

Elements of Successful Praying 2 - Right Motive: For God's Glory



How to Pray and Get What You Pray For (Part 7)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again. This week I'm sharing with you on the elements that are needed to make up a complete and successful prayer.

Yesterday I dealt with the first element of successful praying from two points of view: the positive, that we must come with confidence; the negative, that we must come without condemnation. I compared these to the two opposite sides of one coin. The positive side with confidence, the negative side without condemnation. And I explained the basic conditions that make it possible for us to come without condemnation.

Today I'm going to speak about the second main element of successful praying. It is that we pray with the right motive, and it's very important that we know what the right motive is. The right motive is for God's glory.

Religious people often tend to focus on externals. They're concerned about the way people dress, the entertainments that they enjoy, the things they eat. In the days of the Pharisees there were all sorts of ordinances that they insisted upon, like washing their hands before meals. Generally speaking, religion starts at the outside and looks at externals. It's hard for religious people to realize that God starts at the inside and works from inside out. God looks below the surface. There's a very vivid example of this in 1 Samuel 16. God had sent Samuel to the house of Jesse to anoint one of his sons as the future king of Israel. And Jesse brought forward seven sons, all of whom were fine, handsome, strong upstanding young men. Each time that Samuel saw one of these sons he thought, "This must be the one," but each time the Lord corrected him and said, "That's not the one." And then the Lord gave him this explanation.

> "...for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." (NAS)

Bear that in mind when you come to pray. The Lord looks at the heart. Somewhere it says in the scripture that "He searches the hearts and the rain." He's a discerner of the thoughts and intents of our hearts. One particular thing that He searches is our motives. God is not concerned merely whether what we want when we pray is good, but He's also concerned as to why we want it. This is explained more fully in James 4:2-3. In verse 2, James says:

> "...You do not have because you do not ask." (NAS)

There's one very simple and practical reason why a lot of people don't get things that they could have from God simply because they don't ask. Looking back at my own life I recognize many times the many situations where I did without things that God would willingly have granted me simply because I never asked for them. So remember that one reason why you and I often do without things that God wants us to have is that we do not ask. However, that's not the only reason. In the next verse, verse 3, James says also this:

> "You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures." (NAS)

Notice, here we have people who do pray but they still don't receive because they're praying with wrong motives and particularly the motive that James says is wrong is that you may spend it on your pleasures. This brings us back to the difference between the old self and the new self which was what I was speaking about in one of my talks last week. Remember that Paul says we have to "put off the old self" and then we have to put on the new self. I told you that the old self is a rebel; he's self-assertive, he's egotistic, he's filled with his own wants and needs. "I want this, I want that, I think this, I think that." And God doesn't bargain with the old self. As a matter of fact, God has only got one remedy for the old self and that's execution. The good news of the gospel is that the execution took place in Christ when Jesus died on the cross. Our old self was crucified with Him. But that's got to become effective in the life of each one of us; so each one of us, on the basis of what Jesus did on the cross, has to put off that old self with his self-centeredness, his self-seeking, his emphasis on his own needs and pleasures. As long as we pray with those motives, our motives are wrong and it's very possible for that reason God will not grant us what we pray for, even though what we pray for in itself may be good. So we ask, "What is the right motive for praying?" And Jesus states it clearly in John 14:13. He says:

> "Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." (NAS)

There's a comprehensive promise that whatever we ask, Jesus will do. But you'll notice the basis on which He will do it, "that the Father may be glorified in the Son." And so the right motive for praying is that the answer may bring glory to God.

As a matter of fact, that's not just the right motive for praying but that's the right motive for living. The supreme purpose of life when we view it aright is to glorify God. The greatest privilege that any of God's creatures can have is to bring Him glory and praying is just one of the ways in which God has ordained that we shall be able to bring Him glory when our prayers are answered in the name of Jesus.

I've said that there's only one right motive for praying and that is for the glory of God. We can look at this from the opposite side. We can see that as the very essence of sin. The essence of sin, that is, wrong living, is that it robs God of the glory due to Him. Many people haven't seen this, but it's stated a number of times in the epistle to the Romans. For instance, in Romans 1:21, Paul is describing how the whole human race has turned away from God and descended into a life of darkness and ignorance and wickedness--futility. And in verse 21 of this chapter, Paul describes the steps that led to this awful descent into the abysses of darkness and sinfulness. And he says this:

> "...although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened." (NIV)

What are the first two steps down? The first one: the failure to glorify God; the second one: the failure to be thankful. And when men took those two first steps downward, they were set on a slippery path that leads to a condition that ultimately is too horrible to think about. Therefore, in praying we have to be careful that we do not make those errors. We have to be careful that we start with a motive of glorifying God and with the expression of giving thanks to Him. In Romans 3:23, Paul brings out this point again. He says:

> "...all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." (NIV)

What is the essence of sin? It's not necessarily robbing a bank or committing adultery or doing something very terrible in the eyes of religious people. The essence of sin is that

we're not living for God's glory; that our lives are denying God the glory which is rightfully due to Him. On the other hand, the life of righteousness that's based on faith, restores the glory to God. There's an example given in Romans 4 of Abraham. Speaking about how Abraham held on to God's promise of an heir, in spite of every discouragement and everything that seemed to be going the wrong way, Paul says:

> "Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what He had promised." (NIV)

Notice Abraham, by holding on to God's promise in faith, gave glory to God. He reversed the negative result of sin, and that's what God wants each of us to do who believe in Him and come to Him through Jesus. He wants to set us free from the negative down pull of sin and to restore us to the right motive and the right purpose of living which is to give glory to God. And so, when we are praying with that motive, that God may be glorified, then God says something truly wonderful. He says all His promises are made available to us. This is stated in 1 Corinthians 1:20:

> "For no matter how many promises God has made, they are 'Yes' in Christ. And so through Him the 'Amen' is spoken by us to the glory of God." (NIV)

Isn't that staggering! No matter how many promises God has made, and someone's estimated that there are 8,000 promises of God in the scripture, they are all "Yes" in Christ. When we come to God in Christ, God never says, "I didn't mean that promise," or "You can't have that promise." He says they're all "Yes." But the response of faith is that to God's "Yes" we say "Amen." And it's our "Amen" that clinches God's "Yes" and makes the promise ours. However, we say "Amen" to the glory of God. Let me read that again.

> "For no matter how many promises God has made, they are 'Yes' in Christ. And so through Him the 'Amen' is spoken by us to the glory of God." (NIV)

That's how we rightfully can claim the promises of God, if it's to His glory that we claim them. I've paraphrased that statement there and I've said it this way; and let me leave this with you to meditate on.

> "Every promise that fits my situation and meets my need is for me, now, if I claim it in the name of Jesus and if I claim it to the glory of God."

All right, our time is up for today but I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this time. Today I've been speaking about the need for right motives. Tomorrow I'll be dealing with the next main element of successful praying which is "Right Relationships."

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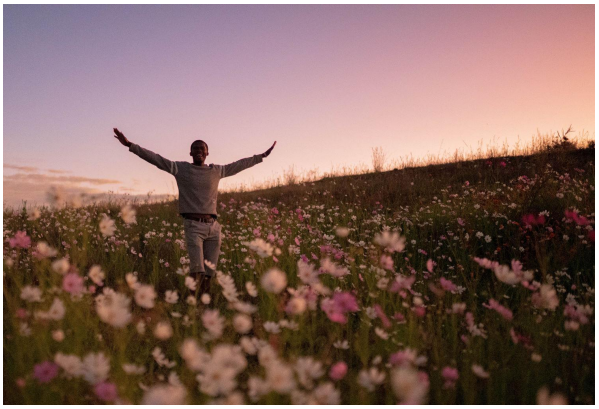

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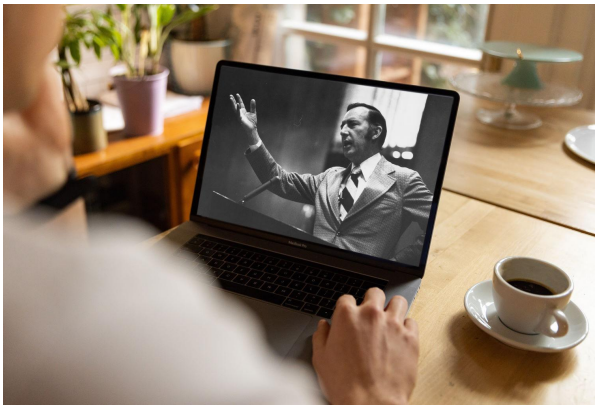

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