



Truth Matters

A Publication Discussing Matters Related To Truth Because Truth Matters

Scripture Reading

Week of

July 10th - July 16th



Monday

- ❖ 2 Chronicles 7, 8
- ❖ Psalm 119:137-144
- ❖ 1 Corinthians 3

Tuesday

- ❖ 2 Chronicles 9, 10
- ❖ Psalm 119:145-152
- ❖ 1 Corinthians 4

Wednesday

- ❖ 2 Chronicles 11, 12
- ❖ Psalm 119:153-160
- ❖ 1 Corinthians 5

Thursday

- ❖ 2 Chronicles 13, 14
- ❖ Psalm 119:161-168
- ❖ 1 Corinthians 6

Friday

- ❖ 2 Chronicles 15, 16
- ❖ Psalm 119:169-176
- ❖ 1 Corinthians 7

Saturday

- ❖ 2 Chronicles 17, 18

Sunday

- ❖ 2 Chronicles 19, 20

How to Pray Series

How to Pray for the Lost

Have you ever been listening to someone pray when something they said shocked you? You asked yourself something like, "Do they really believe that?" I really want you to see the connection with these two elements: what the person said in prayer reflects something of what they believe about God. What we pray reflects on the way we believe God acts.

It is my aim in this series of articles to help you and I pray. As I have mentioned in earlier articles, I am assuming that when people say they do not know *how* to pray, they really mean they do not know *what* to pray. I want to give you an arsenal of passages that will help you align your prayers with God's heart and mind.

We should ask ourselves how God would want us to pray and then search out the Scriptures for passage that give clear direction on how to pray. The how of prayer is more about the heart of prayer that is developed by a theology of prayer. I am concerned with the *what* of prayer. What are the words we can bring to God that reflect our understanding of how he works? Obviously, the two are related. We will not know what to pray if we do not know how to pray and

vice versa. But the only way to really manifest a clear understanding of God is through our words in prayer - what we say.

Prayer must begin with a clear understanding of how God acts. That is, prayer begins with God not man. Prayer is much more than mankind simply bringing his list of desires to God for filling. Next, prayer must begin with a clear understanding of the place prayer plays in the plan of God. I want you to see two parts that are not held in succession. I made two statements here about prayer. Both statements say that prayer begins with something. I do not mean you begin with the first and carry on to the second. Instead, I mean that unless you begin with an understanding of these two elements you cannot pray properly. Prayer begins with a clear understanding of how God acts and the part prayer plays in his plan.

How Should We Pray for the Lost?

So when it comes to the lost, how should we pray? How should we pray so that we demonstrate a clear understanding of how God works in relation to the lost? How should we pray so that

we demonstrate a clear understanding of the place prayer plays in the plan of God for the lost? Once we understand *how* to pray, *what* we pray will become clear.

God in Relation to the Lost

The Bible is unequivocal in its teaching that no person will come to put their faith in Christ unless it has been ordained by God. This is the biblical teaching of election. God has foreordained who will come to faith in him and be eternally saved.

Ephesians 1:3-6 (ESV)

³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, ⁴even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love ⁵he predestined us for adoption through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, ⁶to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.

When addressing the believers, God's choosing, his electing love is the basis of great praise. But God's electing love becomes the

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How to Pray Series

How to Pray for the Lost

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basis for one's faith. Listen to Jesus as he addressed the unbelieving Pharisees:

John 10:25-26 (ESV)

²⁵Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father's name bear witness about me, ²⁶but you do not believe because you are not part of my flock.

Jesus clearly says that the reason they do not believe is owing to the fact that they are not his sheep. You do not become a sheep by believing you believe because you are a sheep.

God's choosing of whom will be saved is unconditional. That is, there is no condition a person can meet in order to be chosen by God. Mankind is dead in their sins and therefore cannot meet any conditions. It is because God chose us before the foundation of the world that he purchases our redemption at the cross and quickens us with irresistible grace and brings us to faith.

All of this means that no person can come to put their faith in Christ apart from a miraculous work of God within them awakening them from death to life. This is called regeneration (John 6:44; 2 Tim. 2:25; Tit. 3:5).

God has chosen all of his elect from the foundation of the world. No person gets on that list of removed from that list. It is eternally fixed in the heart of God.

Acts 13:48 (ESV)

⁴⁸And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as *many as were appointed* to eternal life believed.

Prayer in the Plan of God

When discussing prayer for the lost, the most popular question is, "If God has already chosen who will be saved and has preordained that they be saved, then

why pray?" This is a fair question with a very simple (but not simplistic) answer.

We affirm what the Bible teaches, that God has an eternal plan that cannot be thwarted by any being. Isaiah tells us in 46:8-11 that God has ordained the end from the beginning and all of his counsel will stand; what God has purposed that he will do. So if God has already ordained the end, why bother? Why bother praying? Why bother evangelizing the lost?

I like the way Spurgeon dealt with this. He continued the line of questioning. If God has already ordained the end of all things, why bother? Spurgeon added, why bother to eat or drink or breathe? When asked in this way, I think the answer becomes readily apparent. Yes, God has ordained the end of all things; but in declaring the ends of all things, he has also established the means for all things. It is by eating, drinking and breathing that man will be able to live. Without them, we die. The Bible establishes this truth: That for every ordained end that God has purposed, he has also ordained every means necessary for bring that end about.

For example, we know that it was according to God's predetermined plan that Jesus would become the sacrifice for the sins of God's elect. But the Bible also establishes that while God had ordained the end (the sacrifice of Jesus for sins) he had also determined the means - the murderous acts of Herod, Pilate and the Jewish people (cf. Acts 4:23-28).

It is by prayer and by evangelism that that all of God's elect will come to put their faith in Christ for their salvation. So the New Testament is in line with this teaching to command us as Christ's church to spread the Gospel and pray for the lost. Apart from these means, the end cannot be reached.

What Do We Pray?

When praying for the lost, we need to pray in such a way that we demonstrate a clear understanding of how God works in saving the lost. If God does not act in behalf of a sinner, they will never come to faith. We pray asking God to act.

When we pray for the lost, we need to pray in such a way that we demonstrate a clear understanding of the part prayer plays in the plan of God. Prayer has been ordained by God as a means to bringing about his purposes. We want God to help us be faithful to this task.

Pray for the lost in such a way that it accords with the New Testament's examples and that it asks for the New Covenant's promises. Here are some samples to begin your own thoughts. Pray...

1. That God would take out their heart of stone and put within them a new heart capable of loving and obeying him (Ezekiel 11:19; Ezekiel 36:27)
2. That God would open their heart so as to hear the word of God (Acts 16:14)
3. That God would shine in their heart so that they may see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 4:6)
4. That God might awaken the dead (Ephesians 2:4-5)
5. That God would open their eyes to see so that they may turn from darkness to light (Acts 26:18)
6. That God would grant to them a repentant heart (2 Timothy 2:25-26)
7. That God would transfer them from the kingdom of darkness into his kingdom of his dear Son (Colossians 1:13)