

EVERLASTING LIFE BAPTIST CHURCH

A HELP FOR PERSONAL PRAYER LIFE

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Protestant reformer Martin Luther remarked, “prayer is not overcoming God’s reluctance, but laying hold of His willingness.” Luther laid hold of a significant kernel of truth regarding prayer for believers. The failure concerning prayer has its locus in us, not in our gracious God. It is He, after all, who repeatedly summons us, in Scripture, to His throne.

Scripture presents promises from God to us regarding the efficacy of our petitions, supplications, and intercessions before Him. No one who approaches the Almighty with prayer requests is on a fool’s errand. Some of the promises that elicit from us frequent engagement in prayer to the Lord are marked with encouragement. For example, **Jeremiah 33:3**, “Call to me and I will answer you, I will tell you great and mighty things, which you do not know.” He implored Jeremiah to pray to Him even as He does us. Other passages, too, provide us with encouragement to come boldly before His throne of grace: **Mark 11:22-24; James 5:17-18; 1 John 5:14-15**.

Prayer is an act of faith and worship. As we come to His behest, we do so in faith and worship Him as we do. Joel Beeke writes, “the most fundamental act of faith and worship is described in Scripture as calling upon the Name of the Lord (**Genesis 4:26; Romans 10:11-13**). When we call upon the Name of the Lord, we call upon everything that God is—all that he has revealed Himself to be.”

And what has He disclosed about Himself to us? Among His disclosures are omnipotence, grace, mercy, kindness, sovereignty, etc. Divine sovereignty over all things is not, or should not, ever be an inhibition to prayer, rather it is an incentive to it. For if God did not rule over all, and was not able to bring His will to pass in answering our prayers, our petitions would be an exercise in impotence at best. And at worst, a journey into the world of fantasy.

Jonathan Edwards states, “God has been pleased to constitute prayer to be the antecedent to the bestowment of mercy, and He is pleased to bestow mercy in consequence of prayer, as though He were prevailed upon by prayer.” God in His grace, permits us to participate in accomplishing His purposes in his church, our lives, and the world.

Prayer is a part of faithful discipleship. The earliest disciples of our Lord were men and women who practiced prayer (**Acts 2:42; 3:1**). Prayer was also commanded of believers then and remains a duty for followers of the Lord Jesus Christ (**Romans 12:12; Colossians 4:2; 1 Thessalonians 5:17**).

Our intercessions at our Father's throne are to include the lost. The Lord is entirely able to save without our involvement, but it has pleased Him to grant us the privilege of appealing to Him for souls (**Romans 10:1; 1 Timothy 2:1-4**). Gospel presentations to sinners and petitions on their behalf are two weapons in our spiritual arsenal that the Holy Spirit utilizes to bring the elect to salvation. Neither of these should be neglected by the saints in their spiritual responsibility before the Lord.

Prayer, as a matter of spiritual reality, connects the believer to the Omnipotent One. There is, therefore, no power that can withstand prayer, because there is no power that can withstand the Almighty. Is it any wonder then that Martin Luther once asserted, "prayer is the mightiest of all weapons that created natures can wield?"