

CUT THIS LIFELINE AND YOU ARE DEAD

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by Dr. Henderson Ward



As part of the human drift towards complacency many things vital to our spiritual well being are under-appreciated and under-used. Here we examine prayer, the believers' lifeline to see why it is so important to believers everywhere.

Prayer, a small word that means so very much to the spiritual life and progress of the Christian. Paul advises us to "Pray without ceasing." ([1 Thessalonians 5:17](#)) Could it be that the Apostle Paul wanted us to give up our earthly pursuits and devote ourselves, like cloistered monks, to a life of continuous supplication before God? No, that would be to misunderstand what prayer is all about. Paul, with all his eloquence, gifts and resources as an apostle asked the church to supplicate for him thus, "Brethren, pray for us." (

[1 Thessalonians 5:25](#)

)

Now if Paul needed prayers we can rightfully assert that all believers need prayer. On another occasion the disciples came to Jesus and asked him to teach them to pray and he responded with the "Lord's Prayer" ([Luke 11: 1-4](#)). Throughout the New Testament the disciples, following the example of Jesus, lived a life of prayer and encouraged believers to do the same and hence my calling this topic "Cut this Lifeline and you are Dead".

All through the Bible this word prayer or one of its many derivatives is mentioned about 375

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times depending on the version of the Bible you are using. In spite of the fact that the doctrine of prayer is taught and practiced throughout the Bible and even today virtually everyone prays yet there is a vast misunderstanding surrounding this subject and in this meditation, with God's help, I want to inquire into and throw some light on this subject of prayer.

First we should note the fallacies surrounding prayer

Fibs dangerous to believers

Some believers suppose that once they pray about their concerns then that relieves them of their responsibility to live right, feed the hungry, visit the sick and comfort those who mourn but this attitude is contrary to scripture. The Bible states "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." ([James 1:27](#)). Reference also [Matthew 25:41-45](#)

A number of believers seeking to build up their faith think that prayer will impart faith to them but they will be disappointed because faith is built on the word of God, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." ([Romans 10:17](#))

Several believers entertain the notion that to offer prayers will keep them from the trials of life but they are wrong not understanding that trials is a necessary source of spiritual growth, "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." ([James 1:24](#)).

Although God does not send you temptations, he permits them; when they come from whatever source he will always provide you the means of escape. ([1 Corinthians 10:13](#))

Fabrications dangerous to sinners

Some believe that all that you have to do for sinners to be saved is to pray for them and that alone will get them saved but this is perilous and contrary to scripture which commands us to go and preach the gospel, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth" ([Romans 1:16](#))

Some believe that you can live an unsaved lifestyle and pray for and get the blessings of God, not understanding that the prayer of the wicked (except in repentance) is an abomination to God, "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination." ([Proverbs 28:9](#))

Some believe that God is accessible to the sinner, in the same way he is to believers who do his will, but that is not true, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." ([Psalm 66:18](#))

We should be clear on this principle, "The Lord is far from the wicked but he heareth the prayer of the righteous." (

[Proverbs 15:29](#)

) We will do well to remember that Sovereign God can do as he pleases.

Falsehoods designed to delude

Some believers mislead themselves that prayer puts God in a bind to tie his hands and make him do as they want not realizing that God must be true to himself, "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." ([Isaiah 46:10](#))

Some believe that pray alone will reveal God's will rather than study and commitment to the

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revealed will of God; his written word, "But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." ([Matthew 4:4](#))

Some believe that prayer alone will sanctify the sinner but the Bible assures us that it is the work of the Holy Spirit through the word of God, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." ([John 17:17](#)) All these falsehoods are dangerous and we should be alert to recognize the truth.

Next we should observe the facts surrounding prayer

Prayer is about communications with God

Prayer is a vital instrument that connects us to our heavenly Father, just like the telephone connects us to a friend, but not all people are in contact, "Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, and said, entreat the Lord, that he may take away the frogs from me" ([Exodus 8: 8](#))

Prayer is simply communicating with God, having a conversation with him, we to him and he to us, "I thank thee, and praise thee O thou God of my fathers for thou hast made known unto me what we desired of thee." ([Daniel 2: 23](#))

Prayers from believers are always answered in God's way and God's time and nothing will ever change that, "He shall call upon me and I will answer him" ([Psalm 91:15](#)) and also, "In the time of my favour I will answer you and in the day of salvation I will help you." (

[Isaiah 49:8](#)

) (NIV) When believers properly communicate with God there is always an answer.

Prayer is about commitment to God

Prayer is based solely on a relationship which involves commitment to God which God honours. Almighty God is the creator of all but in that special sense he is the father of the redeemed only through adoption. It is vital we understand and pay attention to these relationship terms.

Our Father; Jesus taught us that when we pray say, "Our Father..." ([Matthew 6:9](#))

My people; this is a definitive relationship "If my people which are called by my name shall humble themselves and pray" ([2 Chronicles 7:14](#))

The upright; this is a rapport in terms of moral standing "but the prayer of the upright is his delight." ([Proverbs 15:8](#))

Prayer is about confidence in God

When our prayers are in accordance with God's will then we can be confident in God that our requests will be honoured, "And this is the confidence that we have in him, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us." ([1 John 5:14](#))

Our prayers are so solidly built on our confidence in God that we do not hesitate to approach him with our many concerns, "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your request be made known unto God." ([Philippians 4:6](#))

When all hope seems to be gone, the believer can rest assured that God can handle the toughest situation and would be able like David to affirm, "This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles." ([Psalm 34:6](#))

Finally we consider the function of prayer

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Prayer fortifies the Christian

Sincere, authentic prayers of the believer can underpin and strengthen the soul, "In the day when I cried thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul." ([Psalm 138: 3](#))

In perilous time prayers can be a means of stability and preservation for, "He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: He that keepeth thee will not slumber The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul." (

[Psalm 121: 3-7](#)

) Prayer can communicate blessed peace to our hearts as we open up to God, "in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your request be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ." (

[Philippians 4: 6-7](#)

)

Prayer accesses God's promises

The prayer of the believer will ensure his requests are granted when he prays according to God's will in a spirit of humility and reverence, "If ye then being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him." ([Matthew 7:11](#))

Prayers from believers will result in promised forgiveness, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." ([1 John 1:9](#))

The intercessory prayer of believers can be very effective in the conduct and affairs of others, e.g. Peter's release from prison ([Acts 12:1-17](#)) Prayer is a powerful tool for divine access.

Prayer can move God to action

Prayer is forceful and when God's requirements are met it will move God to take action, "In his distress he sought the favour of the Lord his God and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers. And when he prayed to him, the Lord was moved by his entreaty and listened to his plea; so he brought him back to Jerusalem and to his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the Lord is God." ([2 Chronicles 33: 12-13](#)) (NIV)

When God is ready to carry out retribution, prayer can, when the conditions are met, cancel or postpone his action, "Then once again I fell prostrate before the Lord for forty days and forty nights; I ate no bread and drank no water, because of all the sin you had committed, doing what was evil in the Lord's sight and so provoking him to anger. I feared the anger and wrath of the Lord, for he was angry enough with you to destroy you. But again the Lord listened to me." ([Deuteronomy 9:18-19](#)) (NIV)

Prayer is efficacious, "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us." ([Ephesians 3:20](#)) and James fully agrees, "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." (

[James 5:16](#)

)

I hope we have been able to see clearly how vital prayer is to every believer. Without this lifeline we shrivel and dry up and become unfruitful in God's service and unedifying to our contemporaries. If we don't know how to pray we can do like the disciples did and ask God to

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teach us to pray. It is through prayer that we approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. These are needy times and this is one lifeline that we dare not sever for it will surely result in our spiritual death.

Enough said.

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