

DO WE KNOW HOW TO PRAY!

THE 19TH CENT POET; **ALFRED LORD TENNISON**, SAID:

**“MORE THINGS ARE WROUGHT BY PRAYER,, THAN
THIS WORLD DREAMS OF”.**

ARGUABLY,, PRAYER,, CAN KEEP US GROUNDED IN
FAITH,, MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE.

BUT,, DO YOU THINK THAT WE KNOW HOW TO PRAY
AS WE SHOULD? BROTHERS AND SISTERS,, PRAYER
IS A SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE. IT CAN BE STRENUOUS
AND FRUSTRATING AT TIMES,, AND MENTALLY AND
PHYSICALLY DEMANDING. PRAYER CAN ALSO BE
TAKEN FOR GRANTED AND IT CAN ASSUME A PLACE
IN OUR HEARTS,, AND MINDS,, THAT’S APART FROM
OUR DAILY ROUTINES AND HABITS.

A WHILE AGO,, I RAN ACROSS A SHORT LITTLE TIP,,
THAT SOMEONE CAME UP WITH,, TO HELP US PRAY.
IT JUST USES YOUR FINGERS AND IT GOES LIKE THIS!

#1. YOUR THUMB: IS NEAREST TO YOU. SO BEGIN
YOUR PRAYERS BY PRAYING FOR THOSE CLOSEST TO
YOU BECAUSE THEY’RE THE EASIEST TO REMEMBER.

#2. THE NEXT FINGER: IS YOUR POINTING FINGER.
THE INDEX FINGER. PRAY FOR THOS WHO TEACH,,
INSTRUCT AND HEAL. THIS INCLUDES TEACHERS,,
DOCTORS,, PASTORS,, OR OTHER CHURCH LEADERS.
BECAUSE,, THEY NEED SUPPORT AND WISDOM,, IN
MINISTERING TO OTHERS.

#3. THE THIRD FINGER: IS THE TALLEST FINGER. IT
REMINDS US OF OUR CIVIC LEADERS. PRAY FOR THE
PRESIDENT,, LEADERS IN BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY,,
ADMINISTRATORS AND THOSE WHO LEAD IN
POSITIONS OF AUTHORITY. THESE PEOPLE SHAPE
OUR NATION AND GUIDE PUBLIC OPINION. THEY
NEED GOD’S GUIDANCE AND WISDOM.

#4. THE FOURTH FINGER: IS OUR RING FINGER. IT’S
THE WEAKEST FINGER OF THE FIVE. IT SHOULD
REMINDE US TO PRAY FOR THOSE WHO ARE WEAK.

FOR THOSE WHO ARE IN TROUBLE,,, IN PAIN,,, OR WHO ARE GOING THROUGH HARD TIMES. PEOPLE,,, WHO,,, LIKE US,,, ARE SOMETIMES FACING LIVES STRUGGLES AND ARE IN NEED OF OUR PRAYERS.

#5. AND THE LAST FINGER: IS THE LEAST AND OUR SMALLEST FINGER. IT REMINDS US OF WHERE WE SHOULD PLACE OURSELVES,,, IN RELATION TO GOD,,, AND TO OTHER PEOPLE,,,AND,,, BY THE TIME WE'VE PRAYED FOR THE OTHER FOUR GROUPS,,, **OUR NEEDS** WILL BE PUT INTO PROPER PERSPECTIVE AND WE'LL BE ABLE TO PRAY FOR OURSELVES MORE EFFECTIVELY AND EFFICIENTLY.

IF YOU WILL REMEMBER,,, LAST WEEK,,, WE SPOKE ABOUT LOVE AND LOVING OTHERS. THAT TOPIC,,, LEADS US,,, TO THIS WEEKS HOMILY; **ON PRAYER.**

(*) **DID YOU KNOW**,,, THAT OVER 50 % OF AMERICANS SAY,,, THAT **THEY PRAY DAILY?**

(*) **DID YOU KNOW**,,, THAT CHRISTIANS ALL OVER THE WORLD,,, RECITE "**THE LORD'S PRAYER**" EVERY SUNDAY? WELL,,,,,, IT'S TRUE,,,,,, THEY DO!

THEY ACTUALLY DO,,, PRAY TO GOD! INTERESTING ISN'T IT? THAT'S WONDERFUL,,, BUT,,, DO THEY REALLY KNOW TO WHOM THEY ARE PRAYING?

WHAT DO PEOPLE,,, THINK GOD IS LIKE,,, WHEN THEY PRAY?

(*) IS HE FAR FROM THEM,,, OR NEAR?

(*) IS HE POWERFUL,,, OR PASSIVE?

(*) IS HE DISGUSTED WITH THEM,,, OR,,, IN LOVE WITH THEM?

(*) IS HE A MEAN OLD MAN,,, OR,,, A KINDLY GRAND-PA TYPE,,, OR NEITHER?

(*) IS HE LISTENING,,, OR NOT?

(*) DOES HE CARE ABOUT THEM,,, OR NOT?

I BELIEVE THAT **WHAT A PERSON BELIEVES ABOUT GOD,,, IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING,,, THAT AFFECTS THEIR PRAYER LIFE!**

IT AFFECTS EVERYTHING ABOUT THEM AND WHAT THEY BELIEVE ABOUT GOD,,, AFFECTS THE WAY THEY PRAY!

UNFORTUNATELY,,, THERE ARE MANY WRONG PERCEPTIONS OF GOD,,, THAT ARE COMMONLY BELIEVED. THESE MISCONCEPTIONS,,, DISTORT OUR PRAYERS AND CAN PREVENT PEOPLE FROM PRAYING ALL TOGETHER!

FOR MANY PEOPLE,,, GOD SEEMS SOMEWHAT REMOTE,,, IMPERSONAL AND BEYOND THEIR UNDERSTANDING!

**BECAUSE OF THAT,,, CHRISTIANS SUFFER FROM:
AN INABILITY TO FEEL FORGIVEN.**

AND THIS CAN LEAVE THEM WITH NAGGING DOUBT,,, AND PERHAPS,,, EVEN A MISTRUST OF GOD!

WE SHAPE OUR PRAYERS,,, BY THE WAY WE PICTURE GOD. A DYSFUNCTIONAL PICTURE OF GOD,,, CAN RESULT IN A DYSFUNCTIONAL WAY OF PRAYING.

PRAYER IS VERY POWERFUL BUT,,, IN FAITH AND HUMILITY,,, WITH THE RIGHT SPIRIT,,, IT CAN WORK MIRACLES!

BUT HERE ARE SOME QUESTIONS FOR US TODAY.

- (*) HAS PRAYER BECOME SUCH A “TAKEN FOR GRANTED” PART OF OUR CHRISTIAN LIFE,,, THAT WE FORGET,,, THE GREAT WORTH,,, IT TRULY IS?**
- (*) HOW ABOUT YOU? WOULD YOU GIVE UP YOUR PRIVILEGE TO PRAY,,, FOR THE GUARANTEE OF NO PERSECUTION?**
- (*) DO WE ONLY USE PRAYER,,, WHEN WE WANT SOMETHING FROM GOD?**
- (*) IS PRAYER ONLY USED,,, IN AN EMERGENCY?**
- (*) DO YOU SEE GOD AS SOMEONE WHO YOU CAN BARGAIN WITH,,, WHEN IT COMES TO YOUR PRAYER REQUESTS?**

AS YOU CAN TELL BY NOW,,, TODAY'S HOMILY AND OUR LESSONS FROM THE SCRIPTURES,,, AND FROM LUKES GOSPEL,,, CONCERN PRAYER.

SCRIPTURE TELLS US,,, THAT JESUS WAS ALONE,,, AND PRAYING,,, AS WAS HIS CUSTOM,,, WHEN ONE OF HIS DISCIPLES,,, CAME TO HIM AND ASKS;

“JESUS,,, TEACH US HOW TO PRAY,,, AS JOHN TAUGHT HIS DISCIPLES”.

JESUS THEN TAUGHT THEM,,, WHAT HAS BECOME KNOWN AS ***THE LORD'S PRAYER - THE "OUR FATHER"***.

BUT JESUS DIDN'T STOP WITH THIS PRAYER,,, HE WENT ON TO TELL THEM THE PARABLE OF THE MAN WHO NEEDED BREAD,,, FOR A LATE NIGHT GUEST.

SOMEHOW,,, JESUS KNEW,,, THAT AS HIS DISCIPLES HEARD THIS PRAYER,,, THEY WOULD LATCH ON TO THIS IDEA OF; ***“THE DAILY BREAD”***. *THIS PARABLE,,, IS ABOUT BEING PERSISTANT IN PRAYER AND A STRONG ENCOURAGEMENT,,, TO PRAY,,, PERIOD!*

LET NOTHING PREVENT US FROM PRAYER! OUR ENCOURAGEMENT,,, LIES IN THE IMPLIED PROMISE WITHIN THAT PRAYER! THAT ONE WILL RECEIVE AN ANSWER,,, AS JESUS STATES,,, IN ***VERSE 9***,,,

“ASK AND IT WILL BE GIVEN TO YOU,,, SEEK AND YOU WILL FIND,,, KNOCK AND IT WILL BE OPENED TO YOU”.

ALL THREE OF THESE VERBS,,, SHOULD BE TAKEN TOGETHER. OUR ASKING,,, SEEKING AND KNOCKING SHOULD BE DONE,,, ALL AT ONCE,,, AND AT THE SAME TIME.

WHEN YOU ASK,,, SEEK,,, AND WHEN YOU SEEK,,, GO AND KNOCK!

THE PROMISE IS: IT SHALL BE GIVEN TO YOU!

NOW,,, THE HEART OF THIS PARABLE,,, BROTHERS AND SISTERS,,, LIES,,, IN THAT PROMISE!

“IT SHALL BE GIVEN TO YOU!”

JESUS WENT ON TO EXPLAIN,, THAT IF A FATHER WANTS TO GIVE GOOD GIFTS,, TO HIS SON,, WHEN HE ASKS,, THEN TRULY,, IT MAKES SENSE,, THAT OUR HEAVENLY FATHER,, WILL GIVE GOOD GIFTS,, TO THOSE; WHO *ASK,, SEEK AND KNOCK!*

NOTICE THE ENDING OF PRAYER FOR JESUS. HE ENDS HIS DISCUSSION ABOUT PRAYER,, WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT!

FOR JESUS,, PRAYER WAS,, AND IS,, A LOVING RELATIONSHIP OF COMMUNICATION AND PERSONAL CONTACT WITH GOD THE FATHER HIMSELF,, BY THE HOLY SPIRIT AND IT IS TO BE THE SAME FOR EACH ONE OF US.

PRAYER,, IN THIS PARABLE,, IS MORE THAN JUST A LIST OF DEMANDS,, IT'S MORE THAN CONVEYING ONES HURTS,, PAINS AND PROBLEMS,, TO GOD.

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,, PRAYER IS A LOVE RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD THE FATHER HIMSELF,, WHILE IN CONSTANT DIALOGUE WITH HIM,, INSPIRED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD.

AS WE ENGAGE IN PRAYER,, WE COME TO KNOW GOD THE FATHER "***ABBA FATHER***" BETTER,, AND HE KNOWS US,, OUR HURTS,, FAILURES,, JOYS,, EXCITEMENT,, AND,, ***ALL THAT IS US!***

PRAYER IS TRUSTING THAT GOD HAS REVEALED HIMSELF,, TO US,, THROUGH HIS SON,, JESUS CHRIST. SO WHEN WE THINK OF GOD THE FATHER,, KNOW,, THAT HE IS OUR GOD AND OUR FATHER. HE DELITES IN HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH YOU AND I,, AND HE IS A FATHER WHO DELITES IN PROSPERING US,, AS OUR SOUL PROSPERS IN HIM.

BROTHERS AND SISTERS,, BECAUSE GOD IS OUR FATHER,, LET US GIVE HIM THE GIFT,, OF LOVING HIM,, WITH ALL OUR HEART,, SOUL,, MIND,, AND STRENGTH,, BECAUSE THAT'S HOW HE LOVES US!

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER AND THE SON AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

+++ AMEN+++

(1,258) WDS,, 5 PGS

