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“Pray Without Ceasing”

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1 Thessalonians 5:17 exhorts each of us as Christians to “pray without ceasing,” telling us that “this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” (**1 Thess 5:18**). Prayer is a blessing and opportunity for each of us to speak to our Heavenly Father through His Son and our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Prayer allows us to give thanks for all the things that God has done for us and will do. Acknowledging His presence in our lives, acknowledging who He is and what He means to us as Christians. We as God’s people have countless things to be thankful for. We have many material things and creature comforts, but more importantly, we have prayer, God’s word, and most especially the blessings we have in Christ Jesus, His son. **Psalms 9:1** “I will praise You, O Lord, with my whole heart; I will tell of all Your marvelous works.”

Prayer also gives us an opportunity to express our concerns for our families, friends, and ourselves. We can easily be encumbered with anxiety due to illnesses, family problems, financial issues, cares of this life, etc. Even though we worry and have anxieties concerning these temporal things, prayer demonstrates our faith in Him, and that he knows our needs, wants, and what is ultimately best for us.

Philippians 4:6-7 tells us “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

Furthermore, **Matthew 6:25**, instructs us to not worry about our lives concerning our food, clothing, shelter, etc. God knows the things that we need and will provide, as He has done for the birds of the air and the lilies of the field. Our worries over these things will not improve our situation, and in many cases worry can exacerbate the problem. Our prayer is an opportunity to voice our anxiousness and worry to Him. “If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!” (**Matthew 7:11**) We should take strength and comfort in knowing that He cares for us.

Prayer is an affirmation of a Christian’s belief, that He is our only hope of salvation. We acknowledge our dependence on Him and realize our absence of hope without Him. We can be emboldened as believers knowing that the God of Heaven hears our prayers. How fortunate are God’s people to have the avenue of prayer vs. those who are non-believers. I often wonder where those who do not believe turn to when faced with the difficulties of life. We all know that people can let us down, disappoint us, but God is our constant anchor, so long as we allow Him to be. **Romans 12:12** states we are to be “Rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer.”

Prayer can help us as Christians maintain a proper perspective on this temporary life and on our spiritual life. It should help us to value our souls more than we value this world. **James 4:14** tells us that our life is “a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away.” Knowing the brevity of our life here on earth and the importance of our souls, our communication with God is paramount. Nothing in this life is everlasting, but our spiritual destination is eternal.

Prayer serves as an encouragement to those in our spiritual family. We all know that family and friends are burdened with the same cares which we are as individuals. We are even told to pray for our enemies! (**Matt 5:44**) The encouragement that we can provide for someone, when they know that they are in our thoughts and daily prayers, can be powerfully uplifting to someone who is afflicted with physical, mental, and spiritual ailments. Our prayers for strangers, enemies, and those who do not know God is in the hope that they will come to know Him. (**2 Pet 3:9**) God has shown his mercy and consideration for us, we are to do the same to others. Prayer is a great start!

Prayer is an act of worship that we as Christians are expected and encouraged to do. We know that we cannot have a relationship with someone who we do not communicate with. This is most definitely the case in our relationship with God. Our lack or absence of prayer can demonstrate a conceit or undue sense of self-reliance. If we rely solely on ourselves, we will fail.

Lack of prayer also provides an opportunity for sin. Our communication with God helps us with the temptations that we face in day to day life. Without this, we allow a vulnerability to sin in all of its forms.

Lastly, if we are not talking to God, we can become discouraged with life and its disappointments. When we know that we have a Heavenly Father who cares for and hears us, we can have faith that He will see us through any situation that we are faced with. **Psalms 145:18** tells us “The Lord is near to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth.”

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