

SET FREE!

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We've all heard messages concerning how to pray, what to pray, when to pray and that we need to pray. It's probably the most written about and talked about subject of anything that the Bible talks about and yet, there is always more to know and understand.

Prayer is basically talking to and with God and just like anything else we do there, are different approaches to this.

Ephesians 6:18 *"Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit."*

The term "all prayer" is translated in some Bibles as "all kinds of prayer". This would be accurate, because there are many kinds of prayer.

This verse said "prayer and supplication" and so does this one.

Phil. 4:6 *"Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your request be made known unto God."*

The word "supplication" is often translated "petition".

In this day of public input to government policies, we all know what a petition is.

Across the top we write what we are looking to have done and then everyone signs his or her name to it.

This kind of petition style prayer can be called "praying the solution and not the problem." We come to the Father with His covenant promises, and we pray His solutions as recorded in the Word. It's a somewhat formal kind of praying.

Just like there is more than one way to address individuals there is more than one way in which we approach God.

If I was having a personal conversation with my wife and all that I did each time we talked was to quote back to her our marriage vows, it would lose a lot of its intimacy.

Many people don't know about intimate conversations with God because all that they ever hear are more formal public prayers. If your pastor were to ask you to stand and lead the meeting in prayer, some of you might have a cardiac arrest. You'd be worrying if you said all the right things, did you cover all of the topic, did I say "O Lord" too many times, etc.

The reason you'd be so conscious of your words is because it was more like a speech for us to hear rather than what you really wanted to say to Father God.

When a person has only heard others pray like this, they might begin to think that you

always have to be super formal with God. But that is not so.

Let's talk a bit about intimacy in prayer.

Our prayer life needs to be primarily **spiritual**.

John 4:24 *"God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."*

Prayer is an act of worship.

I like the direct Greek rendering of this verse:

"A spirit God is and those worshipping Him in spirit and truth need to worship."

"Worship": motion towards; to kiss; to adore.

Intimate prayer is not a formal experience it is an intimate and personal experience.

This experience is to be so intimate, that the verse we read in Ephesians 6:18 said we are to pray *"always in the spirit"*.

So prayer is not just a mental process, it's spirit-to-spirit intimacy.

In this article I'll try to address one of the things that hinder most people from enjoying intimate prayer.

If you come away from a time of prayer and you have not enjoyed it at all. If it was a religious exercise to you, something you felt like you **had** to do, then you don't know

intimate prayer. You likely have things that are blocking you from enjoying prayer and the wonderful experience it is meant to be.

It's time to be set free in your prayer life.

One of the reasons that many people don't have intimate prayer is what we began with. They've only heard formal public praying and have never known anything different. This is not likely the case with most people, but this next reason is a more likely one.

The greatest hindrance to intimate prayer is having a lack of understanding of who we are in Christ Jesus and what His grace has provided for us.

We need to see ourselves as God sees us. He sees us like He has made us to be.

2 Corinthians 5:21 *"For he hath made him (Jesus) to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."*

"Righteousness" is an old English term meaning: God's quality of rightness. One of my commentaries said that this verse is saying, that, "we are by faith, forensically made right with the demands of the law by the atonement of Christ."

The what of the what?

Forensic means something that is used in the courts of law. In the courts of the laws of God, we have not just had right standing applied to us, like a title, we have actually been made into a person who is in perfect standing with the laws of God.

A few verses back, **Verse 17**, it says, *"Therefore if any*

man be in Christ he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

The great exchange occurred when Jesus, who knew no sin, became sin - so that we who knew or had no intimate experience with righteousness - could become what he is - righteous.

This is where some folks get a bit confused. They get the process of sanctification, which means to be separated from, or progressively separating ourselves from, a life style or the actions of sin - and the state of being.

The state of being righteous: we can't become more righteous in God's eyes than we are now.

So we have two things here, the process and a state of being.

We make progress in how we live out that state of being through holy living. **That is progressive sanctification.**

This is a lifetime process. The good news is that there is a freedom in this process.

So many get this confused.

They think that if they can just stop doing this or that or if they can do more of this or that, that they will be more righteous or more acceptable to Father God. The fact however is, we have been made acceptable to God, through what Jesus did for us. Not through our actions.

2 Corinthians 3:17-18

17 Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. 18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

"where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty".

Where does the Spirit of the Lord live? He lives in you and me.

So there is liberty or freedom to be intimate with God when we know who we are in Christ Jesus.

As we look into the mirror of the spirit, we see Jesus looking back at us. Here is the progressive part. As we continue to look into that mirror our image changes into the image that is in the mirror.

Verse. 18 (Philips) *"we are transfigured in ever-increasing splendour into his own image, and the transformation comes from the Lord who is the Spirit."*

The mirror changes the person to look like the reflection and the reflection is Jesus.

So how does that happen? How do we turn into the image that is in the mirror?

Firstly, when we are born again we become one with Him in spirit, thus we are in His image. We are righteous in our position.

Secondly, our lifestyle will begin to reflect the person of Jesus in the way we live.

John 1:1 & 14 *"In the beginning was the Word and the Word was God and the Word became flesh and dwelt amongst us."*

Jesus is the Word.

As we spend time looking into the Word, the Word changes our lifestyle to become like His. Once again, the mirror changes the lifestyle to look like the reflection and the reflection is Jesus.

HOW DOES THAT WORK?

James 1:23-25 (Philips)

"The man who simply hears and does nothing about it is like a man catching the reflection of his own face in a mirror. He sees himself, it is true, but he goes on with whatever he was doing without the slightest recollection of what sort of person he saw in the mirror. But the man who looks into the perfect mirror of God's law, the law of liberty, and makes a habit of so doing, is not the man who sees and forgets. He puts that law into practice and he wins true happiness."

When I look in the mirror in the morning and see that my hair needs combing and my beard needs shaving then I see what needs doing and I do it.

But if I looked and saw what needed doing and then walked away without doing anything about it, that would not be a very pretty sight after a few hours.

Now as a believer, we look into that perfect law of liberty, and we apply what it says to do.

We apply that Word and then we start to look, to those around us, like the finished product, the face in the mirror. We look like Jesus. That's the **progressive** side of this analogy.

From the **positional** point of view God sees us as the **finished work**, because of the **finished work** of Calvary. He sees us with our hair combed and our face clean and all of that. From his side of the mirror he sees us perfect - all cleaned up. He sees Jesus.

What we need to do is to not walk away from the mirror of God's Word that tells us we are the righteousness of God, and

forget it. We need to remember it and act and live like it, living and doing what is right.

In the context of our subject today, we also need to remember that when we are talking to our Father God. Don't forget how He sees you in the mirror.

Remember that, when He looks at your reflection in the mirror, He sees Jesus.

He is not judging your lifestyle He is just accepting you for who you are – one who is complete, "in Christ Jesus."

Under the Old Law.

Hebrews 10:1-3
(Contemporary Version)

The Law of Moses is like a shadow of the good things to come. This shadow isn't the good things themselves, because it cannot free people from sin by the sacrifices that are offered year after year. 2 If there were worshipers who already have their sins washed away and their consciences made clear, there would not be any need to go on offering sacrifices. 3 But the blood of bulls and goats cannot take away sins. It only reminds people of their sins from one year to the next.

Under the Old Covenant, when the people made their annual sacrifices of bulls and goats, they went away still conscious of their sins because the blood of those animals couldn't take away that memory. If it could, then they wouldn't have had to go back year after year.

A guilty of sin conscience will rob you of intimacy. It's difficult to have intimate fellowship with someone if you feel guilty when you are with him or her.

If you had promised to do something for me by such and such a time and then you didn't do it, the next time you saw me you might feel a bit embarrassed. You really would rather not sit down and have an hour-long chat with that on your mind.

Have you ever told someone a lie and then you found out that they knew that you had done that? What did you do? You would either avoid that person or you would apologize.

Some folks think that God has this great long list of sins that you have committed and that every time you talk to him you have to hand him an eraser.

"Oh did you remember to scratch that one out yet?"

Even under the old covenant, David knew better.

Psalms 130:3-5

If You, Lord, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? 4 But there is forgiveness with You, That You may be feared. 5 I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, And in His word I do hope.

My paraphrase: "Lord, if you marked down every one of our sins, who would be left standing? But you have provided forgiveness so that you could be held in awesome respect, by us."

He hasn't forgiven us so that we'll be afraid of Him. But the fact that he has forgiven us leaves us with a sense of awesome respect.

The thing that we have that awesome respect for is for His grace. God's grace allows him to look at us as perfect in his eyes.

All scriptures used are from the Message Bible, unless otherwise indicated.

That's the whole key here.

"For by grace are ye saved".

Saved: kept preserved!

Our understanding of grace will determine our whole approach to God.

If you don't have an understanding of God's grace, then you will not be able to enjoy intimate prayer.

The knowledge of this grace of God takes away the guilt and fear. It sets you free to enjoy intimate prayer.

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We used to sing a song a few years ago that I just fell in love with it the first time I heard it.

My first reason for liking it is because it talks about Jesus. A lot of songs lately don't even mention the word God or Lord, much less the name Jesus.

I love that name - Jesus. I love singing songs with His name in it.

Remember when you had that first crush on someone? You wrote their name down a hundred times. It's like that with me.

I love to sing and say that wonderful, beautiful name. I'm in love with Jesus.

The song starts off with, **"Jesus, what a beautiful name".**

The last verse says,

"Jesus what a beautiful name, rescued my soul, my strong hold, loosed me from shame.

Forgiveness and purity, power and love, grace that blows all fear away, Jesus what a beautiful name."

The grace of God has blown away all of the fear of approaching God.

"Grace that blows all fears away."

I can imagine this mountain of fear and then I see grace, like dynamite, blowing that fear away. Boom - all of the fear is gone!

Grace is not a sissy thing or attitude. God treats us sweetly, gracefully with mercy - but He can do that because of the **powerful force of grace.**

Grace is a power that God used to eradicate sin.

We need to see that grace blowing away the fear of a sin conscience that keeps us from intimacy with Father God.

Hebrews 4:16 "Let us come boldly unto the throne of Grace"

The grace of God that sees you as justified, purified, sanctified, glorified - in Father God's eyes, allows us to come to him boldly.

Our Father wants us to come boldly, without fear, to the throne of grace.

We come in a state of intimacy, at home, in peace, in the presence of our Father.



Christ has set us free to live a free life. So take your stand! Never again let anyone put a harness of slavery on you."
Galatians 5:1 (MSG)

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Is a complimentary ministry, prepared for you, by: Ray Sargent

Freedom From The Fear Of "Praying Wrong."

Romans 8:26-28 *Meanwhile, the moment we get tired in the waiting, God's Spirit is right alongside helping us along. If we don't know how or what to pray, it doesn't matter. He does our praying in and for us, making prayer out of our wordless sighs, our aching groans. 27 He knows us far better than we know ourselves, knows our pregnant condition, and keeps us present before God. 28 That's why we can be so sure that every detail in our lives of love for God is worked into something good.*

Prayer is spirit to Spirit, our spirit communicating with God's Holy Spirit. This removes the mental exercise of getting our words "just right". The Spirit of God does the praying in and for and through us.

Sometimes verse 28 is taken out of context when folks quote it saying "Well you know all things work together for good". But that is not the context of the verse. Not "all things" work together for good. That's fatalistic theology.

What it is saying, is that when we pray with the understanding that the Spirit is praying **through us**, we can be **assured** that every detail in our lives is being worked into some thing good.

Pray "in the spirit" (KJV Eph. 6:18) and you will be **set free** from the fear of praying wrong.