



## Pray: Growing in our Direct Access to God

### Sermon Notes for Message #1 of DDM: Why We Pray (1 Peter 4:7) – Pastor Jeff

- One of God's amazing resources He has blessed us with is having direct access to Him in prayer. We talk a lot about this access and rightly so, but we can tend to feel that our prayer life is inadequate, awkward and underutilized.
- Prayer can stir up so many questions: What does it really mean to pray? Am I supposed to pray to the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit or just to God in general? What do I need to include in my prayers? Do I need to close my eyes, bow my head and get on my knees to be serious about prayer? How often and how long should I pray? Is there a special way to pray that causes God to answer all my prayers? If I pray in faith and according to God's will, then why doesn't God always answer my prayers? If God knows everything and already knows what I need before I ask, then why pray? If God really "*works all things after the counsel of his will*" (Eph. 1:11) and His will can never be thwarted (Job 42:2), then what are my prayers really accomplishing since He's going to do what He wants to do, right? These and other questions can cause us to wonder about prayer.
- Every religion utilizes prayer as one of their disciplines, yet Scripture teaches us there is only one true and living God who can hear and answer prayer (Isa. 44:8b-9, 17; Psalm 115:3-4; 1 Kings 18:20-39)
  - God calls His children to pray to Him
  - God has appointed that His children play a key role in advancing His kingdom purposes through the discipline of prayer.
  - God wants us to be "*of sound judgment and sober spirit for the purpose of prayer*" (1 Pet. 4:7). Voicing words to God is easy but requires us to be thoughtful and aware of how God wants us to approach Him.
  - What is prayer? It is pouring out our hearts to the true and living God confidently and regularly in praise, thanksgiving, confession of sin, making petitions for ourselves and others in the name of Christ.
- There are two fundamental reasons why we need to pray:
  - ① **We need supernatural help** (various Scriptures)
    - One of the most foundational realities we could ever understand and admit is we desperately need help from God. Prayerlessness is a declaration of independence from God that only exacerbates our need for divine help.
    - Prayer is an awareness of our helpless need and an acknowledgment of God's adequacy (Ps. 60:11; 30:10)
    - We need supernatural help **personally** with our sins (1 Jn 1:9; Ps. 79:9; 25:11), temptations (Matt. 26:41), sorrows (Lam. 3:17-23), eternal perspective (Ps. 16:12, 8-11), faith (Mark 9:24), God's will (1 John 5:14-15), wisdom (Jms 1:5); spiritual enlightenment (Eph. 1:15-20), spiritual empowerment (Eph. 3:13-19), and motives (Jms 4:3)

- We need supernatural help **relationally** with our love (Phil. 1:9-11; 1Thess. 3:11-12), witness (Acts 4:23-31; Col. 4:2-7; Matt. 9:38), ministry (Rom. 15:30-33), forgiveness (Matt 6:14-15), unity (John 17:20-23).

## ② **God is our supreme Helper** (Psalm 54:4 and other various Scriptures)

- We are constantly reminded that God is our divine Helper (Ps 115:1; Deut. 33:29; 2 Sam. 22:36; 2 Chron. 14:11; Ps. 46:1; 70:5;
- God is a powerful Helper (Psalm 121:1-2; 124:8). He is able to far beyond what we can ask (Eph. 3:20)
- God is a praiseworthy Helper: He is great (Ps. 77:13), good in all His ways (Luke 11:13; Ps. 31:19), generous (Heb. 4:16; Luke 11:9-13), glorious (John 14:13), gracious (Ps. 86:15-16)
- God is a profound Helper through His word (Ps. 119:175)
- God is a promise keeping Helper (Isa. 41:10, 13-14; 44:2)
- God is a Personal Helper (Matt. 6:5-8)