophets of Baal, Elijah created a confrontation at Mt. Carmel. He suggested that they see whose God could call down fire from heaven on a prepared altar. After the failure of the prophets of Baal, Elijah prayed that God demonstrate He is the only true God.

**Application**—

*Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.*

- A. We may ask God to show someone He is God.
- B. We may ask God for a sign that He is God.
- C. We may ask God to send fire from heaven.

## #34 Prayer and Sin

**Observation**—2 Kings 22:13 [See also Ezra 9:1–10:1; Psalm 25:6-7; 38; 51; 66:18; Isaiah 55:6-9; Daniel 9:3-14; Acts 2:38; 8:22; and 1 John 1:9]

**Interpretation**—Josiah was another good king of Judah (1 Kings 22:2). When the book of the Law was found (probably Deuteronomy), he had it read to him and repented because it revealed his and Israel's sin.

### **Application**—

*Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.*

- A. We should ask God to forgive the Jews today.
- B. We should confess our sin only when convicted by God's Word.
- C. We should confess our sin as revealed in God's Word.

## #35 Humility in Prayer

**Observation**—2 Chronicles 33:10-13 [See also Ezra 8:21-23]

**Interpretation**—Manasseh was a bad king of Judah who reigned for a long time, ages 12-67 (2 Chronicles 33:1-2). He built altars to idols and refused to listen to God. But when he was captured and carried off by the Assyrians, he finally humbled himself. God listened and restored him when he humbled himself.

### **Application**—

*Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.*

- A. If we humble ourselves in prayer, God will restore us to our earthly position.
- B. When we pray, we should humble ourselves before God.
- C. We should turn to God in the midst of a crisis, expecting Him to resolve the situation.

## #36 Asking God to Respond

**Observation**—Daniel 9:18-19 [See also 2 Samuel 7:18-29 and Isaiah 55:6-9]

**Interpretation**—Daniel confessed that Jerusalem fell because of Israel's sin and asked God to restore it based on His compassion and promises.

### **Application**—

*Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.*

- A. We should ask God to restore America.
- B. We should ask God to restore Israel.
- C. We should ask God to respond according to His own character.

## #37 Fasting and Prayer

**Observation**—Nehemiah 1:4-11 [See also Ezra 8:21-23; Nehemiah 9:1; Esther 4:14-16; Job 1:20; 2 Samuel 12:16; Daniel 9:3; Mark 9:29; Luke 2:37; Acts 13:3; and 14:23]

**Interpretation**—When Nehemiah heard that the walls of Jerusalem were broken and the Jews there were suffering, he was moved to weep and fast for days. This is the context of his prayer. He prayed night and day (v. 6), confessing the sins of Israel and calling on God to keep His covenant. Only after this did he ask the king for help (2:1-8).

### **Application**—

*Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.*

- A. Prayer should be taken seriously when there is suffering.
- B. Weeping and fasting may create a context for prayer.
- C. Serious situations must be prayed for night and day.

## #38 Quick Prayers

**Observation**—Nehemiah 2:1-8 [See also Acts 7:59]

**Interpretation**—Nehemiah's sadness was observed by the king. It was illegal to be sad before the king. So when the king asked what Nehemiah wanted, Nehemiah prayed quickly before he made his request to the king for help with the proposed Jerusalem wall project.

### **Application**—

*Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.*

- A. Prayer may be brief and sudden in an urgent situation.
- B. Prayer may be brief and sudden in any situation.
- C. Prayer may be brief and sudden if you are trying to complete a task for God.

## #39 A Dedication Prayer

**Observation**—Nehemiah 9:1-38 [See also Psalms 44:1-3 and Isaiah 25:1-5]

**Interpretation**—After the walls of Jerusalem were rebuilt under Nehemiah's direction, the Levites prayed a dedication prayer. Of the 34 verses of prayer, 22 are a record of what God did for Israel in the past. They cover creation, a major part of the history of what God did for Israel, His judgment for their sin, and God's compassion.

### **Application**—

*Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.*

- A. The majority of your prayer should cover what God has done in the past.
- B. When you pray, you should mention creation.
- C. When you pray, you should remember what God has done.

## #40 Job's Intercession

**Observation**—Job 1:1-5

**Interpretation**—Job was a wealthy, righteous man who probably lived before Abraham. Part of his righteousness included getting up early to offer sacrifices as a form of prayer for the sins of his children.

### **Application**—

*Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.*

- A. Parents should make sacrifices for their children.
- B. Parents should get up early to pray for their children.
- C. Parents should pray for the spiritual condition of their children.

## #41 Asking for Answers

**Observation**—Psalm 4:1 [See also Psalm 3:7; 5:1-2; 7:1; 12:1; 13:1-4; 17:13; 60:11; 88; 102; 142; 143; Isaiah 64]

**Interpretation**—David was a man of prayer. He prayed, he sang prayers, and he also called upon God to answer his prayers. That does not mean he only prayed to get answers or that his answers governed his prayer life. David believed it was his job to pray and God's job to answer. But David's job was not to dictate God's job. David asked God to answer because it was good to ask God to answer, not because God was obliged to answer.

### **Application**—

*Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.*

- A. When we pray, we should expect God to answer.
- B. When we pray, we should ask God to answer.
- C. When we pray, we should wait for God to answer.

## #42 How David Prayed

**Observation**—Psalm 18:1-2

**Interpretation**—David expressed his love for God. It's an emotional love, but it's based on an intelligent understanding of the character of God. David prayed emotionally. He was in love with God emotionally. But the knowledge of the God he was in love with came intelligently.

**Application**—

*Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.*

- A. We should express a love for God when we pray.
- B. Prayer should be emotional.
- C. We should express some emotion when we pray.

## #43 The Prayer Standard

**Observation**—Psalm 19:14 [See also Psalms 34:15-17; 131; Proverbs 15:8, 29; 28:9]

**Interpretation**—David, after praising God for His creation and His Law, asks God to keep him from sin and to let his words and thoughts be acceptable to God.

**Application**—

*Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.*

- A. We should ask God to reveal to us what is acceptable to Him.
- B. We should ask God to help us be acceptable to Him.
- C. We should ask God to respond to us based on our being acceptable to Him.

## #44 God's Leadership

**Observation**—Psalm 23 [See also Psalm 27:1-6; 63; and 71]

**Interpretation**—David expressed his trust in God as his leader and provider. *...He guides me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake (23:3).*

**Application**—

*Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.*

- A. We should express our trust in God as our coach.
- B. We should express our trust in God as our captain.
- C. We should express our trust in God as our shepherd.

## #45 Prayer For Justice

**Observation**—Psalm 35:1, 5 [See also Psalm 55; 56; 59; 64; 69; 70; 94; 109; 140; Lamentations 3:55-66]

**Interpretation**—David was a warrior king. He fought many enemies. But David never saw himself or his armies as the destroyer of his enemies. David left that up to God and asked God to do it.

**Application**—

*Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.*

- A. We should take reasonable action in conflict situations but never assume we can defeat our enemies.
- B. We should always turn the other cheek and let God deal with our enemies.
- C. We should avoid our enemies and pray for God to destroy them.

## #46 Prayers For Desires

**Observation**—Psalm 84:1, 2, 10 [See also John 17:24]

**Interpretation**—David expresses his desire to be in the presence of God in God's own dwelling place and stand in His courts. David says if he could just stand in the entry way of God's dwelling place, it's better than living with the wicked.

**Application**—

*Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.*

- A. We should pray for the wicked.
- B. We should pray that we not have to live with the wicked.
- C. We should pray with a longing for heaven.

## #47 Prayers and Praises

**Observation**—Psalm 119:12, 66, 97, and 105

**Interpretation**—In this, the longest prayer in the Bible, David cannot say enough about his admiration for the written Word of God. He tells God how he loves His Word and meditates on it daily.

**Application**—

*Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.*

- A. We should love the revelation of God and pray for continued revelation.
- B. We should love to memorize God's Word.
- C. We should love the Bible and tell God so in prayer.

## #48 Timely Prayer

**Observation**—Psalm 145:1-2 [See also Lamentations 3:22, 23; Daniel 6:10]

**Interpretation**—David says he will not only praise God forever but he will do it every day.

**Application**—

*Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.*

- A. We should praise God daily when we pray.
- B. We should praise God regularly when we pray.
- C. We will praise God throughout eternity when we pray.

## #49 Solomon's Prayer Advice

**Observation**—Ecclesiastes 5:2 [See also Ecclesiastes 5:1-7]

**Interpretation**—While writing about making vows, Solomon mentions prayer. Basically he tells us to think through our prayers rather than flippantly making promises to God or asking for things from God.

**Application**—

*Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.*

- A. Avoid asking God for things.
- B. Avoid making promises to God.
- C. If you make a promise to God, pray you'll have the strength to keep it.

## #50 Thanking God

**Observation**—Isaiah 12:1

**Interpretation**—After describing the future millennial kingdom in chapter 11, Isaiah prophesies about a prayer of thanks that will be prayed in that kingdom. The point is, God's anger about our sin has been satisfied (by Christ), so He can comfort us, and we can thank Him for comforting us.

**Application**—

*Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.*

- A. Be thankful when you are comforted by God.
- B. Be thankful that God is no longer angry with us because of our sin.
- C. Be thankful for the future kingdom.

## #51 Changing God's Mind

**Observation**—Isaiah 38:1-5 [See also Exodus 32:14 and James 5:16]

**Interpretation**—From the view of sovereignty, God does not change, because then He would not be God. But from our viewpoint, He appears to change His mind. God clearly told Hezekiah that he would die yet changed that decree due to the prayer of the king.

**Application**—

*Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.*

- A. We can change God's plan.
- B. We might change God's plan.
- C. We cannot change God's plan.

## #52 The Law and Prayer

**Observation**—Daniel 6:10

**Interpretation**—Daniel intentionally broke the Medo-Persian law that forbid prayer to anyone except King Darius for a period of 30 days. Daniel could have complied with this law and waited 30 days or prayed privately. Instead, he continued his custom of public prayer three times daily, facing Jerusalem.

**Application**—

*Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.*

- A. We should pray publicly, even if it's against the law.
- B. We should not stop praying, even when the law forbids it.
- C. We should pray, either publicly or privately, three times a day.

## #53 Unanswered Prayer

**Observation**—Habakkuk 1:2

**Interpretation**—Habakkuk asked God why He hadn't answered the prophet's prayers about the sin in Judah. God was just as opposed to Judah's sin as Habakkuk was, so why hadn't He answered the prayers about it?

**Application**—

*Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.*

- A. We may express frustration over unanswered prayer.
- B. We should express all our frustrations to God.
- C. We should question God when He doesn't act.

## #54 Private Prayer

**Observation**—Matthew 6:1, 5 [See also Matthew 14:23; 23:14; Mark 6:46; and 12:40]

**Interpretation**—In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus warned against doing good things with the motive that others will see you doing them. Then He illustrated this with giving to the poor, prayer, and later, fasting. The point is, if you desire rewards from people, you'll have none from God.

**Application**—

*Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.*

- A. It's better to pray privately than publicly.
- B. It's better to pray publicly and privately.
- C. It's better to pray sincerely than hypocritically.

## #55 Proper Prayer

**Observation**—Matthew 6:7

**Interpretation**—Jesus probably was referring to the religious practice of chanting prayers or repeating traditional prayers that are usually done with lots of words but no thoughts.

**Application**—

*Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.*

- A. Repeating the Lord's Prayer has no value.
- B. Repetitious prayers have the danger of becoming meaningless.
- C. Saying the Apostles' Creed each Sunday is meaningless repetition.

## #56 Asking For Forgiveness

**Observation**—Matthew 6:12, 14, 15 [See also Mark 11:25]

**Interpretation**—The Greek words here are very strong. *Forgive us our debts only as we forgive our debtors.* Before we pray, we must search our heart attitudes to see if there is someone we have not forgiven for a wrong done against us.

**Application**—

*Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.*

- A. We must forgive people whenever they ask to be forgiven.
- B. We must forgive people whether they ask to be forgiven or not.
- C. After awhile, it is not helpful to continue to forgive people who continue to sin and ask to be forgiven.

## #57 Ask and You Shall Receive

**Observation**—Matthew 7:7 [See also Matthew 7:7-11 and Hebrews 11:6]

**Interpretation**—Jesus made the point that our heavenly Father wants to give us what we desire when our desires are good. Desires are indicated by what we seek for, as well as what we ask for.

**Application**—

*Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.*

- A. We should seek for what we ask for.
- B. We should ask for things we cannot seek for.
- C. We should pray for things we believe we should seek for.

## #58 Prayer For Support

**Observation**—Matthew 9:38 [See also Matthew 9:35-38]

**Interpretation**—As Jesus went from village to village (mainly through the Jezreel Valley), He was moved by compassion because the people were *distressed and downcast, like sheep without a shepherd* (Matthew 9:36). So He asked the disciples to pray for more people to minister to these sheep. But notice that these people had lots of religions, plenty of priests, Pharisees, scribes, elders, etc.

**Application**—

*Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.*

- A. I should pray for more pastors, priests, and missionaries.
- B. I should pray for more evangelists, pastors, and teachers.
- C. I should pray for more people to be involved in ministry to God's sheep.

## #59 Thanking God for Revelation

**Observation**—Matthew 11:25 [See also Luke 18:15-17 and Matthew 19:13-15]

**Interpretation**—Jesus praised God for hiding Himself from those who saw themselves as intellectuals and for revealing Himself to those who saw themselves as children.

**Application**—

*Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.*

Part of my prayer life should include:

- A. Thanking God for people who have understood, repented, and received Christ for salvation.
- B. Thanking God for those who do not come to Christ as well as those who do.
- C. Thanking God for not revealing Himself to self-sufficient people.



## #60 Giving Thanks before We Eat

**Observation**—Matthew 26:26-27

**Interpretation**—Jesus celebrated the Passover in an Upper Room in Jerusalem with His 12 disciples. Before eating and before drinking, Jesus prayed, giving thanks. He did the same before feeding the 5,000 (John 6:11) and before feeding the 4,000 (Mark 8:6). This seems to be a regular practice of Jesus.

**Application**—

Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.

- A. It's a sin to eat without first praying, thanking God for our food.
- B. Praying before we eat is one tradition that is both common and biblical.
- C. Praying before we eat is neither sinful nor essential.

## #61 A Request to Escape Future Suffering

**Observation**—Matthew 26:39 [See also Matthew 26:36-46; Luke 21:36; and 22:41-44]

**Interpretation**—Before His death, Jesus, being grieved, went to Gethsemane to pray. He asked His Father if it was possible to not go through death on the cross. Yet, at the same time, He knew it was not possible for God the Father to answer that request. It's fascinating that Jesus knelt down, prayed for over an hour, 3 times (possibly 3 hours), with great intensity, yet He knew that His prayer request would not be granted.

**Application**—

Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.

- A. It's okay to expect God to answer our prayers.
- B. It's okay to not expect God to answer our prayers.
- C. It's okay to pray for an outcome we do not believe God will bring about.

## #62 Discontinued Prayer

**Observation**—Matthew 26:44-46 [See also Matthew 26:39-46; 2 Samuel 12:22-23 and 2 Corinthians 12:7-10]

**Interpretation**—After praying three times about not going to the cross, Jesus, knowing He would have to die, stopped praying, took His disciples, and went on to meet His killers.

**Application**—

Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.

- A. Prayer requests should end when they are no longer appropriate.
- B. We should stop praying a certain prayer when we believe that prayer will not be answered.
- C. Persistence requires all prayer requests to continue until they are fulfilled or denied.

## #63 The Unexpected Work of God

**Observation**—Isaiah 64:3-4

**Interpretation**—Isaiah described God as different from the gods people create in that He *did awesome things we did not expect* and He *acts in behalf of the one who waits for Him*. God is likely to answer us in a way we do not expect and in a manner which requires us to wait on Him.

**Application**—

Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.

- A. When we pray, God may do something we do not expect.
- B. Unanswered prayer is not really unanswered. We just need to wait for God to answer it.
- C. If we wait long enough, God will grant our prayer request.

## #64 Prayer and Our Bodies

**Observation**—1 Corinthians 6:18-20 [See also Jeremiah 7:11; Matthew 21:13; and Ephesians 2:21-22]

**Interpretation**—Jesus never commented on the conditions of the synagogues, nor did He do anything to correct them. But the Temple was a different matter. Twice He chased the crooks out of the Temple because it was the God-ordained house of prayer (1 Kings 9:3). Today the body of each believer is that house of prayer where God dwells (1 Corinthians 6:19).

**Application**—

*Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.*

- A. Our bodies replace the Temple as a place of prayer.
- B. The assembly of believers replaces the Temple as a place of prayer.
- C. Our bodies should be kept holy because they are a place of prayer.

## #65 All Night Prayer

**Observation**—Luke 6:12

**Interpretation**—Before He chose the 12 apostles, Jesus spent all night in prayer.

**Application**—

*Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.*

- A. I may decide to have an all-night prayer meeting with some friends.
- B. I may decide to pray all night before some crucial decision.
- C. Our churches should be open for prayer day and night.

## #66 Praying for Those Who Mistreat Us

**Observation**—Luke 6:28

**Interpretation**—In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus told the crowd to pray for people who mistreat them.

**Application**—

*Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.*

- A. We should pray for people we don't like.
- B. We should pray for people who don't like us.
- C. We should pray for people who treat us badly.

## #67 Prayer with a Few Close Friends

**Observation**—Luke 9:28

**Interpretation**—The Mt. of Transfiguration was a prayer retreat where Jesus took only Peter, James, and John.

**Application**—

*Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.*

- A. We should usually pray alone or with a few close friends.
- B. We should pray in small groups not large groups.
- C. Once in awhile, we should invite a few close friends for a prayer retreat.

## #68 Persistent Prayer

**Observation**—Luke 11:8-13 [See also Acts 1:14]

**Interpretation**—When asked by His disciples to teach them to pray, Jesus gave the Lord's Prayer or a brief version of it. Then He told a story about a man who received food from a reluctant neighbor when he persisted in asking for it.

**Application**—

*Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.*

- A. Persistence in prayer gets God's attention.
- B. Persistence in prayer gets you what you pray for.
- C. Persistence in prayer gets God's people the Holy Spirit.

## #69 Prayer and the World

**Observation**—John 17:15, 17, 20 [See also John 17:9-21 and Luke 15:7, 10]

**Interpretation**—After the Last Supper and before Jesus crossed *the ravine of the Kidron* (18:1) to the Garden of Gethsemane near Jerusalem, He prayed what is usually called the High Priestly Prayer. In that prayer He asked that His disciples and their converts be kept from evil but not from the world itself.

### **Application**—

*Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.*

- A. I should pray that my children not run around with other children who use illegal drugs.
- B. I should pray that my children not be tempted to use illegal drugs.
- C. I should pray that my children will be kept from using illegal drugs.

## #70 Prayer for Unity

**Observation**—John 17:21

**Interpretation**—During the High Priestly Prayer, Jesus asked for the unity of the 12 with each other and the Trinity, so that the world would know the truth about Christ.

### **Application**—

*Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.*

- A. We should pray for unity in spite of our different beliefs.
- B. We should pray for unity in the sense that we all believe what is true.
- C. We should pray for unity in the sense that we unite our beliefs.

## #71 Prayer for the Glory of God

**Observation**—John 17:24 [See also John 17:1-5]

**Interpretation**—Jesus also asked God to glorify Himself and for His disciples to be with Him in heaven in order to see His glory, which was given to Him by God the Father.

### **Application**—

*Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.*

- A. It's all about the glory of God.
- B. It's all about the salvation of man.
- C. It's all about seeing God's glory in heaven.

## #72 Prayer and Temptation

**Observation**—Luke 22:46 [See also Luke 22:40 and Matthew 6:13]

**Interpretation**—After the Lord's Supper, to celebrate the Passover with His disciples, Jesus went to the Garden of Gethsemane on the Mt. of Olives to pray, *as was His custom* (verse 39). He knew He would soon be arrested and suffer the agony of the cross. He also knew the disciples would be tempted to deny Him and flee. Before He withdrew from them *a stone's throw*, He told them to pray that they might not be tempted.

### **Application**—

*Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.*

- A. We should pray that God keep us from situations that could lead to sin.
- B. We should pray that we are not tempted to sin when we are in a tempting situation.
- C. We should pray that we will overcome our temptations to sin.

## #73 Prayer and the Assembly of Believers

**Observation**—Acts 2:42 [See also Luke 1:10; Acts 12:5, 12; 20:36; 21:5; and 2 Corinthians 1:10-11]

**Interpretation**—Fifty days after Jesus was crucified, on the Passover, came the Day of Pentecost. It was on that day that Peter preached to a large crowd in Jerusalem and 3000 people became believers (Acts 2:41). Then we have this verse, which seems to summarize what that first church did. They devoted themselves to teaching, fellowship, worship, and prayer.

**Application**—

*Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.*

- A. Believers should pray whenever they assemble together.
- B. Prayer is one of the reasons for believers to assemble.
- C. The assembly of believers is a special occasion ordained of God for prayer.

## #74 Prayer which Quotes or Summarizes Scripture

**Observation**—Acts 4:24, 26

**Interpretation**—After preaching and seeing thousands receive Christ, Peter and John were arrested, warned to stop preaching, and released. Then the church prayed, quoting Psalm 2:1-2 and 146:6.

**Application**—

*Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.*

- A. If I am asked to pray in a group, I may begin my prayer by quoting Scripture.
- B. Quoting Scripture is the best way to pray because we are praying God's words back to Him.
- C. Whenever we are praying for a serious situation, we should quote Scripture in our prayer.

## #75 Prayer and Becoming a Believer

**Observation**—Acts 10:2 [See also Acts 10:1-5, 24-26, 34ff]

**Interpretation**—After the Holy Spirit came to the Jews and the Samaritans, we learn about Cornelius. He was a Gentile seeking God and favoring the Jews. But we don't know much about the content of his faith. He sent for Peter because an angel appeared to him, telling him his previous prayers had been heard.

**Application**—

*Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.*

- A. God only answers the prayers of believers or those receiving Christ.
- B. It is biblical to encourage unbelievers to pray for God to reveal Himself to them, even if they don't yet know what to believe.
- C. We should not encourage unbelievers to pray for anything except salvation because they might think God is with them, when He is not.

## #76 Prayer about Choosing Leaders

**Observation**—Acts 14:23 [See also Luke 6:12-13 and Acts 13:3]

**Interpretation**—On the way back to Antioch from the first missionary journey, Paul and Barnabas appointed elders. These men were leaders in charge of the believers in each city. The leaders were chosen with prayer and fasting, as were Paul and Barnabas, by the leaders at Antioch, and as the 12 apostles were chosen by Christ.

**Application**—

*Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.*

Any time leaders are to be chosen for a church or mission project:

- A. It's good to pray before choosing those leaders.
- B. It's good to pray and fast before choosing those leaders.
- C. It's good to pray all night before choosing those leaders.

## #77 Prayer in a Difficult Situation

**Observation**—Acts 16:25

**Interpretation**—Paul and Silas, on the second missionary journey, were beaten and thrown into prison for casting the demon out of a fortunetelling slave girl (because now her owner couldn't make money off of her). About midnight they were *praying and singing hymns of praise to God*.

**Application**—

*Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.*

- A. We should pray and praise God in a difficult situation.
- B. We should not pray unless we can also praise God in the midst of a difficult situation.
- C. We should not praise God unless we also pray to Him.

## #78 Prayer and the Work of the Holy Spirit

**Observation**—Romans 8:26-30

**Interpretation**—God is sovereign over our prayers. The context here is predestination. Paul said God even causes our weak, unintelligent, or misdirected prayers to be brought before God by the Holy Spirit in such a way that the predetermined plan of God is what He ends up hearing. Other passages point out human impact and free will, but this one stresses God's sovereignty.

**Application**—

*Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.*

- A. I need to be careful about what I pray so that it is consistent with the predetermined plan of God.
- B. I do not need to be careful about what I pray because the Holy Spirit will bring it before God in such a way that it is consistent with God's plan.
- C. I can pray about something even if I am not sure it is in God's plan because the Holy Spirit will bring it before God in such a way that it is consistent with His plan.

## #79 Prayer and the Roles of Men and Women

**Observation**—1 Corinthians 11:4-6 [See 1 Corinthians 11:2-16]

**Interpretation**—Paul told the Corinthians that there are certain traditions which all churches are to *hold firmly* (verse 2). One is that, while praying, men should not wear anything on their heads and women should. Paul says the reason is to reflect the harmony of God's order in creation, illustrated by a fact which nature teaches us, namely, that women have longer hair than men (verses 14-15). Praying in this manner reflects the submission of women to men and men to Christ, as Christ is to the Father (verse 3).

**Application**—

*Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.*

- A. Because I am a man, I should take off my hat when I pray. By so doing, I am saying I am under the headship of Christ, offering my headship to my wife and daughters.
- B. Since Paul's purpose is to convey male headship (verse 2), it doesn't matter how I show that, as long as I show it in some way.
- C. The nature of my prayer should demonstrate submission to God, but male headship and female head covering was just a cultural issue of Paul's day.

## #80 Prayer and the Use of Our Minds

**Observation**—1 Corinthians 14:15 [See also 1 Corinthians 14:13-15 and 1 Peter 4:7]

**Interpretation**—Paul told the Corinthians that praying in tongues was useless unless it is interpreted because their minds would not be involved. Prayer is a mental message to God. The spirit without the mind is not true spirituality.

**Application**—

*Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.*

- A. We need to think when we pray.
- B. We need to think out our prayer before we pray so that we do not ramble on before God with meaningless repetition.
- C. We should not pray in tongues because that is mindless babbling.

## #81 Prayer and Giving

**Observation**—2 Corinthians 9:13-14

**Interpretation**—Paul told the Corinthians that their *gift* to the Jerusalem Christians, accompanied by their *prayer* for the Jerusalem Christians, would result in *thanksgiving* on the part of the Jerusalem Christians. This will draw the two groups together through the grace of God.

### **Application**—

*Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.*

- A. We should not support a missionary or poorer group of Christians unless we also intend to pray for them.
- B. We should not support those who are not poor or missionaries.
- C. When we support a missionary or a poorer group of Christians, we should also pray for them.

## #82 Prayer and Our Weaknesses

**Observation**—2 Corinthians 12:8-10

**Interpretation**—Paul had some problem which caused him distress and insults. When he asked God to remove the problem, he was told God's grace was sufficient because God's strength was seen in Paul's weakness.

### **Application**—

*Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.*

- A. God's answers to my prayers will keep me socially weak.
- B. God may not remove my problem if He gets more glory by my serving Him with my weakness.
- C. If I don't get an answer to my prayer, it's because God's answer is "wait" or "no."

## #83 Prayer, Wisdom, and Knowledge

**Observation**—Ephesians 1:15-17 [See also Colossians 1:9; James 1:5; and 1 Kings 3:6-13]

**Interpretation**—Paul told his readers that he was praying for them, especially that they may understand the revelation of God (which, for us, is the Bible). He went on to pray for their heart to be enlightened in the knowledge of God. Apparently, a right understanding of the revelation of God is crucial for spiritual growth.

### **Application**—

*Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.*

- A. If we don't have the right wisdom, revelation, and knowledge, we won't grow spiritually.
- B. If we don't have faith, we won't grow spiritually.
- C. If we don't apply what we know, we won't grow spiritually.

## #84 Prayer and the Trinity

**Observation**—Matthew 6:9 and John 14:14 [See also Ephesians 3:20-21 and 6:18]

**Interpretation**—Jesus told His disciples to pray to *Our Father* and to *Me*. There is no example in the Bible of prayer to angels, saints, Mary, or the Holy Spirit. In the New Testament, prayer was thought of as in the Holy Spirit and with the Holy Spirit but not to the Holy Spirit.

### **Application**—

*Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.*

- A. I should begin my prayers saying something like, "Our Father who art in heaven ..." or "Be gracious to me, O God ..." but not "Mary, mother of God" or "Dear Holy Spirit."
- B. The Bible tells us not to pray to Mary or to saints or to angels.
- C. It's wrong to pray to the Holy Spirit because there is no biblical basis for it.

## #85 Prayer and Boldness

**Observation**—Ephesians 6:19 [See also Philippians 1:3-5, 19-20; Colossians 4:3-4; 1 Thessalonians 5:25]

**Interpretation**—Paul asked the Ephesians to pray that God would give him the right words and the boldness necessary to declare the mysteries of the Gospel.

**Application**—

*Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.*

- A. It's good to pray for the success of my ministry.
- B. It's good to pray for courage in my ministry.
- C. It's good to pray for God to be involved in my ministry.

## #86 Prayer with Thanksgiving

**Observation**—Philippians 4:6 [See also Colossians 1:3; 4:2; 1 Thessalonians 1:2; 5:18; 2 Timothy 1:3]

**Interpretation**—Paul says when we make requests of God, it should be with thankfulness.

**Application**—

*Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.*

- A. Some of my prayers should include thanksgiving.
- B. Sometimes I should pray only mentioning things I am thankful for.
- C. Every time I ask God for something, I should be thankful.

## #87 Prayer and Personal Peace

**Observation**—Philippians 4:7 [See also Luke 22:43]

**Interpretation**—Paul told the Philippians to pray instead of worrying and expect a peace of mind that would guard their hearts (feelings) and their minds (understanding).

**Application**—

*Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.*

- A. I am to expect peace of mind because of my prayers.
- B. I am to have peace because I know God will answer my prayers.
- C. I'm to pray for peace in addition to whatever else I pray for.

## #88 Laboring in Prayer

**Observation**—Colossians 4:12

**Interpretation**—Paul told the Colossians about a friend of theirs who is earnestly laboring for them in prayer. Paul saw his prayer as sincere work.

**Application**—

*Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.*

- A. I must pray before I work today.
- B. I must look at prayer as part of the work I have to do today.
- C. I must pray in addition to the work I have to do today.

## #89 Prayer Without Ceasing

**Observation**—1 Thessalonians 5:17 [See also Ephesians 6:18; 2 Thessalonians 1:11; 1 Timothy 5:5; and Romans 12:12]

**Interpretation**—The context of this is things they would do all the time, so we must conclude that Paul meant for them to continually be in prayer.

**Application**—

*Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.*

- A. We should have regular weekly prayer meetings.
- B. We should personally have a daily prayer time.
- C. We should be praying as part of our thoughts and actions, all day long.

## #90 Prayer for Political Leaders

**Observation**—1 Timothy 2:1-4

**Interpretation**—Paul told Timothy to urge the Ephesians to pray for everybody and especially for political leaders, that they may be saved and we may not have to be distracted by political hassles.

**Application**—

*Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.*

- A. It's good to pray for our leaders to pursue world peace.
- B. It's good to pray for everybody to be saved, especially our political leaders.
- C. It's most important to pray that our leaders get saved because then people under them will get saved.

## #91 Lifting Our Hands in Prayer

**Observation**—1 Timothy 2:8

**Interpretation**—The emphasis here is on “holy” not “hands.” But this is certainly an acceptable form of prayer.

**Application**—

*Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.*

- A. We should all lift our hands at times when we pray.
- B. Men, not women, should lift their hands when they pray.
- C. Men should be living holy lives when they lift their hands in prayer.

## #92 Prayer and Prayer Requests

**Observation**—Hebrews 13:18-19 [See also Romans 15:30-32 and 2 Corinthians 1:11]

**Interpretation**—The author of Hebrews asked them to pray for him. Specifically, he asked for them to pray that he would be *restored to you the sooner*.

**Application**—

*Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.*

- A. It is biblical for me to ask you to pray for me, if my requests are honorable.
- B. We should always pray for the request other believers ask us to pray about.
- C. We do not have a responsibility to pray for other believers who do not ask for prayer.

## #93 Prayer, Faith, and Doubt

**Observation**—James 1:5-8 [See also James 5:15]

**Interpretation**—James told his readers to pray for wisdom, but then he said they must do it in faith, defined as not doubting, because when they doubt, they have no direction in mind when they pray—like the surf of the sea.

**Application**—

*Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.*

- A. If we had enough faith, we would get what we prayed for.
- B. If we doubt what we pray for, our mind is going in two directions at once.
- C. If we had no doubt about what we pray about, we could expect an answer from God.

## #94 Prayer for Healing

**Observation**—James 5:14-16

**Interpretation**—James told the early church that when someone is sick, they should call for the elders to pray over the sick one, anointing him or her with oil.

**Application**—

*Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.*



- A. When a believer is sick, it is biblical to call for the elders of the city to pray and anoint the sick one with oil.
- B. Everyone whom the elders anoint with oil and pray for will be healed.
- C. All sickness is caused by some sort of sin.

## #95 Prayer for the Sick

**Observation**—James 5:15 [See also 1 Timothy 5:23; 2 Samuel 12:16, 22-23; Job 1:5, 19; 2 Timothy 4:20]

**Interpretation**—James told his readers that prayer offered in faith would bring about healing from God. This is a fact but not something true without exception. Timothy had *frequent ailments*. Does that mean he was not a man of faith? Unlikely! David prayed for his infant son to be healed, yet he died. Job prayed for his children daily, yet they were all killed. Are we to assume it was because of their lack of faith? Clearly not! Paul left Trophimus sick at Miletus. Was that because Paul neglected to pray for him or didn't have enough faith that he'd be healed? Unlikely! Prayer for healing is biblical, but a lack of healing may be due to many causes.

### **Application**—

*Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.*

- A. Sick people are sick because of their sin or lack of faith.
- B. Sick people are not sick because of their sin or lack of faith.
- C. Sick people may or may not be sick because of their sin or lack of faith.

## #96 The Prayer of a Righteous Man

**Observation**—James 5:16-18

**Interpretation**—This is the most basic principle James offered. Then he illustrated it with the prayers of the prophet Elijah, who was a faithful, righteous man.

### **Application**—

*Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.*

- A. The point is to #1 be righteous and #2 pray earnestly.
- B. The point is to #1 pray earnestly and #2 be righteous.
- C. The point is to #1 call for the elders and #2 let them do the praying.

## #97 When Prayer Is Hindered

**Observation**—1 Peter 3:7

**Interpretation**—Peter told his readers that one consequence of not living with their wives in an understanding way is that their prayers would be hindered.

### **Application**—

*Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.*

- A. If I were living with my wife in an understanding way, my prayers would be answered.
- B. If I am praying, but I feel like I do not have God's attention, one thing I should check is the way I live with my wife.
- C. If I want my prayers to be answered, I need to live with my wife in an understanding way.

## #98 How to Get What You Pray For

**Observation**—1 John 5:14-17 [See also Jeremiah 7:16; Mark 11:23-24; John 14:13-16; 15:7; 16:26; 17:9; and 2 Thessalonians 1:11]

**Interpretation**—After stating, *we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him*, the Apostle John illustrated it with praying for a brother committing a sin. But then John said not to pray for a brother committing a sin unto death. So we are to pray for one brother and not the other because it is according to God's will that one be restored and not the other. Here God's will is best understood as God's plan.

**Application—**

*Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.*

- A. We get what we ask for when what we ask for is according to God's plan.
- B. We get what we ask for when what we ask for is what God desires.
- C. We get what we ask for when what we ask for is a good thing.

## #99 Prayer and Building Our Faith

**Observation—**Jude 20

**Interpretation—**In contrast to the worldly-minded, Jude told his readers that prayer was part of the process which built up their faith.

**Application—**

*Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.*

- A. The more I pray, the more evidence there is for my faith in God.
- B. Prayer is somehow connected to the building of my faith, even if I don't know how.
- C. The more I pray, the more I trust God, therefore, the stronger my faith grows.

## #100 Prayers in Heaven

**Observation—**Revelation 5:8 [See also Revelation 8:3-4]

**Interpretation—**John recorded a scene in heaven where the prayers of believers on earth are presented before God as incense in golden bowls.

**Application—**

*Choose only the best answer. For the authors' answer, see Appendix A.*

- A. All biblical prayers are always answered by God.
- B. All prayers are always presented to God.
- C. All good prayers are always valuable to God.

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# Appendix A

## The Authors' Answers

**#1** A is correct. God hears all prayers because God is omnipresent. B and C are incorrect because, although God hears everything, He is not interested in, nor does He respond to, all prayers (such as prayers offered to Allah or Buddha).

**#2** C is correct. Writing you a letter or leaving you a message on a phone answering machine is like prayer (except that God hears us immediately). The focus is on my communication to you. A and B are incorrect. If prayer involves any listening, we would have to call all of the Apostles' communication with Christ prayer. Adam spoke to God, as did Noah, Job, Abraham, Moses, Joshua, and some of the judges and prophets. But speaking directly to God when He is specifically manifested in a seeable form (which is the form of the second person of the Godhead, whom we call Jesus Christ—John 1:18) is conversation. That happened between man and God, and it is recorded in the Bible, but the Bible does not call it prayer.

**#3** C is correct. We should depend on God when we pray. A and B are incorrect. An answer to prayer may be a supernatural act of God. But answers must be kept separate from prayer because prayer is our job and answers are God's job. Visions, manifestations, and revelations of God are not prayer. These are communications from God, not to God. Prayer is always initiated by us. Therefore, we should not think of supernatural encounters with God, incurred by certain people in the Bible, as prayer. For example, Moses' encounter with God at Mt. Sinai is not the same as David's prayer to God in the Psalms.

**#4** C is correct. From all we know about prayer from the Bible, it is unique to human beings. For example, the Psalms are clearly expressions unique to human beings. Animals don't make expressions about spiritual matters, and David is not an angel. A is incorrect because there is nothing divine about prayer except that God is the recipient of our prayers. B is incorrect because many prayers aren't good. For example, some prayers are "meaningless repetition" (Matthew 6:7).

**#5** B is correct. All humans pray. A is incorrect because, although all people pray, they don't all pray according to the commands and examples (like that of David in the Psalms) given in the Bible. C is incorrect because people should not pray if they are praying to a false god or disbelieving God's Word (Proverbs 28:9).

**#6** C is correct. The Psalms, like all biblical prayers, are a message from earth to heaven. A is incorrect because spirituality is a characteristic of people, not prayer, and it has nothing to do with the direction of prayer. B is incorrect. Biblical prayer is earthly in that it comes from earth.

**#7** A is correct. For example, we can assume that the Psalms are a good model for prayer because (1) they are in the Bible, (2) they are not condemned, and (3) they fit the biblical teaching about prayer. B is incorrect because prayer is not necessarily good. C is incorrect because the Bible records bad prayers, such as those offered to false gods and those done to be noticed by people.

**#8** B is correct. David believed that God exists, that He is present and involved in the world, and that He is knowledgeable, powerful, personal, moral, and spiritual. A is incorrect. Although usually the more you know the better your prayers will be, it is not necessary to know a lot about God in order to pray to Him. C is incorrect, because biblically, you must know something true about God in order to pray to God.

**#9** C is correct. David also believes that humans, such as himself, are moral, spiritual, personal, distinct beings who have a real free will. He sees us as needy and dependent on God with the capacity to have faith, hope, and love. A is incorrect because it is people who are spiritual, not prayers. B is incorrect because it is biblical prayers, not spiritual prayers, which are significant.

**#10** C is correct. David teaches us about prayer mostly by example. His life was obviously filled with prayer. The Psalms are a testimony to the dominant role prayer played in his life. A is incorrect because godly people do not always have biblical prayers. B is incorrect. Although we may learn about prayer from other godly people, it is better to learn about prayer from the Bible than from any extra-biblical sources, no matter how biblically accurate they may be.

**#11** B is correct. Vows were a serious thing, not encouraged in the Bible and not to be taken lightly. For example, marriage is a good time to make a vow to God. A marrying couple should vow to God to never divorce, to live according to the Scripture, and if God gives them children, to teach them to know God through the Bible. A is incorrect because biblical prayer should not necessarily include an if-then statement to God. C is incorrect because there is no house of God today (Acts 7:48; 17:24; and 1 Corinthians 6:19).

**#12** A is correct. Biblical prayer may ask God to do what He has promised to do. We are praying for what God has promised to do when we pray for things like making disciples, being used by God in building His church, and having personal righteousness and maturity. B and C are incorrect because it is not necessarily praying for what God has promised to do when we ask God to bless our country or give us success in business, since God never said He would do that [see Appendix C].

**#13** C is correct. As God's people, it is biblical to pray that we be freed from continual suffering. A is incorrect because sin causes suffering, and we are sinners. It is inevitable, therefore, that we will suffer and is unreasonable to pray that we never suffer. B is incorrect because God may use oppression, sickness, or poverty to discipline us, help us change or mature, or to carry out His will. While it is biblical to pray for relief from longterm oppression, sickness, or poverty, it may, nonetheless, be a biblically profitable experience.

**#14** A is correct. I might sing a song praising God for His attributes which are revealed in Scripture. B is incorrect because God has not revealed Himself in order to fix our broken dreams. C is incorrect because Scripture does not teach that the majesty of God flows from His throne unto His own.

**#15** A is correct. Moses prayed for help, while leading Israel, when he encountered a problem he could not solve. B and C are incorrect because God has not promised to do miracles today. Although you certainly may ask God to perform a miracle, you should not expect Him to give you one (see Appendix B). God does do that which is contrary to probability, and you may choose to call that a miracle. If you do, you need to understand there was a different kind of miracle in the Bible, namely, something contrary to nature. Those contrary-to-nature events generally accompanied and confirmed God's new revelation, which was ultimately recorded in the Bible (Hebrews 2:3-4). The healings by Jesus would be an example of these contrary-to-nature miracles. But since we do not have more Bible being revealed today (Revelation 22:18), there is no basis for expecting contrary-to-nature miracles today. That is not to say that God could not do them today but only that we don't have a basis for expecting them. For example, the healings we experience today are generally contrary-to-probability but not contrary to nature.

**#16** B is correct. Kneeling or bowing can be an expression of sincerity before God. A is incorrect because no mechanical act can prove anything to God. God knows our heart and does not become convinced by something we do. C is incorrect because the Bible does not command that prayer should be done while kneeling or bowing.

**#17** B is correct. The confidence Moses had in making a request of God was based on the favor God had towards him. A is incorrect because the fact that we favor God will not help us if God does not favor us. C is incorrect. Although we should revere God, reverence does not ensure a good standing or a right relationship with God.

**#18** A is correct. It is biblical to pray for God's judgment against His enemies, for example, false teachers. B is incorrect because loving enemies is not something God does but is something we are commanded to do. C is incorrect because this prayer does not ask God to show patience toward His enemies.

**#19** B is correct. It is biblical to express my confusion and frustration to God. Sin in my life, or some unwise practice which I am unaware of, may be hindering me from doing God's work. If I don't know what it is, I should ask God to show me through His Word. A is incorrect. It is better to pray for the ability to deal with the sins of others after they have been revealed (Matthew 18) than to pray that they be revealed. C is incorrect. While there may be times when it is good to ask for future success while in the midst of current failure, it is not mentioned in this verse. Therefore, it is not a good application of this verse.

**#20** B is correct. It is biblical to pray publicly, requesting help from God as well as praising Him. For example, someone may stand up before a group of believers and publicly ask God to help them complete some mission. A is incorrect. Prayer should usually be private (Matthew 6:6). C is incorrect, prayer may be done at special occasions, but this passage does not restrict prayer for only special occasions.

**#21** A is correct. It is biblical, for example, if one has had a sexual affair, to pray for help because of the anguish caused by the affair. That doesn't erase the effects of the sin. Nonetheless, such prayer is right. B is incorrect because desperation does not make prayer more biblical. C is incorrect because God may respond to our prayers in the midst of sin (2 Kings 13:1-6).

**#22** C is correct. It is biblical, for example, to praise God for those faithfully doing righteous acts such as evangelism, discipleship, teaching their own children, being faithful to their spouse in a difficult marriage, or practicing celibacy before marriage. A and B are incorrect because you can be noble and courageous without being righteous.

**#23** A is correct. A central virtue in prayer is to want what God wants. B is incorrect because asking for a lesser evil is still asking for something evil. C is incorrect because, although it is always good to pray when we are blind and weak, it does not allow us to expect an answer from God. Certainly we can expect God to do what He has promised (as, for example, in John 1:12), but He has not promised to answer every request any of us make. We shall discuss this more in the rest of this study book. [See also Appendix C.]

**#24** C is correct. It is biblical to pray, recognizing the attributes of God, like sovereignty when someone is born or dies. A and B are incorrect. Although they may be good prayers, Hannah does not mention them in her prayer.

**#25** A is correct. It is biblical to ask God what to do when we encounter a situation which we feel is morally wrong or ungodly. For example, a mission group we are part of may decide to hire a president we disapprove of. God may allow it because the group has rejected Him as their source of truth. B is incorrect. Samuel didn't try to change the decision God had made. C is incorrect. We should never tolerate things we do not like if those things are against God. We should deal with sin as Samuel dealt with sin, but we shouldn't tolerate it, just as he didn't tolerate it.

**#26** A is correct. In this passage, Samuel prayed for rain in order for the sin of the people to be revealed to them. B is incorrect because their sin is the issue, not whether or not they are successful. C is incorrect because countries don't sin, people sin, and God responds to the sin of individuals.

**#27** C is correct. When God denies our specific requests, we should rejoice in the gifts He has given and will give and praise Him for who He is. A is incorrect as an application of this passage, even though it is a true statement. B is incorrect here because David was rejoicing in future blessing, not past blessing.

**#28** B is correct. God is often gracious and merciful, so it is good to pray for these things but not to demand or expect them. It's biblical to pray for God to bail me out of the results of my sin, even though God does not always grant it. A is incorrect. Grace and mercy, unlike love and justice, are not attributes of God. C is incorrect. Fasting and prayer are biblical examples but are not biblical commands (Acts 13:3).

**#29** C is correct. Biblical prayer reflects a belief that God is the Creator of heaven and earth. A is incorrect because prayer should not begin with incorrect beliefs (Proverbs 28:9). B is incorrect because we should pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17), not just when life backs us into a corner.

**#30** A is correct because many of David's prayers were in the form of songs of praise to the Lord. B is incorrect because the passage is not a command for everyone to use outstanding musicians. C is incorrect because Asaph was a musician, not a song leader.

**#31** B is correct. It's biblical to pray for the prayers of others. For example, we might not only pray for our children but also that the prayers of our children be answered when they turn from their sin. A is incorrect because today there are no holy places (John 4:21-24). C is incorrect because prayers can be short (Nehemiah 2:1-8).

**#32** C is correct. Jesus spoke of His own body as the Temple (John 2:21), and Paul wrote, *Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body* (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). A is incorrect. Jews were to make the Temple in Jerusalem the focal point of prayer on earth. The church congregation today does not replace the Old Testament Temple. Any place a believer prays, or gathers with other believers to pray, is the place of the Temple of God on earth today. (See also 1 Peter 2:5-9.) B is incorrect. There is no New Testament command to face any particular direction today.

**#33** A is correct. It is biblical to ask God to reveal to someone that He is God. Suppose I'm witnessing to a

friend. It's okay to ask God to do something specific and unmistakable in my friend's life so that he or she will know that God is real. B is incorrect. Jesus said, *An evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign* (Matthew 12:39). C is incorrect. We shouldn't expect God to deal with us the way He dealt with Old Testament believers.

**#34** C is correct. *If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness* (1 John 1:9). Josiah confessed his sin when it was revealed to him from God's Word. A is incorrect because we should pray for the Jews to repent and accept Christ. B is incorrect because we should not just wait for conviction from the Word of God to prompt our confession.

**#35** B is correct. Even if I have led a sinful life like Manasseh, I can turn to God. But I must come in humility. I cannot come with excuses, like, "I'm sorry, but I grew up in a broken home" or "I'm sorry, but my parents abused me" or "I'm sorry, but I have a bad natural or genetic tendency" or "I'm sorry, but I have a bad marriage." "I'm sorry, but ..." is an explanation, not a confession. A is incorrect. Our humility does not guarantee that God will restore us to our earthly position. C is incorrect. Although it is true that we should turn to God in the midst of a crisis, the point of the passage is our attitude of humility when we turn to God, not the expectation that He will solve the crisis.

**#36** C is correct. The basis of our appeal to God is God's own character. We should make requests based on His compassion and because we are His people. A is incorrect because the passage does not speak of restoring America. B is a legitimate prayer request, but the best application from the passage comes from Daniel asking God to keep His own promises.

**#37** B is correct. It's biblical to fast or cry or be in anguish for days over a prayer request. A is incorrect because prayer should always be taken seriously. C is incorrect because there is no biblical command that we should specifically pray night and day.

**#38** A is correct. It's biblical to pray a quick prayer in an urgent situation. We may pray a few words before a test, a speech, an interview, in a dangerous situation, or before we die. But this should be done within a lifestyle of regular devotion to prayer. There's an old story about a boy and his grandfather being chased by a bull. The boy asked if they should stop and pray. The grandfather said, "Son, I stayed prayed up for times like this." B is not incorrect, but prayer should usually be thought through. C is also correct. Although it was the urgency, not completing a task for God, which caused Nehemiah to pray in this instance.

**#39** C is correct. It's biblical to pray back to God a record of what He has done. We should pray in detail, demonstrating from God's perspective all He has done. We should not just pray, "Thanks for all You've done for me and given me." A is incorrect because there is no biblical formula for what percentage of our prayer should cover what God has done in the past. B is incorrect. Although it is biblical to mention creation (Revelation 4:11), we are not commanded to mention creation in prayer.

**#40** C is correct. It's biblical for parents to pray for the spiritual condition of their children. We should pray for our children regularly, daily, and continually. It's simply part of the responsibility of being a parent. If you aren't going to pray regularly for your children, then don't have any. A is incorrect because the passage is not about Job making sacrifices for his children in the sense that parents would make sacrifices for their children today. B is incorrect because *when* you pray is not the point. *That* you pray is the point.

**#41** B is correct. It is biblical to ask God to answer our prayers. A is incorrect. David did not expect God to answer in the sense that his prayer life depended upon God's answers. Say I pray for a bad situation at my work or school. It's good to ask God to answer that prayer and fix the problem. But it is not good to say, "I know God will fix it because I prayed for it." God may want me to have that situation. For example, He may have designed it to help me learn wisdom, to provide a witnessing opportunity, or to work in some other person's life. To demand or expect an answer is not biblical. To ask for one is biblical (see Appendix B). C is incorrect. There is nothing in the passage about David waiting on God. Besides, waiting implies inactivity. For example, if you have cancer and you ask God to heal it, you should also go to the doctor to have the cancer treated. Or if you pray and

ask God for a ministry, you should not just sit at home and wait for it to happen. *Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, that they are white for harvest* (John 4:35).

**#42** A is correct. I should express my love for God in prayer. It must, however, be a love based on my feelings about the righteous character of God. I must exercise my will to believe in God based on my intellect (my knowledge of Him.) Then use my emotions to express the love I have developed for the God I know. B is incorrect because prayer shouldn't be emotional if it is based on feelings alone and not on knowledge. C is incorrect because expressing emotion is good but not biblically necessary in order to pray.

**#43** B is correct. David's desire was that he change so that he might be acceptable to God. The standard for my thoughts and words in my prayer is what is acceptable to God. A is incorrect because God has already revealed to us, in His word, what He finds acceptable. C is incorrect because we should ask God to respond based on His character, not ours.

**#44** C is correct. My trust must be in God, not my friends or teachers or employers or parents or spouse or government, etc. It is that trust in God which should be expressed in my prayers. A and B are incorrect because they are not biblical descriptions of God's leadership.

**#45** A is correct. We should take reasonable action in conflict situations but never assume we can defeat our enemies. For example, we may have to hire a lawyer, but we must depend on God, not lawyers. B is incorrect because it is not being taught in Psalm 35. C is incorrect, because it is impossible (and the Bible does not tell us to) to avoid all our enemies.

**#46** C is correct. It is biblical to pray telling God how we long for His presence, not just in our hearts but especially in heaven with Him in the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21 and 22). A is incorrect. It is true that we should pray for the wicked to repent, but that is not what David is doing here. B is incorrect because the world is full of wickedness, and we are sent into that world (John 17:15).

**#47** C is correct. It is biblical to love the Bible and tell God so in prayer. I should express in my prayer my love for the revealed inerrant written Word of God contained on the pages of the Bible. A is incorrect because we are not told to pray for God's continued revelation today. B is incorrect, although memorizing can be very valuable. The Bible commands us to meditate on God's Word, but it never commands us to memorize it.

**#48** A is correct. David implies we should praise God "every day." B is incorrect. Although it may generally be a true statement, David was much more specific using the words, "every day," and "forever." C is incorrect. It is true that we should praise God forever, but there is no biblical evidence that the praise of God will be done through prayer in eternity.

**#49** B is correct. We should not pray things like: "God, if you heal me, I'll serve You," or "If You make me rich, I'll give it to You," or "If You get me out of this mess, I'll become a missionary," or "If You keep my wife from finding out about my affair, I'll become a godly man." A is incorrect because God encourages us to ask for godly things—"you don't have because you don't ask." C is incorrect. With the exception of marriage, we should avoid making promises to God (Matthew 5:33-37). The problem with making promises, pledges, or vows is that you cannot control future circumstances.

**#50** A is correct. When we sin, God is angry about that sin. When we confess it (1 John 1:9) and turn away from it, God comforts us. It's biblical to pray, thanking God for that comfort. B is incorrect because, although God has forgiven us our sin, He is still angry when we sin. C is incorrect because, although it is true that we should be thankful for the future millennial kingdom, Isaiah is here describing a prayer of thanksgiving after the kingdom is established.

**#51** C is correct. We must understand that God is sovereign and His plan cannot be broken no matter what we pray or how much we pray. A and B are incorrect. We cannot change God. Even though it is true that we have

a real free will which influences God and the sincere prayer of a righteous person moves the heart of God, still nothing happens outside of God's sovereign plan, which was made in eternity past (Ephesians 1:3-5).

**#52** B is correct. It is biblical to continue to pray even if the law forbids it. Most countries' laws do not forbid personal prayer. We should establish a prayer pattern and not break that when laws (even social or cultural ones) discourage it. A is incorrect because prayer does not have to be public. C is incorrect because it is not a good application of this passage, and the Bible does not command us to pray three times a day.

**#53** A is correct. It is biblical to express our frustration to God over unanswered prayer. If we pray for something God also desires (say, for less suffering or more righteousness), and the condition continues, then it is biblical to express our frustration over the fact that ... you're still sick, the church is still hypocritical, etc. B is incorrect because not all frustrations (like I'm having a bad hair day) should be expressed to God (see Ecclesiastes 5:2). C is incorrect because it is not good to question God. When Job questioned God about his suffering, God, in essence, responded, "Who are you to question Me?"

**#54** A is correct. Jesus favors private secret prayer in your inner room or "closet" (Matthew 6:6). B is incorrect because if we are asked to pray publicly, we must be careful not to preach or try to impress people. Public prayer should be done as if it were private. C is incorrect because sincerity is not, in itself, a virtue in prayer. Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims, and idolators are often sincere in prayer.

**#55** B is correct. Jesus warned about the danger of meaningless repetition. A and C are incorrect because repeating true things is not necessarily meaningless, if I think about what I am repeating.

**#56** B is correct. We must forgive people because of our relationship with God, not because they ask for it. A and C are incorrect because there is nothing in this passage about people asking for forgiveness.

**#57** A is correct. For example, if I pray for good health, I should also be seeking good health. If I pray for someone to come to Christ, I should also be seeking to lead them to Christ. B may be true, but here Jesus seems to link together asking and seeking. C is incorrect because we may believe we should seek for bad things.

**#58** C is correct. What is needed is not more religion or religious professionals but more people willing to shepherd sheep. A is incorrect because these are religious leaders, not necessarily shepherds of the sheep. B is incorrect. Even though these are biblical gifts (Ephesians 4:11), the point here is for gifted people to use their gifts to shepherd Christ's sheep.

**#59** B is correct. Jesus thanked God for hiding these things from the "wise" and revealing them to "infants." A is good to do but not taught in this passage. C is only half correct because it only deals with half of what Christ prayed.

**#60** B is correct because it seems Jesus always prayed before a meal. A is incorrect because the Bible never calls it a sin, and there are times the Apostles ate when no prayer is mentioned, for example, when eating grain on the Sabbath (Matthew 12:1). C is incorrect because that could never be concluded from this passage.

**#61** C is correct. Jesus here prays for an outcome He, as the Son of God, knew God would not bring about. A and B are incorrect. It is not biblical to expect God to answer (or not answer) our particular prayers unless God has already promised in the Bible to answer (or not answer) that particular prayer.

**#62** A is correct. For example, when we pray for something, there may come a time when more prayer is not appropriate, namely, when that event is over or inevitable. If I pray for a sick friend to live and he or she dies, then praying for his or her health ends. B is incorrect because a good prayer should be prayed consistently, as long as it's appropriate to do so. C is incorrect because some prayer requests are inappropriate, for example, if they are contrary to the will of God.



- #63** A is correct. Isaiah told us that God does the unexpected and *acts in behalf of the one who waits for Him*. B and C are incorrect because they assume God works for us, and, therefore, always eventually answers our requests.
- #64** C is correct. The emphasis here is to *flee immorality* and *glorify God in your body* because it is *a temple of the Holy Spirit*. A and B are incorrect because neither our body nor the collective body of believers replace the Temple in Jerusalem. The early church honored the Temple in Jerusalem (Acts 2:46). They did not see it as replaced by the church.
- #65** B is correct. Jesus prayed alone all night before choosing the twelve. A is incorrect here, although it might be a good idea. The passage illustrates private, not group, prayer. C is incorrect because the place of prayer is not what is stressed here. [See also John 4:21-24.]
- #66** C is correct. Jesus specifies here to pray for those who mistreat us. A and B are incorrect only because they are not mentioned in Luke 6:28. Both, however, are true in general.
- #67** C is correct. On a few occasions Jesus invited a small group of His closest disciples to come away and pray with Him. A is incorrect because this passage is not an example of how Jesus usually prayed. B is incorrect because occasionally He prayed with both small groups and large groups.
- #68** C is correct. Jesus concludes with *your heavenly Father [will] give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him*. A is incorrect because persistence in prayer for evil things or to idols or to false gods does not get God's attention (in a positive way). B is incorrect because it could include bad prayers.
- #69** C is correct. Illegal drug use is sinful because it is illegal (Romans 13:1-3), and it destroys our bodies (1 Corinthians 6:19), so we should pray that our children be kept from that. A is incorrect because here Jesus prays, *I do not ask You to take them out of the world*. B is incorrect. Not being tempted is not what Christ prayed for.
- #70** B is correct. Jesus assumes the truth as a basis for unity. A is incorrect because it would not be biblical, for example, to pray for the unity between Christians and the Mormons, or those who are true disciples of Christ and those who believe there are other ways to God—like Buddha or some religion. C is incorrect because we should pray that people believe the truth, not that they unite their beliefs.
- #71** A is correct. The central theme in all our prayers should be to bring glory to God. B and C are incorrect because they focus on man, not God.
- #72** C is correct. The question is, What did Jesus mean, *pray that you may not enter into temptation*? The point seems to be that we overcome the temptation to sin. A is incorrect because keeping us out of every possible sinful situation would be to stay out of the world in which we live. B is incorrect because even Jesus was tempted to sin (Hebrews 4:15).
- #73** B is correct. Acts 2:42 specifies prayer as one of the four things the early church did when they assembled together. A is incorrect because believers might get together for many reasons (to watch a football game, play basketball, go hunting or shopping) which don't necessitate prayer. C is incorrect because the assembly of believers is not a special time when prayer is more ordained of God than any other time.
- #74** A is correct. Quoting Scripture is a biblical way to pray. B is incorrect because nothing says quoting Scripture is the best way to pray. C is incorrect because many serious significant prayers in the Bible did not quote Scripture.

**#75** B is correct. Unbelievers, of course, pray when they get saved, but they may also pray before that for someone to tell them more about God. A and C are incorrect because, even though the emphasis in Scripture is on believers' prayers, God has not said He would never answer the prayers of unbelievers.

**#76** B is correct. This verse says *they prayed with fasting* before choosing the leaders. A and C are good statements, but fasting is included here and all-night praying is not.

**#77** A is correct. In verse 21, Paul and Silas *were praying and singing hymns of praise to God* while fastened to stocks in prison. B and C are incorrect because the passage does not teach anything about who should not pray or praise God.

**#78** C is correct. The Spirit *helps our weakness, for we do not know how to pray as we should*. A is incorrect because we cannot always know the predetermined plan of God. B is incorrect because we always need to be careful about how we pray since we decide what to pray based on our desires. We will be accountable for what we choose to pray for.

**#79** A is correct. Paul says, *Every man who has something on his head while praying or prophesying disgraces his head*. I don't prophesy, but I do pray. B is incorrect because Paul says it does matter how we show headship and submission (verse 16). C is incorrect because Paul's command had to do with the tradition he delivered to them (verse 2), what is taught *by nature itself* (verse 14), and *we have no other practice nor have the churches of God*. Culture had nothing to do with it.

**#80** A is correct. Paul here stresses that our minds be fruitfully engaged while praying. Meaningless repetition, rambling, and babbling are all condemned in the Bible. Spiritual prayer is a mental thing. B is incorrect because the text does not command that we think through our prayers before we pray. C is incorrect because Paul here only says that tongues in prayer need interpretation.

**#81** C is correct. When we pray for those we support, this tends to bring us closer together and allows us both to rejoice in the grace of God. A is incorrect because praying for people is not a condition for giving. B is incorrect because the passage says nothing about who we should not support.

**#82** B is correct. Paul tells us that God's power was displayed in Paul's weakness. A is incorrect because the Bible does not say God wants everybody socially weak. C is incorrect because Paul received a specific "no" answer, not just unchanged circumstances.

**#83** A is correct. Paul prays that they have a spirit of wisdom, revelation, and knowledge of Christ. B and C are correct statements but incorrect here because they are not taught in this passage.

**#84** A is correct. We are told to pray to God the Father and God the Son. B is incorrect. The Bible does not specifically mention prayer in connection with Mary, saints, or angels. But it does say, *For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus* (1 Timothy 2:5). It's just that there is no example of it or encouragement to do so. C is incorrect because the deity of the Holy Spirit is a legitimate reason to pray to Him. There is, however, no biblical example of it.

**#85** B is correct. Paul asked them to pray that God would give him boldness to say the right things. A is incorrect because God is not promoting the success of our ministries. C is incorrect because we should pray to be involved in what God is doing, not for God to be involved in what we are doing.

**#86** C is correct. Paul says, *with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God*. A and B are insufficient conclusions for what Paul taught here.

- #87** A is correct. Paul says when I pray for what I am anxious about, the peace of God will guard my heart and mind in Christ Jesus. B is incorrect because the peace promised here is not because my prayers will be answered. C is incorrect because this passage does not say to pray for peace.
- #88** B is correct. Paul said Epaphras was laboring in prayer for them. A is incorrect because prayer is part of our work, not before it. C is incorrect because prayer is part of our work, not in addition to work.
- #89** C is correct. In the same sense that I am to *rejoice always* (verse 16) and *in everything give thanks* (verse 18), I am to always be expressing myself to God all day long. A and B are incorrect because prayer here is not a meeting or any particular occasion of prayer.
- #90** B is correct. Paul said to pray for *all men*, and here he emphasizes *kings and all who are in authority*, all in the context that God *desires all men to be saved*. A is incorrect because personal peace, not world peace, is mentioned here. C is incorrect because nowhere does the Bible teach it's more important for leaders to get saved.
- #91** C is correct. This command is given to men, to be sure. The hands they raise in prayer represents holy lives. A is incorrect because God's answer to our prayer is not based on some mechanical right way to do it. B is incorrect because, although the passage is addressed to males, it does not forbid females from raising their hands in prayer.
- #92** A is correct. This passage gives the example of requesting others to pray for us. B is incorrect because the Bible does not say we must agree to every request for prayer. C is incorrect because we have a responsibility to pray for those close to us, and even our enemies (Matthew 5:44), whether or not they request prayer.
- #93** B is correct. James says a doubter is double-minded. His prayers, therefore, go in two directions at once. A and C are incorrect because there is no formula which guarantees answers to prayer. Even if we have all the faith in the world, God won't give us what is sinful or contrary to His plan.
- #94** A is correct. The passage tells us to call for the elders of the church to pray and anoint the sick one with oil. B is incorrect. Verse 15 is like Peter's statement that sinful husbands can be won by submissive wives (1 Peter 3:1). This is not a magic formula for success but a statement of how things should be done. C is incorrect because there are many reasons for sickness.
- #95** C is correct. Sickness has a wide range of causes. One could be personal sin. Therefore, A and B are incorrect.
- #96** A is correct. Elijah is the example here, and he was a *righteous man* who prayed *earnestly*. B is incorrect because the point is that Elijah was first and foremost a righteous man. C is incorrect because here the point is not to call for the elders, and even when we do, we are not to give up our own prayer responsibility.
- #97** B is correct. One reason to live with my wife in an understanding way is so my prayers not be hindered. A is incorrect because there are many things that might hinder my prayers. C is incorrect because Peter states it the other way around. His focus is on living with my wife, not prayer.
- #98** A is correct. John says God hears and answers us according to *His will*—best understood as God's plan. B and C are incorrect because not all of God's desires are in His plan nor is every good thing. For example, God is not willing for any to perish (2 Peter 3:9), and God hates divorce (Malachi 2:16), yet we know people perishing and being divorced are in God's plan because it happens.

**#99** B is correct. Jude lists prayer in the context with building my faith, but he does not say how one affects the other. A is incorrect because Jude does not list prayer as evidence for faith. C is incorrect because Jude does not give a cause-effect argument.

**#100** C is correct. The point of this passage seems to be the value of our prayers to God. A is incorrect because answers to prayer are not taught here and there are examples of biblical prayers that were not answered. B is incorrect. In view of Romans 8:26, it seems the Holy Spirit keeps some of our prayers from reaching God the Father. (See also #78.)

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## Appendix B

### Expecting God to Answer Prayer

Expecting God to answer prayer keeps my prayer life from maturity. God is not in the business of meeting my expectations. God is who He is not who I expect Him to be. God is doing what He is doing not what I expect Him to do. When I ask God to do what He has promised to do, then, of course, I can expect a “yes” answer (for example, John 1:12; John 3:16, etc.). But most of my prayers are not that. Most of my prayers are more like David’s in Psalm 22. David asked God to save him (verses 19-21) from a specific situation. Since God never specified that He would save David from that situation, David does not expect God to do so. David requests deliverance, wants it, and hopes for it, but he does not expect it.

When I expect God to answer prayer, at least two things happen (probably many more):

- (1) My concept (doctrine or theology) of God changes from biblical to personal. I begin ignoring who the Bible says God is and begin focusing on who I want Him to be.
- (2) My communication with God changes from what’s right to what works. I begin to think of good prayer as what gets me what I want rather than what the Bible says is good prayer.

Consider the prayer of Christ about the cross. We read, *And He went a little beyond [them] and fell on His face and prayed, saying, “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as Thou wilt”* (Matthew 26:39). When He was dying, we read, *and about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, “Eli, Eli, Lama Sabachthani?” that is, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?”* (Matthew 27:46).

Jesus prayed about good things. It’s good to pray for suffering to be removed because God is against suffering (Revelation 22:1-3). It’s good to pray for the will of God to be done. It’s good to pray expressing pain over being forsaken by God (in this case, due to our sin). It’s good to **desire** these things and **express** these things.

But it is **not** good to **expect** them. Jesus desired relief from the suffering of the cross, but He did not expect. If He had expected a “yes” answer, it would have hindered His relationship with God the Father, which is, of course, theologically impossible. Even Jesus didn’t get a “yes” to all His requests.

Therefore, we know that it can be right to pray for that which God will not answer “yes.” The only thing that is not right is to expect God to answer (unless, as I mentioned before, it is something which He previously specifically promised). I make no distinction between unanswered prayer and a “no” answer to prayer. If unanswered prayer is “wait,” then it is not unanswered prayer.

# Appendix C

## Claiming Promises in Prayer

It is part of biblical prayer to claim promises which God has given to us. For example, it's biblical to claim the promise of salvation if we ask Christ to come into our lives (John 1:12). It is biblical to claim peace of mind when I pray about a personal problem (Philippians 4:6-7). It is biblical to claim the promise of answered prayer for those things which are part of God's plan (1 John 5:14-17). Old Testament prayers of the prophets, for example, are filled with appeals to God based on His promises to Israel.

Claiming promises, however, is only biblical when those promises are indeed given in the Bible. So claiming promises depends on a correct understanding or interpretation of the text being claimed. Many people are claiming promises God never made. For example,

- 2 Chronicles 7:14 reads, *and [if] My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray, and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.* [See also Deuteronomy 28:1.] Many people claim this as a promise from God to restore their nation if the people turn to God. But this was a promise made to Israel, not any other nation. God made no national promises for believers in the church.
- In Deuteronomy 28 we read, *The Lord will establish you as a holy people to Himself, as He swore to you, if you will keep the commandments of the Lord your God, and walk in His ways. ...And the Lord will make you abound in prosperity, in the offspring of your body and in the offspring of your beast and in the produce of your ground, in the land which the Lord swore to your fathers to give you* (verses 9 and 11). Many people claim this as a promise of personal prosperity for believers who keep God's commandments. But this, again, was given to Jews in Israel, not believers of the church age. Jesus promised His followers peace in Him but not prosperity in the world. Actually, He promised them hatred and tribulation from this world (John 15:19 and 16:33). Paul explained, *through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God* (Acts 14:22).
- In John 14:14 Jesus said, *If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it.* Many claim that Jesus promised to do anything they ask as long as they pray "in Jesus' name, ... Amen." But Jesus is talking to His Apostles in the Upper Room, discussing their role in the beginning of the church. This is not a promise to the church in general. During this same discourse, He told them the Holy Spirit was not yet sent, and when He came, He would cause them to remember all that Jesus said. But these are not promises for us today. We already have the Holy Spirit, and we never heard Jesus speak and are not going to be caused by the Spirit to remember His words. These were promises to the Apostles but not to us.

Remember, all Scripture is to be applied by us (2 Timothy 3:16-17), but not all Scripture is a promise to us, and we must be careful to discern the difference (2 Timothy 2:15). Actually, reading the Bible is a little like reading someone else's mail—not exactly, since it is assumed others would read it, too, and there are some things for all of us in that mail. But to apply the Bible is to learn about God, the author of the Scripture and then apply His mind, as revealed in that Scripture to a human author and written without error. It does not mean we can claim all the promises that the biblical authors or speakers gave to their audiences or readers.

Suppose, for example, my friend Joe is looking for a car. I find a great deal and write to him to tell him another friend's car is for sale for \$1000, which is an excellent deal, but for him, my friend will lower the price to \$800. If you read my letter, you could claim the promise for \$1000 but not \$800. The letter was not to you, but it is about you, if you need a \$1000 car.

This is common in any message. When the President addresses Congress during the State of the Union Address, he is speaking to them, not me. I am listening to someone else's speech. Some of its promises are not for me. "I promise if you pass this legislation in 30 days, I will not veto it." Some of it is. "The American people need lower taxes." The difference is the Bible was written by God, so it reveals the heart of God, which is always applicable.