

Encouragement to Prayer.

Passages from the New Testament collected

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1. Promises.

Matth. vii, 7-8 : Ask, and it shall be given you ; seek, and ye shall find ; knock, and it shall be opened unto you : for every one that asketh receiveth ; and he that seeketh findeth ; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

Matth. vii, 9-11. Or what man is there of you, who, if his son shall ask him for a loaf, will give him a stone ; or if he shall ask for a fish, will give him a serpent ? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father, which is in heaven, give good things to them that ask him ?

Matth. xviii, 19-20. Again I say unto you, that if *two* of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together *in my name*, there am I in the midst of them.

Matth. xxi, 22. And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.

Mark xi, 24. All things, whatsoever ye pray and ask for, believe that ye have received them, and ye *shall* have them.

John xiv, 13-14. And whatsoever ye shall ask *in my name*, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask me anything in my name, that will I do.

John xv, 7. If ye abide in me and my words abide in you, ask whatsoever ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

John xv, 16. Ye did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you, that ye should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should abide : that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

John xvi, 23-24. Verily, verily, I say unto you, If ye shall ask anything of the Father, he will give it you in my name. Hitherto have ye asked nothing *in my name* : ask, and ye *shall* receive, that *your joy may be fulfilled*.

I. John iii, 21-23. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, we have boldness towards God ; and whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep his commandments and do the things, that are pleasing in his sight. And this is his command-

ment, that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, even as he gave us commandment. (cf. John vi, 29.)

I. John v, 14-15. And this is the boldness which we have toward him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us : and if we know that he heareth us whatsoever we ask, we know that we *have* the petitions, which we have asked of him.

Matth. ix, 38. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he send forth labourers into his harvest. (This exhortation contains a promise ; but compare also the context Luke x, 3 : “go your ways,” in the Greek only : “*go ye forth!*”)

James iv, 2-3. Ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may spend it in your pleasures.

James i, 6-7. But let him ask in faith, nothing doubting : for he that doubteth, is like the surge of the sea, driven by the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord ; a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

James iv, 8-9. *Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you.* Cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and purify your hearts, ye double-minded.

James v, 16. The supplication of a *righteous* man availeth much in its working.

Prayer shall be *perseverant* :

Luke xviii, 1-8. He spake a parable unto them to the end that they ought always to pray, and *not to faint*. (Parable of the widow before the unrighteous judge.) “And shall not God avenge his elect, which cry to him day and night, and he is long suffering over them? I say unto you, that he will avenge them speedily.” (The best German translation, that of Weizsäcker, translates not avenge, but “procure justice to” and in the second part of the question: “And does he protract it with regard to them?” cf. Jesus Sirach 35, 18-22, or 32, 18 respectively.)

Luke xi, 8-9. I say unto you: Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will arise and give him as many as he needeth. And I say unto you: Ask and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

Eph. vi, 18. With all prayer and supplication praying at all seasons in the Spirit, and watching thereunto in all *perseverance* and supplication for all the saints and on my behalf, etc.

Col. iv, 2. Continue stedfastly in prayer, watching therein with thanksgiving.

I. Thess. i, 2. We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers.

I. Thess. v, 17-18. Rejoice alway; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks.

Phil. iv, 6. In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

Dangers thereby: we should pray not in order to appear as godly, not without sincerity and concentration, not with vain repetitions and many words.

Matth. vi, 5-9. And when ye pray, ye shall not be as the hypocrites; for they *love to stand and pray* in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they *may be seen* of men. Verily I say unto you, they have received their reward. But *thou*, when *thou* prayest, enter into thine *inner chamber*, and having *shut* thy door, pray to thy Father, which is *in secret*, and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall recompense thee. And in praying *use not vain repetitions*, as the Gentiles do: for they *think* that they shall be heard for their *much speaking*. Be not therefore like unto them; for your Father *knoweth* what things ye have need of, *before* ye ask him. After *this manner* therefore pray ye: "Our Father which art in heaven, etc."

Cf. Luke xx, 47: "long prayers."

2. *The Prayer-life of Christ.*

Mark i, 35. And in the morning, a great while before day, he rose up and went out, and departed into a desert place, and there prayed.

Matth. xiv, 23. And after he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into the mountain apart to pray ; and when even was come, he was there alone.

Luke vi, 12. And it came to pass in these days, that he went out into the mountain to pray ; and he continued all night in prayer to God (before selecting the twelve apostles, verse 13).

Luke xi, 1. And it came to pass, as he was praying in a certain place, that when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord teach us to pray, even as John also taught his disciples. (He teaches them the "Our Father.")

John vi, 11. Jesus took the loaves, and *having given thanks* he distributed to them that were set down.

Matth. xxvi, 26. And as they were eating, Jesus took bread and blessed and break it and he gave to the disciples, etc.—And he took a cup and gave thanks and gave to them, etc.

Luke xxiv, 34 : "and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread " (cf. verse 30, he blessed it).

Matth. xi, 25-26. Jesus said : I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding, and didst reveal them unto babes ; yea, Father, for so it was well-pleasing in thy sight.

John iv, 23-24. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth ; for such does the Father *seek* to be his worshippers. God is a Spirit, and they that worship him, must worship in spirit and truth. (God *seeks* such worshippers, he *wants* our prayers.)

John xi, 22. (Martha said :) And even now I know, that whatsoever thou shalt ask of God, God will give thee.

John xi, 41b-43. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said : Father I thank thee, that thou heardest me. And I knew that thou hearest me *always* ; but because of the multitude, which standeth around, I said it, that they may believe that thou didst send me. And when he had thus spoken, he cried with a loud voice : Lazarus, come forth !

Luke xxii, 32. But I made supplication for thee, that thy faith fail not.

John xii, 27-28. Now is my soul troubled ; and what shall I say ? Father save me from this hour. But for this cause came I unto this hour. Father,

glorify thy name. There came therefore a voice out of heaven, saying, I have both glorified it and will glorify it again. The multitude therefore, that stood by and heard it, said that it had thundered ; others said, An angel hath spoken to him.

John xvii, 1-26. These things spake Jesus ; and lifting up his eyes to heaven, he said : Father, the hour is come ; glorify thy Son, that the Son may glorify thee,—etc.

John xvii, 24. Father, that which thou hast given me, *I will that*, where I am, they also may be with me, that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me.

Matth. xxvi, 39. And he went forward a little, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying : O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass away from me ; nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.

Verse 42 : Again a second time he went away, and prayed saying : O my Father, if this cannot pass away, except I drink it, thy will be done.

Verse 44 : And he left them again and went away, and prayed a third time, saying again the same words.

Hebr. v, 7. Who in the days of his flesh, having offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him

from death, and having been heard for his godly fear (better: away from anxiety), etc.

Luke xxiii, 34. And Jesus said: Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.—Psalm 22.

Luke xxiii, 46. And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said: Father into thy hands I commend my spirit.

John xiv, 16. And I *will* pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth.

I. John ii, 1, b. And if any man sin, we have an *Advocate* with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

Rom. viii, 34. It is God that justifieth; who is he that shall condemn? It is Christ Jesus that died, yea rather, that was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, who also *makes intercession for us*.

Hebr. vii, 24. But he, because he abideth forever, has his priesthood unchangeable. Wherefore also he is able to save to the uttermost them that draw near unto God through him, seeing he ever liveth to make *intercession* for them.

3. Prayer-life of Paul, the Apostle.

Act. ix, 11. Behold, he prays !

Act. xiv, 23. And when they had appointed for them elders in every church, and had *prayed* with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they had believed.

Act. xvi, 25. But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns unto God, and the prisoners were listening to them.

Act. xx, 36. And when he had thus spoken, he knelt down and prayed with them all.

Act. xxi, 5. And they all, with wives and children, brought us on our way, till we were out of the city ; and kneeling down on the beach, we prayed and bade each other farewell.

Rom. i, 9-10. For God is my witness, whom I serve in my spirit in the gospel of his Son, how *unceasingly* I make mention of you always in my prayers, making request, if by any means now at length I may be prospered by the will of God to come unto you.

I. Cor. i, 4. I thank my God always concerning you, for the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus.

Eph. i, 16. I cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers.

Eph. iii, 14. For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that he would grant you according to the riches of his glory that ye may be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inward man, etc.

Phil. i, 3-4. I thank my God upon all my remembrance of you, always in every supplication of mine on behalf of you all, making my supplication *with joy*, for your fellowship in furtherance of the gospel from the first day until now.

Col. i, 3, 9. We give thanks to God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, having heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have toward all the saints,—. For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray and make request for you, that ye may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, etc.

I. Thess. i, 2. We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers; remembering without ceasing your work of faith and labour of love and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, before our God and Father.

I. Thess. iii, 10. Night and day praying exceedingly, that we may see your face and may perfect that which is lacking in your faith.

II. Thess. i, 11. To which end we also pray always for you, that our God may count you worthy of your calling, etc.

I. Tim. i, 12. I thank him, that enabled me, even Christ Jesus our Lord, for that he counted me faithful, appointing me to his service.

II. Tim. i, 3. I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers in a pure conscience, how unceasing is my remembrance of thee in my supplications, night and day longing to see thee.

Philem. iv. I thank my God always, making mention of thee in my prayers.

I. Cor. iv, 12. Being reviled, we bless.

Eph. v, 20. Giving thanks always for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

II. Cor. xii, 8-9. Concerning this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he hath said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my power is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my weaknesses, that the strength of Christ may rest upon me.

Rom. x, 1. Brethren, my heart's desire and my supplication to God is for them, that they may be saved.

Rom. viii, 26. And the Spirit also helpeth our infirmity; for we know not how to pray as we ought; but the Spirit himself maketh intercession for us

with groanings which cannot be uttered; and he that searcheth the hearts, knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

*Exhortation to intercessory Prayer in
behalf of others :*

Rom. xv, 30. Now I beseech you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me.

II. Cor. i, 10-11. On God we have set our hope, that he will also still deliver us; ye also helping together on our behalf by your supplication; that, for the gift bestowed upon us by means of many, thanks may be given by many persons on our behalf.

Eph. vi, 18-20. With all prayer and supplication praying at all seasons in the Spirit, and watching thereunto in all perseverance and supplication for all the saints, and *on my behalf*, that utterance may be given unto me in opening my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

Col. iv, 2-3. Continue stedfastly in prayer, watching therein with thanksgiving; withal praying for us

also, that God may *open unto us a door for the word*, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds; that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak. Cf. Rev. iii, 7, 8.

II. Thess. iii, 1-2. Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord *may run and be glorified*, even as also it is with you; and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and evil men; for all have not faith.—I. Tim. ii, 1, 2.

Hebr. x, 19-23. Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by the way which he dedicated for us, a new and living way, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; and having a great priest over the house of God; *let us draw near with a true heart in fulness of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our body washed with pure water; let us hold fast the confession of our hope that it waver not, for he is faithful that promised.*

I. Sam. xii, 23. Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should *sin* against the Lord in *ceasing* to pray for you.



4. *Some Thoughts on Prayer.*

God has allowed us freedom of action and freedom of prayer, and he makes the measure of his blessings dependent on the manner how we use this freedom. By his infinite grace and mercy and by his all-comprehending foreknowledge, he has included the prayers of his children as efficient factors in the providential plan of the development of history. He has incorporated the *prayer-law* into the laws of his Universe. Not the efficacy of prayer, but the omission of prayer on the part of his children is against the laws, i.e., against the original intention of God. Prayer is the God-appointed force by which the greatest obstacles in the progress of the kingdom of God shall be removed. God *wants* our prayers, he *seeks* true worshippers (John iv, 23). Dr. Martin Luther said: "God himself has *commanded* us to pray and has *promised* that he will hear our prayers." Luther, A. H. Francke, George Müller, Hudson Taylor, and many, many others have tested the promises of Christ with regard to prayer and found them to be literally true.—Brethren, let us pray for the *evangelisation* of China in this generation; pray for the *conversion* of the full complement, the full contingent from all gentile nations, [Rom. xi, 25, *pleroma* as in Matth. ix, 16, Mark ii, 21,

“ that by which something is made full ;” cf. Rom, xi, 12, the “ falling out ” of Israel]; pray for the return of the majority of Israel to Palestine, so that the conversion of Israel as a whole nation may be made possible (Dan. xii, 7-b (revised version); Rom. xi, 26, Luke xxi, 24, Matth. xxiii, 38-39); pray for the coming of Christ and God’s kingdom. “ Thy kingdom come ! ” “ Come, Lord Jesus ! ” (Rev. xxii, 20.) Amen.



Note.—A Chinese translation of this tract, in Mandarin, is for sale at the Presbyterian Mission Press, Shanghai; at 10 cents per 10 copies.