



WORLDVIEW MADE PRACTICAL
Volume 18 Number 26
July 12, 2023

Target Persons of Prayer: Part 1 - Pray for Yourself!

By Tal Davis

Have you ever had a flat tire? If you have been driving for very long you probably have. So what do you do? You could call AAA or some other roadside assistance team. But what if you are not a member? The first thing to do, of course, is to get out the spare tire (if you can find it). Most spare tires these days are "dough-nuts" that are not intended to last very long. Soon you will need to get a new tire to replace the flat one.

For many people, prayer is sort of like a "spare tire." They take it for granted and forget about it until something breaks down and goes flat. Unfortunately, this is true even for most Christians. Many believers simply do not know how pray or what to pray for.

This article begins a three installment study that will focus on prayer. Specifically we will explore the questions, "Who do we pray for?" or "Just who do we target for our prayers?"

We usually call Jesus' words in Matthew 6:9-13 and Luke 11:2-4 "The Lord's Prayer." That is a very old tradition, however, and it probably is incorrect (He didn't need to ask for forgiveness). That prayer was not Jesus' own prayer, it was a model. He used to teach His disciples how to pray. Nonetheless, we know that Jesus prayed extensively. It would seem that if the Son of God felt the need to pray, then what about us? In this and the next two installments we will look who Jesus prayed for, and who we should likewise target for our prayers.

In this first part we will look at who should be first on our prayer list. That would be ourselves! In the

next installment we will discuss praying for our fellow believers in Christ. Then, in part three, we will look the people we target the least with our prayers: the lost – those who are without Christ and salvation.

If we want to be accurate, the "Lord's prayer" should actually be what is found in John's Gospel, chapter seventeen verses 1-24. In that section, Jesus prayed out loud in the hours just before His crucifixion. His disciples heard His words and young John eventually wrote them down. In John's record of Jesus' prayer, we see that Jesus indeed prayed for Himself. He referred to Himself as "Your Son," "Him," "Jesus Christ," "I," and "Me."

Jesus spoke these things; and raising His eyes to heaven, He said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son, so that the Son may glorify You, 2 just as You gave Him authority over all mankind, so that to all whom You have given Him, He may give eternal life. 3 And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. 4 I glorified You on the earth by accomplishing the work which You have given Me to do. 5 And now You, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world existed. (John 17:1-4 NASB)

So this raises an important question. If Jesus prayed for His own self, should we, therefore, pray for our own selves as well? The clear answer must be yes. We should actually pray first of all for ourselves, then follow with prayers for others.

I suggest that Scripture designates three basic ways we should pray for ourselves.

Permission to Reprint

If you wish to reprint this article in your own print or electronic newsletter, please include the following text:

*Reprinted from **Worldview Made Practical**; a free e-zine produced by **MarketFaith Ministries** featuring practical teaching and life tools to help Christians become more effective in their faith life. Discover **MarketFaith Ministries** at www.marketfaith.org.*

Speaking Schedule

If you are interested in having Freddy Davis or Tal Davis present one of our **Worldview Seminars** or to share about worldview and its practical implications at your church or organization, please contact **MarketFaith Ministries** to schedule your event. All contact information is at the bottom of this e-zine.

Worldview Resources

It is one of the primary purposes of **MarketFaith Ministries** to provide resources to help Christians understand the practical implications of worldview. You can find many free resources that will help you in your quest at <http://www.marketfaith.org>.

First, we should pray for our own spiritual well-being.

In Hebrews, the writer advises his readers to go boldly to talk to God:

Therefore let's approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace for help at the time of our need. (Hebrews 4:16 NASB)

The writer tells us to "approach" or "draw near" to "the throne of grace," that is, to God Himself. Just how can we do that? We can't go to heaven to see Him in person. The answer is that we get close to God by prayer. When we focus our minds and hearts in Him, it is just as though we are in His throne room. He is that close and hears our every word and thought (we don't have to pray out loud, He knows our thoughts). It is through prayer that we grow spiritually and experience mercy and grace for help in our times of need.

In Jude's letter, verse 20, he writes:

20 But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, 21 keep yourselves in the love of God, looking forward to the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life. (Jude 20-21 NASB)

Jude expresses an important principle for life and for prayer. Note, he says that the Holy Spirit empowers us when we pray. When we pray in the Spirit we allow Him to say the words through us that we need to say to the Father.

In James 1:5, the brother of Jesus states:

But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. (James 1:5 NASB)

So James says we also receive wisdom when we pray. Wisdom can be defined as the ability to discern inner qualities and relationships, and to have good sense, good judgment, or a wise attitude. When we pray for it, God gives us a supernatural kind of wisdom that transcends mere human understanding. We also need to keep in mind what the Scriptures say, that "*the fear (awe) of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.*" (Psalm 111:10; Proverbs 9:10)

Another important aspect of praying for ourselves is confession of our sins. Jesus told His disciples to pray, "And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors." (Matthew 6:12 NASB)

John, in his first letter, instructs us:

8 If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous, so that He will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us. (1 John 1:8-10 NASB)

Confession of sin and acknowledging God's forgiveness, gives us a clean heart so we can then pray for others.

So, yes, we need to pray for our spiritual health and well being.

Nonetheless, second, we also should pray for our own personal physical and emotional needs.

We mentioned that Jesus taught His disciples to pray when they asked Him to teach them. In Luke 11:1- 4 it reads this way:

1 It happened that while Jesus was praying in a certain place, when He had finished, one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John also taught his disciples." 2 And He said to them, "When you pray, say: 'Father, hallowed be Your name. Your

Subscription Information SUBSCRIPTION NOTICE:

A subscription to **Worldview Made Practical** is complementary for anyone interested in receiving it. If you received this email as a forward from a family member or a friend and wish to subscribe for yourself, you may do so at www.marketfaith.org. If you wish to unsubscribe from this newsletter, simply follow the instructions found at the bottom of each edition.

Contact Information

If you wish to contact us directly, you may do so by the following methods:

321 Anton Dr., Tallahassee, FL 32312

E-mail:

info@marketfaith.org

Phone: 850-383-9756 (Tallahassee, Florida)

Fax: 850-514-4571

You can order our products and examine our services at <http://www.marketfaith.org>.

This issue of **Worldview Made Practical** is a production of **MarketFaith Ministries**, © 2023. All rights reserved.

kingdom come. 3 Give us each day our daily bread. 4 And forgive us our sins, For we ourselves also forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And do not lead us into temptation." (Luke 11:1-4 NASB)

Now look at Luke 11:5-13 (NASB). Jesus followed that model prayer with two humorous parables to illustrate the effectiveness of persistent prayer:

5 And He said to them, "Suppose one of you has a friend, and goes to him at midnight and says to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves, 6 because a friend of mine has come to me from a journey and I have nothing to serve him'; 7 and from inside he answers and says, 'Do not bother me; the door has already been shut and my children and I are in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything.' 8 I tell you, even if he will not get up and give him anything just because he is his friend, yet because of his shamelessness he will get up and give him as much as he needs. 9 "So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 10 For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks, it will be opened. 11 Now which one of you fathers will his son ask for a fish, and instead of a fish, he will give him a snake? 12 Or he will even ask for an egg, and his father will give him a scorpion? 13 So if you, despite being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?" (Luke 11:5-13 NASB)

I like how the KJV renders verse 8. It reads, *"yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth."* The parable says that we should pray with what is called *"importunity."* That's a word we don't use much anymore, but it means with *"urgency"* and *"persistence"* – like soliciting something

from a king or superior. (Did you ever go to your boss and ask for a raise? It can be scary.)

It kind of reminds me of when my kids were little. My oldest son, when he was only about two, every time we passed a McDonalds would say, over and over, "Fries! Fries!" He also said the same thing when we went through the drive-in widow at the bank.

Finally, Paul tells the Christians in Philippi:

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and pleading with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. (Philippians 4:6 NASB)

The point is, we definitely should pray for our material needs: food, clothing, home, jobs, even school. I recall a day when I was in college and I bopped in cheerfully to a class. The professor then said, "Take out paper for the test." "What test?" I said in terror. I had not studied for it at all. I had forgotten all about it (I think I made a D). I often prayed before tests, but it didn't mean I didn't have to study. I prayed that God would make me a good steward of my study time and keep my mind clear.

Yes, we should pray for our material needs. However, we must be careful not to think God will always give us whatever we want, as the "word-faith," "health and wealth," and "name it and claim it" preachers assert. We must never forget, prayer is not for us tell God what He should do, but it is to discover what God wants us to do!

But, third, we also need to pray for our own protection.

In May of 2019, the world's secular press was stunned when Pope Francis, commenting on Matthew 6:13, stated that people should be wary of the devil and temptation. He reportedly stated, "So began the public life of

Jesus, with the temptation that comes from Satan... Many people say: 'But why talk about the devil, which is an ancient thing? The devil does not exist.' But look at what the Gospel teaches you," Francis emphasized. "Jesus confronted the devil, he was tempted by Satan. But Jesus rejects every temptation and comes out victorious."

Matthew 6:13 is the last line in Jesus' model prayer for His disciples. It says "*And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil*" (lit. "*the evil one.*"). (NASB) Obviously the Pope takes that line quite literally, as should we. As Christians we are involved in a spiritual war. The battle is not just against earthly and human enemies, but also unseen demonic powers. As Paul told the Ephesians:

11 Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. (Ephesians 6:11-12 NASB)

Though many people, including some who claim to be Christian theologians deny the reality of Satan or demons, he, and they, are a reality. Satan's greatest desire is to ruin our lives and our witness. That's why the Apostle told the Ephesians to "put on the full armor of God" which he then described in detail using the analogy of a fully equipped soldier.

13 Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist on the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. 14 Stand firm therefore, having belted your waist with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, 15 and having strapped on your feet the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16 in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. 17 And take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. (Ephesians 6:13-17 NASB)

We are at war with the devil. So what is the key to our defense against spiritual attacks? James presents a clue:

7 Submit therefore to God. But resist the devil, and he will flee from you. 8 Come close to God (in prayer) and He will come close to you. (James 4:7-8a NASB)

Prayer is our greatest weapon to resist the devil. When we submit to God in prayer and, in His power, oppose the devil, he will flee. Regular times of prayer and Bible study are the best assurance of being able to resist Satan and temptation.

In summary, therefore, nothing is wrong with praying for yourself. Some think that its selfish and we should pray for others above ourselves. But Jesus did not do that. In John 17 He prayed for Himself first, then for others. We ourselves should be our first targets for our prayers. We pray for our spiritual lives, for our personal needs, and for protection against evil.

We mustn't let prayer become like a spare tire. It's too important. It should be the wheels we ride on! In the next two installments we will look at other target persons for our prayers. In part two, we will see how and what Jesus prayed for His disciples and why we should pray for our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ. In part three, we look at why we should pray for the unsaved lost, just as Jesus did.

Would You Consider Supporting Us?

Would you consider financial support for **MarketFaith Ministries**? I feel confident that what we are doing is consistent with your beliefs about spreading the gospel and equipping the saints for ministry. Would you let us be one element of your hands and feet in this process? **MarketFaith Ministries** is a 501 (c) (3) not for profit corporation, so your contributions are tax deductible. If you would consider this we would be very grateful. Also, if you would like to know more about the ministry, it would be my pleasure to share with you personally what we are working on and how you can plug in. I can be reached at 850-383-9756 or by e-mail at Freddy@marketfaith.org. As for any donations, they may be sent directly to **MarketFaith Ministries** at 321 Anton Dr., Tallahassee, FL 32312, or you can contribute through our secure website at www.marketfaith.org. Simply click on the "Donate" button at the bottom of the homepage. We are deeply grateful for your support of this ministry.

And, as always, if you have any thoughts, opinions or suggestions about how **MarketFaith Ministries** can help you, please feel free, at any time, to call (850-383-9756) or e-mail (info@marketfaith.org). We are here to serve you.