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Prayer – Lesson 02

In this lesson we will see how Jesus prayed for His disciples and how the early church apostles prayed for theirs.

Let us look at Jesus first.

One obvious place we remember how Jesus prayed for Apostle Peter.

Luke 22:31-32, ³¹And the Lord said, “Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. ³²But **I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren.**”(NKJV)

Jesus did not pray that Peter will not go through trials but He prayed that his faith will not fail.

Jesus always prayed but He did not pray for any human need rather He met all the human needs.

Jesus responded to every compelling need to those around Him but not turning to His Father in prayer!

Jesus heals the leper and Jesus casts out the demon. Jesus does not ask *God* to meet these urgent needs because he knows that God has already given Him the power to meet these needs himself.

Understand that Jesus never asks God to carry out the work which God has set before Him to do. And neither should you.

Let us look at the prayers of Apostle Paul recorded in his epistles in the bible.

1. Praying for an opportunity for him to come and preach the Gospel to them.

Romans 1:8-10, *First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is being reported all over the world. God, whom I serve with my whole heart in preaching the gospel of his Son, is my witness how constantly I remember you in my prayers at all times; and I pray that now at last by God's will the way may be opened for me to come to you.*

2. He is willing to be cursed if his countrymen can be saved.

Romans 10:1, *Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved.*

3. Prays for church in Rome to be united as one and they may glorify God

Romans 15:5-6, *Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus,⁶ that you may with one mind and one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

4. Praying for the church to be complete in every aspect for the ministry.

1 Corinthians 1:4-9, *I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given to you by Christ Jesus,⁵ that you were enriched in everything by Him in all utterance and all knowledge,⁶ even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you,⁷ so that you come short in no gift, eagerly waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ,⁸ who will also confirm you to the end, that you may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.⁹ God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.*

2 Corinthians 13:7-9, *Now I pray to God that you do no evil, not that we should appear approved, but that you should do what is honourable, though we may seem disqualified.⁸ For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth.⁹ For we are glad when we are weak and you are strong. And this also we pray, that you may be made complete.*

5. Praying for the church in Ephesus that they will know the Lord has blessed them spiritually so that the church may walk in fullness.

Ephesians 1:15-22, *Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints,¹⁶ do not cease to*

give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: ¹⁷ that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, ¹⁸ the eyes of your understanding^[c] being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹ and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power ²⁰ which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹ far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come. ²² And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, ²³ which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

6. Pray for the church in Ephesus that they will comprehend the knowledge of who God and how much He loves them so that they will be effective in ministry.

Ephesians 3: 14-21, *For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ ¹⁵ from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, ¹⁶ that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, ¹⁷ that Christ may dwell in your hearts*

through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love,¹⁸ may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—¹⁹ to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.²⁰ Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us,²¹ to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

7. Praying for church in Philippi to be filled with love and their love may abound in every good work.

Philippians 1:3-6 & 9-11, I thank my God upon every remembrance of you,⁴ always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy,⁵ for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now,⁶ being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;

And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment,¹⁰ that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ,¹¹ being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

8. Praying for the church in Colossae that they will be filled in the knowledge of who God is and they will grow in the knowledge of Him.

Colossians 1:3-14, *We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, ⁴ since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of your love for all the saints; ⁵ because of the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel, ⁶ which has come to you, as it has also in all the world, and is bringing forth fruit, as it is also among you since the day you heard and knew the grace of God in truth; ⁷ as you also learned from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf, ⁸ who also declared to us your love in the Spirit.*

⁹ For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; ¹⁰ that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; ¹¹ strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy; ¹² giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. ¹³ He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.

Epaphras is also praying the same to the church

Colossians 4:12, *Epaphras, a servant of Jesus Christ, from your group, also greets you. He always prays for you that you will grow to be spiritually mature and have everything God wants for you.*

9. Praying for the church in Thessaloniki to be strengthened in the love, faith and in work of the Lord

1 Thessalonians 1:2-5, *We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers, ³remembering without ceasing your work of faith, labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the sight of our God and Father, ⁴knowing, beloved brethren, your election by God. ⁵For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake.*

1 Thessalonians 3:9-13, *For what thanks can we render to God for you, for all the joy with which we rejoice for your sake before our God, ¹⁰night and day praying exceedingly that we may see your face and perfect what is lacking in your faith? ¹¹Now may our God and Father Himself, and our Lord Jesus Christ, direct our way to you. ¹²And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as we do to you, ¹³so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints.*

1 Thessalonians 5:23-24, *Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and*

body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴ He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it.

2 Thessalonians 1:11-12, *Therefore we also pray always for you that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of His goodness and the work of faith with power, ¹² that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

10. Praying for his spiritual son Timothy who was handling the church in Ephesus to stir up the spiritual gifts which is in him.

2 Timothy 1:3-7, *I thank God, whom I serve with a pure conscience, as my forefathers did, as without ceasing I remember you in my prayers night and day, ⁴ greatly desiring to see you, being mindful of your tears, that I may be filled with joy, ⁵ when I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also. ⁶ Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. ⁷ For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.*

11. Praying for Philemon

Philemon 4-7, *I thank my God, making mention of you always in my prayers, ⁵ hearing of your love and faith which you have toward the Lord Jesus and toward all the saints, ⁶ that the sharing of your faith may become effective by the acknowledgment of*

every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus.⁷ For we have great joy and consolation in your love, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed by you, brother.

What we can learn from the above is that neither Jesus nor His disciples prayed for the physical needs of any of the disciple of the early church. Now why do we pray for those needs more?

When was the last time you heard a prayer from the pulpit for asking for the knowledge God to increase in you? Or to awaken your spiritual gifts in you, by which you will be an effective minister of God in preaching the Gospel?

We ought to see our life through the mirror of scriptures not by our experience or by what you have learnt from your pastor or teacher.

The scripture says like in **1 Corinthians 15:19**, *And if our hope in Christ is only for this life, we are more to be pitied than anyone in the world.* (NLT)

Just check your own life.

Do you ask someone to pray for earthly blessings or Spiritual blessings?

When did the last time you went to pray with someone to awaken your spiritual life?

You may think the apostle did ask us to pray, you may even remember the words of Apostle Paul commanding us to pray

without ceasing. The next lesson we will look in detail what they had asked us to pray as well as how Jesus commanded us to pray.

I can't help but to echo the words of Jesus when He spoke about His second coming on the context of prayer.

Luke 18:8, ⁸I tell you, he will grant justice to them quickly! *But when the Son of Man returns, how many will he find on the earth who have faith?*" (NLT)

Luke 18:8, *I tell you, God will help his people quickly. But when the Son of Man comes again, will he find those on earth who believe in him?*" (NCV)