



ISTockphoto.com – *Moses conversing with God*

The Bible as It Is

The Scriptural Basis of Prayer*

Old Testament*

“The Old Testament assumes that prayer can be offered at any time and place. There are, however, prescribed times: confession is made on the Day of Atonement; hours are set for daily prayer (Dan. 6:10; and the sabbath and other festivals are days for prayer. The Temple was a place of prayer, as were the synagogues and homes in the postexilic era. The prophets taught that prayer is more than a matter of ritual; it must be offered with integrity, pure motives, and only within the context of having attended to ethical concerns.”

Conversations With God – Oldest Forms of Prayer

Genesis 3:9-12 – God and Adam who has discovered he is naked.

Genesis 15:1-6 – God and Abraham who asks for a male heir.

Exodus 3:1-4:17 – God and Moses upon his commission to redeem the children of Israel.

Exodus 33:11 – God and Moses in continuing conversation.

Conversations With God – Oldest Forms of Prayer (cont.)

1 Samuel 3:4-9 – God and Samuel summoned for the first time as a child.
1 Samuel 23:2-4 – God and David asking to attack the Philistines.
1 Kings 3:5-14 – God and Solomon asking for wisdom.
Isaiah 6:1-13 – God and Isaiah who sees the Lord.
Jeremiah 1:4-19 – God and Jeremiah summoned as a prophet.

Petitions for Guidance

Genesis 24:12-14 – Issac for a suitable wife.
Numbers 11:11-15 – Moses' intercession for Mariam.
1 Kings 3:5-14 – Solomon asking for wisdom.

Requests for Necessities

1 Kings 8:22-53 – Solomon's dedication of the Temple.
Proverbs 30:8 – "Provide me only with the food I need."

For Deliverance from Enemies

Genesis 32:11 – Jacob from Esau.
Psalm 31:15 – "My fortunes are in thy hand."
Psalm 59:1 – "... be my tower of strength against all who assail me."

For Retribution

Judges 16:28 – Samson from the Philistines.
Psalm 137:7 – Against the people of Edom.
Jeremiah 17:18 – "May my persecutors be foiled, not I; ..."

Intercessions by the Patriarchs, Moses, David, and the Prophets

Genesis 18:22-32 – Abraham for the people of Sodom.
Exodus 5:22-23 – Moses for the people of Israel against Pharaoh.
Exodus 32:11-13 – Moses regarding the golden calf.
2 Samuel 12:16-17 – David for the son born to him of Bathsheba.
Ezekiel 9:8 – Ezekiel for the Israelites.
Ezekiel 11:13 – Ezekiel for the Israelites.
Amos 7:1-6 – Amos for "Jacob."

Intercessions for Individuals

1 Kings 17:20-21 – Elijah for the widow's dead son.
2 Kings 4:32 – Elisha for the dead son of his hosts.

Intercessions for Gentile Governmental Authority

Jeremiah 29:7 – "Seek the welfare for any city to which I have carried you off . . ."
Ezra 6:10 – "... pray for the life of the king [Darius] and his sons."

Praise and Thanksgiving for God's Steadfast Love and Benevolent Care

Psalm 104:4-5 – "O Lord my God . . . who makest the winds thy messengers . . ."
Psalm 108:3-4 – "... I will raise a psalm to thee; for thy unfailing love . . ."
Psalms 145-150 – "O praise the Lord . . ."

Confession for Sins, Atonement, and Forgiveness

Exodus 32:31-32 – “This people has committed a great sin . . . ”

Leviticus 16:21 – “He shall lay both hands on its head [the live goat] and confess over it . . . ”

Leviticus 26:40-45 – “I will remember on their behalf the covenant with men of former times . . . ”

Judges 10:10 – “We have sinned against thee; we have forsaken our God . . . ”

2 Samuel 24:17 – “It is I [David] who have done wrong; the sin is mine . . . ”

Nehemiah 9:16-37 – “But thou art a forgiving god, gracious and compassionate . . . ”

Psalm 51 – “. . . wash me, that I may become whiter than snow . . . ”

Isaiah 1:18 – Though your sins are scarlet, they may become white as snow . . . ”

Daniel 9:20 – “Thus I was speaking and praying, confessing my own sin and my people Israel’s sin . . . ”

Micah 7:18-19 – “Once more thou wilt show us tender affection and wash out our guilt . . . ”

Ethical Concerns

Isaiah 1:15-17 – “Cease to do evil and learn to do right . . . ”

Hosea 6:6 – “. . . loyalty is my desire, not sacrifice . . . ”

Amos 5:21-24 – “Let justice roll on like a river and righteousness like an everflowing stream . . . ”

Micah 6:8 – “God has told you . . . Only to act justly . . . before your God.”

Psalm 24:3-6 – “Who may go up the mountain of the Lord? . . . He who has clean hands and a pure heart . . . ”

New Testament*

“As in the Old Testament, the prayers of the New Testament are of several kinds . . . Jesus is portrayed as a model and instructor in prayer in the New Testament. . . . Within the early church, prayer was addressed directly to God” . . . who “is to be addressed as ‘Father.’”



Specific Events and Occasions

Luke 3:21 – Jesus’ Baptism.
Luke 6:12 – Jesus calling his disciples.
Luke 9:29 – Jesus’ transfiguration.
Luke 22:39-46 – Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane.
Luke 23:46 – Jesus’ crucifixion.

Major Prayers

Matthew 6:9-13 – Teaching the disciples how to pray.
Matthew 26:39-44 – “My father, if it is possible, let this cup pass me by . . . ”
Matthew 6:5-8 – Pray privately and with brevity.
Matthew 6:9; 7:11 – God is to be addressed as “Father.”
Mark 11:23-24 – Pray in faith.
Mark 11:25 – Pray in a forgiving spirit.
Mark 14:35-40 – “Yet not what I will, but what thou wilt.”
Luke 11:2-4 – Teaching the disciples how to pray.
Luke 11:5-13 – Pray earnestly.
John 17 – The High Priestly Prayer

Addressing Prayers Directly to God or Through Christ as Mediator

Romans 1:5 – Through him [Jesus] I received the privilege of a commission in his name . . . ”
Romans 1:8 – “Let me begin by thanking my God, through Jesus Christ, for you all . . . ”
Romans 5:1 – “. . . let us continue at peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ . . . ”
Romans 8:39 – “. . . nothing in all creation . . . can separate us from the love of God . . . ”
Romans 10:9-13 – “Everyone who has faith in him will be saved from shame . . . ”
1 Corinthians 1:4 – “I [Paul] am always thanking God for you.”
1 Corinthians 1:9 – “It is God himself who called you to share in the life of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord . . . ”
Colossians 1:3 – “In all our prayers to God, the Father . . . we thank him for you . . . ”

Giving Thanks for Faith and Witness of the Faithful

Romans 1:8-9 – “Let me begin by thanking my God, through Jesus Christ, for you all . . . ”
1 Corinthians 1:4 – “I am always thanking God for you.”
Philippians 1:3-5 – “I thank my God whenever I think of you; and when I pray for you all . . . ”

Prayers of Thanksgiving and Praise

Matthew 11:25 – “I thank thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for hiding these things . . . ”
Matthew 26:26-29 – “Then he took a cup, and having offered thanks to God . . . ”
John 6:11: - “Then Jesus took the loaves, gave thanks, and distributed them . . . ”
Acts 2:47 – “. . . they praised God and enjoyed the favor of the whole people.”
1 Corinthians 14:16-17 – “Your prayers of thanksgiving may be all that could be desired . . . ”
Ephesians 1:2-6 – “Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . ”
2 Corinthians 13:14 – “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God, and fellowship in the Holy Spirit, be with you all.”
Philippians 4:20 – “To our God and Father be glory for endless ages! Amen.”

Prayers for Daily Needs

Matthew 6:11 – “Give us today our daily bread.”

Matthew 7:11 – “. . . how much more will your heavenly Father give good things to those who ask him!”

Philippians 4:6 – “. . . but in everything make your requests known to God in prayer . . . ”

Prayers for the Healing of the Sick

James 5:13-16 – “The prayers offered in faith will save the sick man . . . ”

Intercessions for the Congregation, Persons and Rulers

Romans 15:13 – “And may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace . . . ”

Romans 15:30-32 – “. . . pray to God for me that I may be saved from unbelievers . . . ”

2 Corinthians 1:11 – “. . . he will continue to deliver us, if you will cooperate by praying for us ”

Philippians 1:9-11 – “. . . this is my prayer, that your love may grow ever richer and richer . . . ”

1 Thessalonians 5:25 – “Brothers, pray for us also.”

1 Timothy 2:1-2 – “. . . I urge that petitions, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgiving be offered for . . . sovereigns and all in high office . . . ”

Prayers for Forgiveness and Guidance

Luke 18:13 – “O God have mercy on me, sinner that I am.”

Matthew 6:12 – “Forgive us the wrong we have done . . . ”

Matthew 19:13 – They brought children for him to lay his hands on them with prayer.”

Acts 1:24 – “Thou, Lord who knowest the hearts of all men, declare which of these two thou hast chosen to receive this office of ministry and apostleship . . . ”

Acts 6:6 – “These they presented to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them . . . ”

Acts 13:2-3 – “. . . the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set Barnabas and Saul apart for me . . . ’”

Prayers Offered Directly to Christ

Acts 7:59 – “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.”

1 Corinthians 1:2 – “. . . to the congregation of God’s people at Corinth . . . who invoke the name of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . ”

Matthew 8:25 – “Save us, Lord, we are sinking.”

Matthew 17:15 – “‘Have pity, sir, on my son . . . ’” (Kyrie eleison)

Matthew 20:30-31 – “‘Have pity on us, Son of David.’” (Kyrie eleison)

1 Corinthians 16:22 – “*Marana tha*—Come, O Lord!

Revelation 22:20 – “Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!”

Christ’s Prayers as Intercessor

John 17: - “Glorify thy Son, that the Son may glorify thee.”

Romans 8:34 – “It is Christ . . . God’s right hand, and indeed pleads our cause.”

Hebrews 7:25 – “. . . he is always living to plead on their behalf.”

The Spirit in Prayer and as Intercessor for Believers

Romans 8:26 – “In the same way the Spirit Comes to the aid of our weakness.”

Romans 8:27 – “God who searches our inmost being knows what the Spirit means”

1 Corinthians 14:15 – “I will pray as I am inspired to pray . . .”

1 Corinthians 2:10-11 – “For the Spirit explores everything . . .”

Galatians 4:6 – “To prove that you are sons, God has sent into our hearts the Spirit of his Son . . .”

Philippians 3:3 – “. . . we are the circumcised, we whose worship is spiritual . . .”

How Prayer is Answered in Unexpected Ways

2 Corinthians 12:7-9 – My grace is all you need . . .”