

A Study of Prayer

Lesson 2: What Prayer Is and Is Not

I. What Prayer Is

- A. Prayer is a privilege and a command—Rom 12:12; Phil. 4:6; I Thes. 5:17; Heb. 4:14-16
- B. Prayer is as universal as man—Gen. 4:26 (at time of Seth); Ps. 65:2
- C. Prayer is a cry and supplication to God—Ex. 22:23; 22:27; Ps. 34:15, 17
- D. Prayer is the strong desire of the soul for God—Ps. 42:1,2
- E. Prayer is described as beseeching – II Kg. 20:1-3; calling upon God—Acts 7:59; lifting up the soul – Ps. 25:1; pouring out of the heart—Ps. 62:8
- F. Prayer is “the offering up of our desires to God, for things agreeable to His will, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ” (Unknown)

II. What Prayer Is Not

- A. Prayer is not an act to be done so others can see our religious or pious ways—Mt. 6:1, 5
- B. Prayer is not to be vain or meaningless repetition—Mt. 6:7
- C. Prayer is not an emergency device used only when one is in need or some disaster is threatening—Phil. 4:6; I Thes. 5:17 (Not “if you will just get me through this _____, I will turn my life around”)
- D. Prayer is not a substitute for obedience—Prov. 28:9
 - Even Jesus’ prayer on the cross to forgive His murderers – Lk. 23:34 required obedience—Acts 2:22-41
 - God will forgive our sins if we confess them—I Jn. 1:7-9
- E. Prayer is not to be used to inform God and scorn man—Lk. 18:9-14

Questions for thought:

1. From Lesson #1, why did Jesus’ disciples say “Lord, teach us to pray” (Lk. 11:1)?
2. Why should prayer be considered a privilege for us?
3. What is the context for the admonition to pray in Ephesians 6:18, 19?
4. Explain in your own words, the following terms used to describe prayer:
 - a. “A beseeching”-
 - b. “Calling upon God”-
 - c. “Lifting up the heart and soul”-
5. In what sense might prayer be used simply as an emergency device?