***The Doctrine of Prayer  
RO131-02***

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Please open your Bibles to Romans 10:1-4. Our subject today is "True and False Righteousness," and this is segment number one.

Romans 9, which we have just completed, has been a brief review of the past history of the nation of Israel. Paul has pointed out that God has kept His promise to Abraham to send his posterity, the Jews, a messiah Savior, Jesus Christ, to bring the Jews into heaven. The Jewish people rejected the claims of Jesus Christ – that He was that promised Savior and King, and they promptly murdered Him on the cross.

Paul has pointed out in Romans 9 that the gentiles, who were not the primary objectives of grace salvation provision, have accepted Jesus Christ, and they have replaced the Jews as God's people. Paul has illustrated, from Jewish history, the fact that God has always elected only some Jews to salvation blessings, but not all. So, He has indeed kept His promise to Abraham to bring salvation to the Jewish people.

Jesus Christ has, in fact, however, proved to be a stumbling block to the Jews in the attaining of eternal life in heaven. And they have been consequently trapped into the eternal death of the lake of fire. Paul now proceeds, in Romans 10, to review the present historical condition of the Jews. Romans 9 reviewed their past historical conditions. Romans 10 reviews their present condition with God. And Romans 11 will look to their future.

**Brethren**

So, in verses 1 and 2, we have Paul's desire for the Jews. He begins in verse 1 with dealing with the salvation of Israel. He says, "Brethren," which is the Greek word "adelphos." "Adelphos" refers to Paul's Christian brethren in the city of Rome to whom he is writing this letter. This word stands first in the Greek sentence, so it carries an emphasis. And this word carries an emphasis because he wants to make something very clear to these largely gentile believers to whom he is writing. This word is addressing the Christian brotherhood with deep feeling in expressing his concern for Israel. This is the statement of a man who wishes that things were different. And we all have feelings at some time about someone in that way. We just wish that things were different with this person. Paul has a whole group of people about whom he just wishes that things were different.

**A Kind Feeling**

So, he says to the recipients of the letter of Romans: "Christian brethren, it is my heart's desire." The word heart is the word "kardia." This refers to the perceptive mind. The mind of a human being has a perceptive side, and it has a directive side. The perceptive mind takes in information. The directive mind gives out decisions. And Paul says, "Here, in my 'kardia' (in my perceptive mind), as I think about this, I have a certain mental attitude. He calls that "a desire." The word "desire" is "eudokia." "Eudokia" means a kind feeling. He says, "There is, in my mental attitude, a kind of feeling."

This word "eudokia" is illustrated in Philippians 1:15, where it is used in this way. Paul says, "Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife, and some also of good will." Paul says, "Some people are preaching Christ to be in competition with me, and to have better results than I have. But others preach it out of a kind feeling (out of a spirit of goodwill) toward the lost.

Philippians 2:13 uses the word again in this way: "For it is God who works in you, both to will and to do, of His 'eudokia' (of His good pleasure). The good pleasure; the good feeling; and, the good attitude that God instills in us there." So, what this word "eudokia" connotes is an active delight and pleasure, which is here expressed as a wish for something that does not exist; that is, Paul wishes that the Jewish people trusted in Jesus Christ, but they don't.

In the Greek Bible, we have this word "men," which is not translated. But when you see it in the Greek Bible, it adds a degree of intensity to the word. So, when it adds "men" with this "eudokia," Paul is saying, "I really feel deeply about this matter – my heart's desire, indeed." If you were going to translate it, you'd say, "Indeed:" "My heart's desire really indeed is this."

**An Urgent Prayer**

Furthermore, not only his heart's desire, but he says, "I also put this in the form of a prayer." And he uses this word "deesis" for "prayer." This is one of several words for "prayer" in the New Testament. And this word connotes a deep personal urgency. When you have big problems; when you had an intense, enormous need; and, when you were overwhelmed and crushed in life, then you express prayer in the form of a "deesis" – going to God and saying, "Now, this is it. You have to do something. I can't handle this anymore. My need is desperate. I am under a deep pressure of urgency. And indeed, that's the word that Paul uses for "prayer" in his urgent petition to God, not to people, but to God in behalf of the Jewish people.

This word can be illustrated in its use elsewhere in the Bible. For example, it is used in Luke 1:13: "But the angel said unto him, "Fear not, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard, and your wife Elizabeth shall bear a son, and you shall called his name John." Here is the Father of John the Baptist. He is being told that his wife Elizabeth would conceive. And we are told that this is in response to his "deesis" – his prayer of urgency. It was a great burden upon Elizabeth that she could not conceive. It was a great personal grief to her that she was not able to have a child. So, the father and the mother prayed with an urgency type of prayer – a desperation that they have a problem that only God can solve. So, here the angel says, "Your urgency prayer has been heard, and it is answered.

This is also illustrated in Hebrews 5:7: "Who, in the days of His flesh (speaking of Jesus Christ), offered up prayers," and it uses "deesis:" "Jesus Christ offered up urgent, pleading, desperate prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard, in that He feared. It was no fun for Jesus Christ to carry the sins of the world upon him. It was no fun to have that sewage of human evil poured out upon him on the cross. And He met it with tears as a Holy Sinless Person. It was in a moment of desperation that He uttered a prayer of urgency to God the Father to carry Him through that terrible moment.

We have one more 1 Peter 3:12, which uses this word "deesis" as a prayer of urgency: "For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and His ears are open unto their prayers (their urgent appeals), but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil." So, God pays attention to desperate prayers.

Paul says, "That this prayer of his of extreme urgency, delivered with a deep personal emotion, is "to." And the Greek word "to" here is "pros." This is a preposition which connotes face-to-face. Paul is face-to-face with God in prayer. It is a prayer to God, and it is "for;" that is, "in behalf." And the word Israel is not in the Greek Bible. The Greek Bible has "them," but it does refer to the Jewish people: "In behalf of them (the Jewish people), that they might be." And this is the preposition "eis," which means "unto the purpose" or "unto the objective:" "They might be saved." That sounds like a verb in the Bible, but it’s not. It's a noun – the word salvation – "soteria:" "That they might come to salvation."

Here's the way to translate verse 1: "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for them is for their salvation." Now Paul begins chapter 10 with the same expression that he began chapter 9: "I just wish that the Jews had paid attention to the truth, and had received Jesus Christ as Savior." One of the things that Paul does, in trying to change this terrible attitude on the part of the Jewish people, is prayer.

**The Principles of Prayer**

So, we pause this morning to review the principles of prayer, which are largely ignored even within the Christian community. But this is God's basic method of dealing with all human needs.

1. **The Mechanics of Prayer**
   1. **Pray to God the Father**

Prayer is always directed to God the Father. Do not teach your children to pray at a mealtime by saying, "Dear Jesus." Do not pray to God the Holy Spirit. Do it the Bible way. The Bible is clear about it – that all prayer is to be directed to God the Father. John 17:1: "These words spoke Jesus, and lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said, 'Father, the hour is come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son may glorify You.'" Here the Lord Jesus Christ is illustrating the approach to prayer by directing it to the proper source, which is God the Father.

Ephesians 5:20 says this: "Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." We pray, and along with prayer, we give thanks, and it's directed to God the Father. All prayer should be directed to God, the Father.

* 1. **Pray in the Name of Jesus Christ**

Secondly, God the Father is approached on the basis of the authority that is the name of Jesus Christ. John 14:13 indicates this to us: "And whatever you shall ask in My Name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son."

John 15:16 says, "You have not chosen Me. But I have chosen you, and ordained that you should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain. And whatever you shall ask of the Father in My Name, He will give it to you."

John 16:23 says, "And in that day, you shall ask Me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatever you shall ask the Father in My Name, He will give it to you." Jesus says, "Do not address your prayers to Me. Address your prayers to the Father on My authority. Then you will get results."

* 1. **Pray in the Power of God the Holy Spirit**

So, we direct our prayers to God the Father, and we do it on the authority of the Name of God the Son, and we do it in the power of God the Holy Spirit; that is, we do it in temporal fellowship. We do it while we are under His controlling direction for it to be effective.

Ephesians 6:18: "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit (in the Holy Spirit), and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.

We may also add to that Romans 15:13, which sets forth this same principle: "Now the God of Hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Spirit." It is through the power of the Holy Spirit that our prayers are made effective.

1. So, the mechanics of prayer are very simple. The Bible is very clear. You only address prayer to God the Father. You do it on the authority that you have a right to come to Him in the name of Jesus Christ because you have accepted and trusted Him as Savior. And you do it because you are in temporal fellowship. So, you come in dependence upon the Spirit of God to execute the delivery of that prayer in your behalf.
2. **Asking God for Needs and Desires**

A second principle to observe is that prayer is God's children speaking to their Heavenly Father in behalf of their needs and desires. What is prayer all about? Prayer is asking God for things. That is what prayer is. John 14:13-14: "And whatever you shall ask in My Name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you shall ask anything in My Name, I will do it."

So, prayer is asking. Prayer is not thanksgiving. Prayer is not confession of sin. Prayer is not any number of other elements which may accompany prayer, and properly do. But basically, fundamentally, prayer is asking God for something. So, it is requesting something from God the Father.

If you read through John 17, which is the high priestly prayer of Jesus Christ the night before He was crucified, you will see that that whole prayer is a series of requests.

1. **The Lord's Prayer**

The Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6:9-13 is a model prayer for the Millennial Kingdom, and it is not a magic formula for use in the church-age today. This particular prayer is not a prayer that Christians should use today. This is not a prayer for the church-age. This is a prayer that was given within the context of life in the millennium – life under a totally different context. So, it has some variance from what we find elsewhere in Scripture as to what is the Christian order of prayer. There is, of course, no magic in our Father.

Those of you who meet a girl that finally touches the cockles of your heart, and you want to win her love, are not going to win it by going down and repeating three "Our Fathers." That's not going to help you at all. And the fact that she hears you – that will probably finish you off for her, as it probably should, once and for all. This is not a magic formula.

If you are shot down in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, and find yourself adrift on a raft, you will not be found by repeating several "Our Fathers" every hour on the hour. That is not a magic formula. And there are plenty of crazies out there in the religious world that do this all the time. They think that they can gain favor with God by repeating this particular prayer

1. **Unbelievers have no Basis for Prayer>**

Unbelievers have no basis for approaching God in prayer, since they can only approach the Father through the Son. John 14:6 says, "Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man comes to the Father but by Me.'" Prayer is strictly a family communication. Unbelievers cannot pray to God. And when you are in some group of unbelievers, and they perform a religious function of praying to God, it is a travesty. If you are at some event, and they say, "Now we're going to have someone lead us in prayer," and here is this whole mixed company of unbelievers? That's a travesty. You cannot join together as a group in prayer if you are not born again. You cannot do that individually, and you cannot do that if basically it is not a Christian group.

So, our society today likes to have prayers at athletic events; at entertainments; and, at one thing and another, in order to give a little cutesy stamp upon it, that we are recognizing God. But that is not the occasion. That is not the fitting place. And it is not the proper company for someone to stand up in prayer. And when we pray in such a conglomerate, as I heard a young minister do this summer, you will notice that they really do not pray to God. They really pray to the audience. And they generally step up with something that they're reading, and that they have carefully prepared, so as to be non-offensive. And they address some kind of a Supreme Being out there, but they are very careful not to close in Jesus' name. And what is that telling you? It is telling you that they know that they're really not addressing God, because they have no ground for family communication. The prayers of unbelievers are simply a pointless religious ritual.

1. **In Temporal Fellowship**

Prayer is effective only when the believer is in temporal fellowship with the Father, so that in his praying, he is being led by the Spirit of God. Christians who are in carnality do not change the records in heaven. Jude 20 says, "But you, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit." So, if you're out of fellowship; if there is unconfessed sin; or, if there are unresolved problems between you and the Lord, just forget it. Don't waste His time, because He's not going to let you do that. He's not going to pay attention. Don't waste your time trying to pray. Get yourself in tune with God first, and under the direction of the Spirit of God. Then you're prepared to pray.

1. **Pray for the Unbelievers**

This is a proper and legitimate calling of Christians. 1 Timothy 2:1 says, "I exhort, therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men." Then in verse 3, he says, "And this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior – that such prayer should be extended for all men in general (for this purpose), Who will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth." Pray for the salvation of unbelievers in society as a whole: " For there is One God and One Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, Who gave Himself for ransom for all, to be testified in due time. For this, I am ordained a preacher and an apostle. I speak the truth in Christ, and I don't lie – a teacher of the gentiles in faith and verity. I will therefore that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands without wrath and doubting." And specifically, he's talking about praying here in terms of seeking that the Spirit of God would convict the unbeliever, and bring him to Christ.

1. **We are Commanded to Pray**

We are not just invited to pray. We are told in 1 Thessalonians 5:17 that we are to pray: "Pray without ceasing." And the Greek word there for "pray" is in the imperative mood. It is a command. So, God is ordering us to do this.

1. **Unanswered Prayers**

There are certain reasons why, when we pray, nothing happens. And the Bible points out what some of these reasons are. Here are the basic ones.

* 1. **Lack of Faith**

First of all, the reason our prayers are not granted is that there is a lack of faith in the prayer technique, and thus in God. We don't really approach God on the basis of the fact that we are dealing with something very important, and very powerful, and that it does make a difference. If you think that prayer is only soap bubbles that you're sending up into the air to pop into nothingness, then you may expect that there will be no response from God. He does not respond to people who treat Him with such contempt.

Matthew 21:22, therefore, says, "In all things, whatever you shall ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive. If you do not approach it with the confidence that you're dealing with a true technique, it will not result in response.

* 1. **Asking in Keeping with God's Will**

Another reason for not having for granted is that we are not asking in keeping with God's will. 1 John 5:14 identifies this requirement: "And this is the confidence that we have in Him: that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us." Now, we must, therefore, know something about the Word of God, because a great deal of the will of God in prayer, we will secure through the knowledge of Bible doctrine truth.

Secondly, we must be under that temporal fellowship of the Spirit of God Who is able to guide us toward the things for which we should be asking. So, to ask in God's will requires a certain relationship and performance on our part.

* 1. **How we Treat other People**

Another thing that causes prayers not to be answered is because we get the same treatment from God that we give other people. Proverbs 21:13 sets forth this principle of wisdom: "Who so stops his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall crying himself, but shall not be heard." Ignoring the needs of somebody, such as the poor, and blocking your ears out to his needs, and being indifferent to the struggles that other people go through, God says, "If you play that game, I will not be sensitive to your need, because you're not any more perfect than that individual is."

* 1. **Arrogant Self-Righteousness**

Furthermore, God says, "I will not listen to people who have an arrogant self-righteousness. It turns me off." Job 35:12-13: "There is a cry, but none give answer, because of the pride of evil men. Surely God will not hear vanity; neither will the Almighty regard it."

Luke 18:11: "The Pharisees stood and prayed thus with himself: 'God, I think you I am not as other men are: extortionists; unjust; adulterers; or, even as this tax collector." Here you have a classic example of arrogant, self-righteousness. And after this Pharisee prayed not to God, but with himself, you notice what verse 14 says: "I tell you that this man, the humble tax collector, went down to his house justified rather than the other. For everyone that exalts himself shall be abased. And he either humbles himself shall be exalted." So, there is the arrogance, self-righteousness that closes the door to God's response to us.

* 1. **Domestic Tranquility**

Then there is another reason that prayers are not answered within a family unit. And that is because they're squabbling. Lack of domestic tranquility will close the door on God's responses to your prayers. 1 Peter 3:7 says, "In like manner, you husbands dwell with them (with your wives, that is), according to knowledge, giving honor to the wife as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heir together of the grace of life, that your prayers do not hindered." Husbands are to deal with wives in such a way that domestic tranquility is not improperly disrupted, and thus the door for God's response in prayer is not closed upon them.

* 1. **Selfish Designs**

Of course, it is self-evident that we cannot receive from God that which is motivated by selfish designs when we ask. James 4:2-3 point that out. It says, "You lust (you have great strong desires for things), but you don't have them. You even kill, and you desire to have. You cannot obtain even when you take peoples' lives. You fight. You go to war. Yet you have not simply because you ask not. And when you do ask, you receive not because you ask amiss, that you may consume it upon your lusts – upon the lust patterns of the sin nature.

So, there are many lusts from the sin nature that you may want to have satisfied, and you may even be so audacious as to ask God to give you an opportunity to satisfy those lust patterns. But the Word of God says that that kind of praying will bring no response.

* 1. **Being out of Temporal Fellowship**

Of course, as we've already indicated, if you're out of temporal fellowship (you have unconfessed sin in your life), then God will not listen to your appeals. Psalm 66:18 put it this way: "If I regard iniquity in my heart (I ignore iniquity in my heart), the Lord will not hear me."

Isaiah 59:2 adds this: "But your iniquities have separated between you and your God. And your sins have hidden His face from you, and He will not hear you."

John 15:7 lays down this same principle: "If you abide in Me (that is, stay in temporal fellowship), and My words abide in you (functioning on doctrine), ask what you will, and it should be done unto you." Now that is the limitation. You must be in fellowship.

The other side of that, to expand it, of course, is that if you are not in fellowship, then you are not controlled by the Holy Spirit. You are not filled with the Spirit. Jude 20 points out, as we've already seen, that our praying must be in the Spirit: "But you beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit.

Furthermore, Ephesians 6:18 summarizes the effectiveness of the Christian soldier's armor by the use of prayer: "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto, with all perseverance and supplication for all saints." And this comes at the end here of describing all these elements of the Christian soldiers armor, which makes him a winner in the Christian life. Of course, if we are disobedient to the Word of God, specifically knowing yet violating the Word of God; if we are sinning, and we know it, and we choose to do it, God will not respond. 1 John 3:22 says, "And whatever we ask we receive of Him because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight. God is not going to respond to those who do not do the things that are pleasing (that are justified) in His sight.

* 1. **A Show-Off**

Also, if you're a soul in praying, you can forget it. Matthew 6:5-6 says, "And when you pray, you shall not be as the hypocrites are, for they love to pray standing in the synagogue and at the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Verily I say unto you: 'They have their reward.'" What's their reward? Well, their reward is a little praise from the people on the street corner that they are impressed by their praying. That's the extent of it: "But you, when you prayer, enter into your room. And when you have shut the door, pray to your Father who is in secret. And your father who is in secret shall reward you openly." So, showing off in front of people in your praying will bring no response.

* 1. **An Unforgiving Spirit**

Then there is one final element that will close the door. And that's an unforgiving spirit on your part. Mark 11:25: "And when you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against any, that your Father also, Who is in heaven, may forgive you your trespasses." These are those who are the kinds of people that simply are willing to forgive. As the apostle Paul has pointed out, we forgive those who have offended us, for Christ's sake. We have this in Ephesians 4:32: "And be kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven you."

This is one of the primary reasons that Christians have their prayer blocked from ever getting to heaven. Somebody does something, and they hurt your feelings. And maybe they indeed are wrong in what they have done. The basic Bible principle is forget it. Don't give it a second thought. Say, "That's OK. You shouldn't have said that. You shouldn't have done that. You have a wrong attitude. And I hope you get it straightened out." This is just like the Lord said: "Father, forgive them, for they don't know what to do. And there was no resentment on his part, even hanging on the cross.

When you have an unforgiving spirit, and when you are resentful of what somebody has done, if your spiritual ears are sensitive, you will hear the door of your access to God slammed shut with a big bang, until you decide to get off your high horse and forget it. It's that person's problem. Why should you become part of it?

1. **Meaningless Repetitions**

Another principle of prayer is that meaningless repetitions will not gain you what you want. The charismatics love to pray with repetitious phrases. Matthew 6:7 says, "But when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the pagans do, for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking."

1. **Prayer is not Limited to a Place, a Time, or a Set of Words**

You do not have to pray in King James English. Many Christians are dissuaded from praying because they don't know how to use the "thee" and "thous." I remember, on one occasion, a lady who had been reared in a formal denomination, where the individual Christian was not viewed as the person to pray. The individual Christian was not expected to be able to approach God and speak to Him. This was for the professionals in church to do, because they knew how to use the King James English. And on one occasion, visiting, she decided that she would ask the grace at the meal. And she just talked to God. And she thanked Him for our presence, and our friendship, and the food, in Jesus' name. And when she finished, she looked up and smiled, and she said, "I did it." She had talked to God. Wasn't that amazing! How sad it was that, for most of her life, she never felt free to talk to God, because she didn't know the official language.

1. **Grace**

All prayer to God is a matter of grace. It's not that we have something coming. It's only that he is willing to listen to us, and He encourages us to speak up. Hebrews 4:16 says, "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

1. **God Knows our Needs**

God the Father knows the believer's needs before the Christian even prays. But it is God's method that we should ask, and that He will then respond. This is the technique that he has established. Matthew 6:8 says, "Be not, therefore, like them, for your Father knows what things you have need of before you ask Him."

Then James 4:2: "You lust; you don't have; you kill; you desire; you can't obtain; you fight; and. you war. You don't have because you don't ask." So, the Father does indeed know your needs, but He has established that the way He does things is when we ask.

1. **The Holy Spirit**

The Holy Spirit aids the believer in his prayer life and in his needs. And we have gone through that extensively in Romans 8:26-27 – one of the great outstanding instructions on prayer that every Christian needs to know thoroughly: "Likewise, the Spirit also helps our infirmity, for we don't know what we should pray for as we ought. But the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And He that searches the hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God." God the Holy Spirit comes in, and He runs interference to guide us in our praying. Furthermore, when we don't pray like we should, and when we don't ask for the things we should, God the Holy Spirit comes in, and He approaches the Father in our behalf, and He takes up the slack. Now that is good news.

1. **Faith**

Prayer is to be offered with complete faith in its effectiveness. Mark 11:24: "Therefore, I say unto you, whatever things you desire when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you shall have them."

James 1:5-6 say, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God (wisdom, or whatever you ask of God in prayer) Who gives to all men liberally, and do not upbraid; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavers is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind, and tossed back and forth." So, James stresses the fact that God is eager to give us, in a liberal way, what we ask. But if we are wavering, he does not deal with us.

1. **Satan**

Satan knows that prayer is his undoing, so he gives major effort to dissuading Christians from praying. It puzzles some Christians that they don't pray like they should. Others never give it a thought. Some Christians are disturbed as they look back over the week and see how really little organized time they have spent in prayer. Other Christians never think about it at all. And that is a satanic victory. The demons often will give us prosperity and success. They make life good for us. Yes, the demons make life good for us, because they know that when things are going well, you're not going to be inclined to pray. That is because the one thing that the demonic world cannot handle is prayer. This is why even approaching a demonically possessed person under the authority of Jesus Christ, and commanding in prayer that the demon leave, he cannot do anything else but go. And that is big power for a human being over a demonic spirit. And it is because we have that direct contact with God in prayer.

So, Satan is going to do everything he can to keep you from asking God for things that are going to counter Satan's program. Christian service, remember, as deeply as you may be involved in it – without prayer, it's all neutralized. You can knock yourself out all the hours of the day in Christian service. But if it is not immersed in prayer, Satan has you. He has you on the treadmill of doing things without having first become something in the form of a spiritually mature Christian with the capacity to talk to God, and with the capacity to want to talk to God, and to be compelled to talk to God, in order to get the job done that you're trying to do. So, Satan wants to dissuade you from praying blindly.

1. **Effectiveness**

Finally, prayer is what makes the Christian's armor in the angelic warfare effective. And we read once more Ephesians 6:18, which says, "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints. After you've put on all these elements of the armor, then what you need is prayer. And the result of that is the will of God as it is expressed through your requests.

So, all of these principles will enable us to have a capacity for prayer that is effective. We know the mechanics of prayer. We direct it to the Father in the name of the Son and the power of the Holy Spirit. We know that it is asking God for things. We know that it is not some ritual prayer like the Lord's Prayer that gains anything from God. We understand that unbelievers have no way to approach God and get a response. We know that prayer is effective only when we are in fellowship with God the Father. We know that it is our call to pray for unbelievers, because that's how they come to salvation – as the result of prayer of believers.

Christians are commanded to pray on a moment-by-moment basis. It is not merely optional. And we have several reasons that we have seen why prayer is not effective: lack of faith in prayer as a technique from God; not asking in keeping with the will of God; lack of pity for the burdens and sufferings of others; an attitude of arrogant self-righteousness when we approach God; lack of domestic tranquility; asking from selfish motivation; asking while we are out of temporal fellowship; asking while we are not under the control of the Holy Spirit; asking when we are outright disobedient to the Word of God; praying in order to show off in front of other people; and, praying with an unforgiving spirit.

We have seen that meaningless repetitions do not move God. Prayer is not limited to any kind of certain language or place. Prayer is a matter of grace, and God invites us to come indeed to that throne of grace. The Father knows our needs beforehand, but His method meeting those needs is for us to ask. It is the Holy Spirit Who comes to our assistance to enable us to pray in the right way. Prayer is to be offered in complete faith in its effectiveness. Satan wants you to not pray, because prayer, finally, is what makes the Christian soldier's armor effective in combat.

Now the apostle Paul says, "I have a heart's desire. I feel very deeply over the fact that the Jews are not saved. They are ignoring Jesus Christ. They will not come to Him. They will not respond to Him. And I would like to change that." And Paul says, "I am trying to change that through prayer."

You might say, "Well, Paul, that's really dumb. Why don't you get out there and carry on some kind of campaign? Why don't you try to do this? Why don't you hustle in this way? Why don't you get a movement going? Why don't you get people together? Why don't you get some inspiring messages? Prayer?" Yes, prayer. That was the first and foremost thing that he did. And I hope that after we have made this brief review of what Scripture has to say about what prayer will do, when it's properly handled, that you will have some inkling as to why, indeed, Paul made a lot of sense: "I have a huge problem. There's only one way to solve it, and that is with prayer."

It was Martin Luther who, on one occasion, said, "I have so much to do this day, and so little time in which to do it, I will have to spend more time in prayer at the beginning of the day than I normally do, or I'll never get it done."

Dr. John E. Danish, 1988

[**Back to the Romans index**](http://www.christiandataresources.com/romans.htm)

[**Back to the Bible Questions index**](http://www.christiandataresources.com/allarticles.htm)