

The Old-Time Evangelistic News

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We Need To Pray! (Part 2)

I Timothy 2:1-2, 8

Having introduced the subject of prayer last month, we now turn our attention to our first main thought—**The Process of Prayer**. We all say something when we pray, but are we saying what we should be saying? Are we saying things that really matter, or are we saying words that mean nothing? The best way to know that we are praying Scripturally is to look at prayers in the Bible. We obviously cannot look at all of the prayers that are found in the Bible, but we can look at enough to have a good representation of how we should be praying.

The first aspect of the process of prayer is that prayer Involves Praise. Now some may say that their need is too great and they need to go ahead and ask God to meet that need. But as I read the prayers of Joshua, Elijah, Hezekiah, and others, I see that they too had great needs—often needs much greater than ours. And yet they began their prayers with praise. Some will say that they do not have time to praise God in their prayer. “I only have a few minutes, so I have to pray quickly. Praising God in prayer time is not essential to prayer, is it?” Now we may not be so brash to say this out loud, but we may think it in our heart. May I be so bold as to say that we are not as busy as we like to think or say that we are. Everyone of us wastes time that could be spent in praising God. Praising God is an absolute essential to prayer. In fact, if all we ever do is ask God for things and never spend time praising Him, we are not really praying. We may think that we are praying, but it is not true Biblical prayer. Biblical prayer involves, yea, begins with praising God.

Let me give you a few Biblical examples of prayer involving praise. In the Psalms, we find many prayers. We may not think of the Psalms as records of prayer, but many of them are just that. They

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are the recording of the writer’s innermost thoughts. It is their heart crying out to God. That is what prayer is—our innermost thoughts and our heart crying out to God. If we want to know how to pray, we can read through the Psalms. We will look at two Psalms and also one New Testament passage to prove that prayer involves praise.

To understand the praise in these prayers, we will divide the praise into two parts: 1) Praise of God’s Person; and 2) Praise of God’s Performances. I am sure that others have seen this before me, but as I see men and women praising God in the Bible, it often follows this format—praising God for His person and His performances. I often word it this way—praising God for Who He is and what He has done. Now, if God never did anything for us, He would deserve our praise just because He is God. Scripture abounds with praise of God’s person. But God also does great wonders on our behalf. For what He does, He deserves our praise. Notice these Biblical examples of praising God in prayer.

Psalm 99:2-3 says, “*The LORD is great in Zion; and he is high above all the people. Let them praise thy great and terrible name; for it is holy.*” Psalm 145:1-3 says, “*I will extol thee, my God, O king; and I will bless thy name for ever and ever. Every day will I bless thee; and I will praise thy name for ever and ever. Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is unsearchable.*” In these two psalms, the psalmists (unnamed in the first and identified as David in the second) praise God for His Person—for Who He is. One word that is used in both is great. The root of great is used to indicate greatness in size and importance. The adjective form used in 99:2 and 145:3 indicates great in importance.

As we ponder the greatness of God, we can see how appropriate this word is in relationship to God. There is no one more important than God. Man often likes to think that he is important, even essential to certain things. One man might think that he is important in running a country. But if he dies or is removed from office, the country continues without him. Another man might think that he is

important to a business, but businesses often continue when a man dies or is replaced. Even if a man is essential to a particular business and it discontinues after his death, another company often arises to fill the void left by it. We are not as important as we think.

However, God is important. In fact, everything exists because God made it. God made everything in six days. This is not just something recorded in Genesis, but is found many times all throughout Scripture. How important is God? He not only made everything, but He keeps everything running the way it is supposed to run. Colossians 1:17 says that by Christ (true of the Father and Holy Ghost as well) all things consist. The world stays together because God holds it together. Hebrews 1:3 says that the Son (also true of the Father and Holy Ghost) upholds all things by the word of His power. Unbelievers often despair about man destroying this planet. There is no need to fear. God is holding everything together and is making everything work the way it is supposed to work. Man cannot destroy what God made and keeps working. Because of God's greatness in creating and sustaining the earth and everything else that He made, He should be praised.

In relating man's insignificance and God's greatness, think about this. One man normally influences one business and one country. A greater man may extend his influence over a few businesses and a few countries, but if we were to list the greatest men who ever lived, their influence would be limited no matter how great they were. But God's greatness cannot be measured. David said just that in Psalm 145:3—*“His greatness is unsearchable.”* The word unsearchable carries the idea of finding out. You could begin early in your life and examine all that you can about the greatness of God and you would never exhaust the depths or heights of His greatness. God is great, and He deserves our praise. May we begin our prayer with the praise that He deserves.

We may worry about political situations, but we should not because God is so great that He sets up and puts down the leaders in

countries (Daniel 2:21). He controls the sun and the rain (Matthew 5:45). There is nothing beyond the scope of God's greatness. Everything is centered around Him. Therefore, He deserves our praise.

Before we move on to the New Testament passage, notice one other thought from Psalm 99:2. The second clause seems to expand upon the thought of the first one. The first part of the verse says, *“The LORD is great.”* As to seemingly answer the question that one might have as to how great God is, the psalmist says, *“He is high above all the people.”* There are many ways to expound on that thought. One is that He is Creator, and we have already commented some on that. But I want to make one further statement concerning God's creation. The Psalmist may be contrasting the true God Who made man with the false gods that men made. All of the other gods are made of the earth whether wood, stone, or metal. But regardless of what they are made of, very valuable or not so valuable, they are on the earth on the same level with man. The God of the Bible is above the people. Man can never be equal with God. God is far above man—always has been and always will be. He is God—and all things, especially man—must bow before Him and acknowledge Him as such. God is great and deserves our praise.

For the New Testament passage that shows that prayer should involve the praise of God's Person, we turn to the Model Prayer in Matthew 6:9. This passage, often called the Lord's Prayer, is a result of the disciples' request in Luke 11:1 for Jesus to teach them to pray. The pattern to follow (not to vainly repeat) begins with praise—*“Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.”* In words similar to the psalmist Jesus tells us to acknowledge that the God that we are praying to is not on the earth. The psalmist said He is *“high above.”* Jesus said He is *“in heaven.”* Again, this shows the greatness of the God to Whom we pray. He is not on the earth, nor made of the earth. He is in Heaven waiting to receive our praise and ready to meet the needs that we bring before Him. Also, notice the equality between the God of the Old and the New Testaments. He is

the same. He has not changed. He is the same God that is above all and in Heaven. That should be reason to praise Him. His greatness has not changed. What was true about Him in the Old Testament is still true about Him in the New Testament. We pray to the same God that David, Moses, Elijah, and many others prayed to. They praised Him for His greatness and we should to.

Jesus said at the beginning of the prayer (not at the middle or end; I think the location is important. We must begin praying by praising God.) *“Hallowed be thy name.”* Hallowed means to treat as holy; to reverence; to render or acknowledge to be venerable. Jesus taught His disciples, and us as well, that prayer is a special time of reverence because of Whom we are talking to. We can come boldly because of what Christ has provided, but it is not a flippant, careless time. We must acknowledge whose presence we are in. When we recognize that we are in the presence of the God before Whom the seraphim cry out Holy, Holy, Holy, we will do as Ron Hamilton suggested and “Bow the Knee.” God is holy; God is great. We must express with our mouths, when we pray to Him, that He is such. True, Biblical prayer begins with the praise of God’s Person. May we do so.