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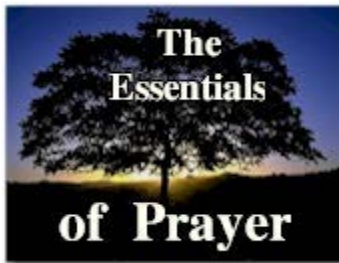
The Essentials of Prayer

by Ernest L. Martin, Ph.D., 1995, expanded January 2002

Edited and annotated by David Sielaff, June 2019

Read the June 1, 2019 Commentary, "[Prayers and Supplications](#)"

Then read the "[June 2019 Newsletter](#)"



Editor's Note: Prayer is direct communication with God. It is your personal communication with God your Father with Christ as the only and loving mediator between our Father and you (1 Timothy 2:5). Use prayer. Do not neglect praying. Perhaps the first thing to ask God is for Him to help you pray constantly, not in formal ways, but casually, privately, so you are "**instant in prayer**" (Romans 12:12) as the King James Version puts it. That phrase in Greek actually means, "**persevering in prayer**" or "**constantly in prayer.**" Dr. Martin's excellent article "The Essentials of Prayer" will help you understand what prayer is, and most importantly how you can pray according to God's will.

But First ...

I want to present Dr. Martin's explanation of his experience with prayer as a young believer. He presents his own account in the "September 2001 Newsletter" given below. You will find it interesting and I doubt if many of you have read this or remember it. Dr. Martin wrote this Newsletter just months before his death in January 2002.

Dear Associates, Students and Friends:

Just about 49 years ago [from 2001] I found myself in one of the most inhospitable places on earth. I was on the West Coast of Greenland about 100 miles east of the ocean and on the western edge of the vast Ice Cap that covers most of the Island (where I stayed a year forecasting the weather when I was in the United States Air Force). I had been introduced to the Holy Scriptures in an academic way about a year before, and here I was above the Arctic Circle enjoying my work in Meteorology very much, but wondering why I was there because I was also getting interested in studying the Holy Scriptures.

There was a great chaplain at the base, Lt. Waterhouse (a Southern Baptist, my mother's denomination). He took me under his wing and encouraged me. He flatly told me that I would one day leave my meteorological career and become a "Doctor of Theology." He was almost right, but later at Ambassador College I received my higher degree in Education (only my Master's degree is in Theology).

A few months later Lt. Waterhouse was transferred. I felt alone in a Christian sense. Though there were about one thousand of us on the Air Base, those of us in the meteorological profession had such odd hours of working (always rotating through daylight, swing and midnight shifts) that it was hard to become fast friends with anyone. I especially felt alone in studying the Bible. I finally had no one to fellowship with who could answer questions for me or even to discuss biblical subjects.

Not only was it a lonely existence, I discovered that I was getting more confused about theological matters and not learning the proper doctrines that were essential to know. The more that I studied alone, the more confused I got. It was frustrating and even demoralizing. Then, I decided to do something about it. On one of my rare days off from work, I went up to a mountain ridge near Lake Ferguson and knelt down. All I saw were dark clouds above and the arctic wilderness on all sides (I was two miles from the base, but having a sense of isolation it seemed as though I was at the North Pole).

All I asked God was a request. It took me no more than two minutes. I simply petitioned God to help me to know the truths of the Scriptures and that I promised to teach those truths to all whom He might send me. I experienced nothing emotional or physically sensational during the prayer. In fact, it was so cold that it was uncomfortable to be kneeling. It was a relief to get off my knees. I simply thanked God for hearing me, and I immediately walked back to the base. But something was different from that moment.

For some reason, when I came down from that mountain ridge (in one of the most desolate areas on earth), I had the real feeling that God had heard my prayer and that He would not let me down. From then on I progressively began to learn the truth. From that very day, my confusions began disappearing. Even in studying alone in a solitary manner, the proper teachings of the Bible began to become evident and even simplistic. What especially pleased me was the fact that I was encountering new discoveries in Scripture almost on a monthly basis that I had never read about in the Commentaries from the top scholars.

God began to bless me abundantly, and He has not stopped. All of the new research that you have read or hear from me, has developed from that singular time when I simply asked God to help me. I mention this to you to give each of you encouragement. I am confident that God will do the same for each of you. We are in an age of discovery. There are yet many new things to uncover. All of us are needed to get the job done. Thus, I have an appeal to make. I want you to join with me (or continue your helping hand) in getting out the Gospel of Christ to this world. It is the proper philosophy of belief that motivates the work of ASK. This is the important thing (and not the detailed bits of biblical information that any of us may discover). It is not that ASK is always right in what is taught (indeed, we all are commanded by God to **“grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”** (2 Peter 3:18).

No person can be right in all things. But it is possible to be right on many points. There is one principle, though, in which we can always be right. That is the philosophy that governs our activities. It is that God-oriented philosophy that is essential. The teaching of ASK is anchored in the belief that all answers on significant subjects that God wishes mankind to know will be found in the pages of the Holy Scriptures as they are properly translated or understood. That is our philosophical belief.

True, we may make mistakes in interpretation from time to time (of course we do, but I hope they are few). Yes, mistakes are made, but our over-all philosophy of how we treat and accept the sanctity of the Holy Scriptures (and I might say, of Christ Jesus himself) is genuine and it is sound teaching. That will not change. I am convinced that God will not allow our prime philosophy to be altered in any negative manner.

These principles of teachings that motivate our activities at ASK are valid, and they are necessary for this period in world history. We all have a big job to do. Thank you for your part in it. For all of you who have been “holding up my hands” over the years, I want you to know that I sincerely appreciate it from my heart. I want to encourage you even to enlarge your individual interest in the work of ASK.

We have no big corporations or foundations supporting us in our efforts to teach the Gospel. Our support comes from individuals who have their hearts in educating the public and even the scholars in biblical matters. Let us all continue to broadcast the proper teachings of God. I ask all of you who have been behind my work with contributions, that you keep up your free-will offerings. I believe God is pleased with you

all, and that He will reward all of us abundantly in the near future.

The real teachings of God are needed now more than ever. This is especially true in all the hot spots of the world where belligerence and hostilities still exist. That is particularly valid in the city where Christ taught and where He was crucified and resurrected from the dead. Jerusalem and the Middle East need a big dosage of the real Gospel of Christ. The people there need a change of heart. The area of Jerusalem has been a special region of my concern for the past 40 years.

A part of my later learning experience (after I left Greenland and went on to college and began my professional work) took me to Jerusalem where I was in charge of 450 college students for five summers at the southern wall of the Haram esh-Sharif. God has allowed me to have my constant attention to that area of the world in all phases of my ministerial work. This is one of the reasons you will find me concentrating on prophetic matters dealing with Jerusalem. I know the strong points in recognizing the prophetic teachings about Jerusalem, and I know some of the major weak points in the world's misunderstanding about Jerusalem. One of those "weak points" is the use of the modern archaeological methods in trying to interpret the early history of the Holy City.

Take for example, my recent research on the true site of the Temples ([*The Temples That Jerusalem Forgot*](#)). There is one thing that keeps a lid on uncovering the truths of history and the Bible regarding Jerusalem. That is the lack of historical training that many archaeologists have. It is a great demerit on their part. My mentor, Professor Benjamin Mazar was different. He was first a historian, and then an archaeologist. This is what is needed today. There are few archaeologists endeavoring to put the historical approach as their standard of belief (rather than some archaeological guesses based on pottery and other items that are shown to be without historical basis).

The majority still go merrily on their way of making singular (and erroneous) evaluations without recourse to the historical accounts. Also, they are usually castigating the proper evidence in the Holy Scriptures (which many do not trust) and the historical records found in the various documents that have come down to us from the past. Historical records are not a first priority in the eyes of many archaeologists. You need to be aware of these fallacies that archaeologists misuse in our modern world. Their deficiencies are often a real deterrent to learning the truth of any historical matter.

Thank you for your encouragement and your support of the work of ASK. Without you, we could do nothing.

Ernest L. Martin

Now enjoy and learn from Dr. Martin's article on prayer (*DWS*) ...

"The Essentials of Prayer"

Dr. Ernest L. Martin, 1995 Audio

The subject of prayer is a most important one in the Holy Scriptures. When all the cognate forms of the word *prayer* are considered, it is referred to over 540 times in the entire biblical revelation, both the Old and the New Testaments. The basic meaning of the word "prayer," ecumenically speaking, is to "entreat," or "to call upon." God is the one who is entreated. Or, you are calling upon Him, the deity, God your Father, to ask for something.

Sometimes the word *prayer* has the significance of "crying out," even "to plead," "to beseech," and to "seek." It can also mean to "ask for something" or even "to demand" something from God or from Christ. We will, however, see what prayer means as we progress.

It means also at times to acknowledge God's greatness, and His power, and His authority. It can also have a secondary significance of praising God, but this is not the ordinary or usual meaning of the attribute, and it should not be pressed as an essential characteristic of prayer, though to praise God is important.

Prayer really means, “to petition,” or “to call” on God for something, which He can and will supply to you. Now it is most important that we realize those two verbs, *can* and *will*, supply to you. We know that He can, but what we have to ask is, will He do it for us? We have to know if He *can* (and we know that), we have to know if He *wills* to do as we request of Him; and we can know that.

Note the model prayer Christ gave to His first apostles and disciples.¹ When you analyze it, you get a wonderful principle that involves all of the factors I have been mentioning. There is one factor it does not mention, which I will get to later when we come to some of the later epistles of Paul, John, and others. But in a simplistic form, we find this prayer given to the disciples and apostles by Christ Himself, is a kind of prologue to the whole subject of prayer. We can learn the main factors of prayer, which are very important for us to understand.

The principles in this model prayer are very effective for all forms of prayer you can discover in the Bible. Jesus mentioned this by saying: “**After this manner therefore, pray you** [then He starts with], **‘Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be your name ...’**” (Matthew 6:9). “**Hallowed**” means hold something to be holy. God’s authority, His position, His power, are all bound up in His name, which is holy, set apart from all other names.

Note the first identification here: God is called “**Our Father.**” That is the first thing that every one of us should understand. Usually, we find our theological friends, our preachers, even evangelists, and lay people do not understand this first principle of praying to someone in heaven, especially to the divine head of heaven and Earth, the Creator. He is called “**Our Father.**” That is the first principle Jesus gives to us. He does not say in a distant way, “**Our God,**” though obviously, He is our God. He is our divine sustainer, and the one who created us — our Father.

At the same time, there is something very personal here that Jesus gives to us, and it is the very first principle that we should understand, and that is, He is our Father. What is a Father? All of us who are born on this Earth are children. Now maybe you did not know your father. Maybe he died very early in your life, or for some other reason you were unable to know him, or know of him, but most of us know our fathers. In fact, if you do not have a father you could relate to, you can learn how others relate to a proper father.²

Fathers are well known in this earth. I am a father. And most of you, if you are not yet married, will get married and have children, and you will be fathers or mothers. In this particular case here, you petition God not as a mother, but as being a father. He is **the** Father.

“Our Father Which Art in Heaven”

That is where He is living at the present moment, in heaven. You have a means of communicating with Him on a very personal level. That is what Jesus is giving us here at the very beginning of His discourse on prayer. He is a Father to us, and you can communicate to Him.

¹ The entire Lord’s Prayer of Matthew 6:9–13 (expressed in mostly the same expression in Luke 11:2–4):

“Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: [*For yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever* {or the eons, ages}]. Amen.”

The last portion, “**For yours is the kingdom ...**” is not in the best Greek manuscripts, so many modern English translations exclude it: English Standard Version, Revised Standard Version, New American Standard, NET (New English Translation) Bible, Rotherham Bible, and the Concordant Literal Version. The New American Standard Bible puts the text of verse 13 in italics. *DWS*

² We often view “**Our Father,**” God Almighty, our Creator, by how we related to our human fathers. This is natural; God made us to have that understanding. So too, God in heaven seems distant from us. We do not see him, feel Him, or hear Him, but we can receive information from Him and His Word, which through the writings of men have been transmitted to us through symbols put into words so His thoughts can be in our minds. We communicate with Him through prayer, as we read in this article.

Regarding God’s seeming remoteness in this lifetime see my August 2013 Commentary, “[You ARE Alone!](#)” and my article “[Forgiving God.](#)” For a more detailed presentation read Dr. Martin’s article, “[Where Is God?](#)” *DWS*

“Hallowed Be Your Name.”

His name is holy, and you should always understand what His name really is. He has many names. He has many titles. He has many attributes associated with Him, and each of us should know, in the Scripture, what they represent. But the general title and the one most appropriate for us in prayer to God is **“Our Father.”** That is as close as you can get to intimacy as you can imagine.

It is hard for me as an adult individual who has been around on this Earth a little over 60-some years, and having experienced life quite a little bit, to understand that this Father in heaven is some kind of a “non-being.” It is hard for me to understand that. In fact, it would be hard for anyone else, I think, to understand it. It certainly would have been to the apostles back then to understand that, or for the disciples listening to Jesus when He was giving this model prayer.

When Jesus said **“Our Father in heaven,”** they automatically recognized that God was their Father. And if He was the Father of Jesus, of the apostles, and of the disciples who heard Him back then, and if He is your Father — then all understand that fathers beget their own kind. They beget the same type of beings that they are, their children are the same as they are. The two go harmoniously together. Saying **“Our Father”** means that you are a child of the living God in heaven. You must remember that, and you must approach Him as a Father. So we find that His name is Holy, and He is your Father.

“Your Kingdom Come.”

He says this to the Jews at this particular time because they were anticipating the kingdom of God to come on Earth. That was what they wanted, and in this particular prayer Jesus was telling the Jews at that time that they should ask for that.³ Now whether you should ask for it or not is another thing.

The last essential that I am going to give you in this lecture — and I want you to listen to it — is that you will find that you are in a position much higher than even the Jews at that time who were looking for a kingdom. You do not have to ask for the kingdom like they did, as I will show you a little bit later.

There are other priorities you should be asking for. Other things that God has given to you, other responsibilities, and other positions of power and authority that you can be asking God for, certain things that did not even apply back then when He gave this model prayer to the Jews. Remember, when Jesus gave this message (the Sermon on the Mount, beginning with Matthew 5:1–2) to the people, it was months before He was crucified. He spoke before He became the sinner for mankind to die in our place. He had not been resurrected from the dead yet. And finally, the Christianity that you and I know, and particularly the information revealed to the apostle Paul and the others after 63 AD, called the Mystery, was not understood by any of the people at that time.

Nevertheless, we find in this model prayer some very good indications, principles, that I am talking about. Those principles have to be modified as we go on because with education, with knowledge, with more understanding of where we are, who we are, why we are here, and what we are to do in the future, these things can and should be modified, but it is excellent teaching of a preliminary nature that Christ gave back then. It can apply to us in principle today. Yet we must apply it differently for us as we go on, as I will show you.

“Your Will Be Done in Earth, as It Is in Heaven.”

Now that is a most important principle that never varies. You can never deviate from this one here. It is an asking that His will, the Father’s will, always to be put into action, as it is in heaven, let it be here on Earth. That is the attitude you must have. No, ...

- It did not say **“your will,”** referring to another human.

³ For information on the religious situation when Jesus and the apostles lived, see [“The Importance of First Century History.”](#) Specifics on religious issues of the time are in [“Chapter 14: The Prophetic Environment of the First Century”](#) from Dr. Martin’s book, [Restoring the Original Bible](#), and his article [“The Expectation of Christ’s Second Coming in Apostolic Times.”](#) DWS

- It did not say “my will.”
- It did not say the “will of our government.”
- It did not say the “will of our king, or queen,” or something like that.
- It did not say the “will of our father, or our mother.”
- It did not say the “will of our children.”

But it does say **“Your will ... in heaven.”** Whose will? The will of God the Father.

This is the first principle. After understanding that you are talking to your Father in heaven, the first essential principle of prayer is that you are asking that His will be done in your life — and in the lives of all of those around you that you are responsible for, or that you love, or whatever contact you have with people — including all of those outward in your country, and all the people in the world.

You must ask for, and believe, that God’s will should be done. It will not necessarily be your will. I will show later that, believe it or not, your will and God’s will shall mesh together into a single will, if you really have a proper understanding of this whole matter of the will of God. This is because God’s will works in each of us at this moment whether you know it or not. In fact, when you are really educated in the understanding of God’s truth, your will and His will shall be exact and precisely the same.

You will find God’s will is working in us all the time and His will shall prevail. You should tell yourself in your mind, with your attitude, that His will prevails in all circumstances. Once you have that in mind, then your attitude in prayer is proper, because you are motivating and little by little aligning your mind to be like His, so that your will agrees with His will and not your human will. The two wills together, when you look at them, slowly become one and the same.⁴ We will find this to be true as we proceed. It says [in Matthew 9:11]:

“Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread.”

This is an acknowledgment that He is the supplier of all things in our lives. You should be thankful and appreciative for what you get every single day. And you should thank Him for such things. **“Give us this day our daily bread.”** Notice it says **“daily.”** Now that does not mean that you are kneeling before God in prayer all the time. In fact, the physical attitude that you have, whether kneeling, walking, standing, lying on the ground face down like many people did in ancient times, that is not what I am referring to in these essentials of prayer. The essentials that I am giving to you will automatically allow you to comfortably do what you need to do. Principles are what I am giving you — the essentials. One thing you should ask for **“our daily bread.”**

Next, Jesus says you should be forgiving:

“And Forgive Us Our Debts, as We Forgive Our Debtors.”

This sentence shows you are to do things as well. As I treat my neighbor, I want my neighbor to treat me. But more than anything else, I want you, Father, to treat me that way. I want you to forgive me for my wrongs. This verse, Matthew 6:12, suggests that you will continually ask God for this, because **“all have sinned and come short of the glory of God”** (Romans 3:23). Not a one of us is perfect, completely. In your daily prayers, wherever they may be, and however you may utter them, you should understand that He is the one who can, and will, forgive you. Jesus says you should forgive others as they forgive you. He will come and forgive you at the same time.

“And Lead Us Not into Temptation. Amen.”

It says, **“into temptation”** which really means “into trial” or “into a trial.” God can put us under trial and testing, if He wishes. He certainly put the Israelites in the Old Testament on many occasions under trial. Some

⁴ This is how Jesus was able to state, **“I and my Father are one”** (John 10:30). DWS

of you, at this very moment, are undergoing various trials.

You can ask Him not to put you under trial, in a particular circumstance, or whatever it might be. In fact, Jesus even says **“bring us not into trial, but deliver us from evil.”** Evil here mean bad things, trials.⁵ He can do that, too. However, you have already said **“your will be done,”** remember? You said that before you ever got to the trial part of the prayer. If you are under trials, recognize that our Father is in control. Knowing He is in control of your life gives you an attitude in prayer far different than if you did not know He is in control. Do you see the point? You already acknowledged and understood that He is in control. And He is ...

“Lead us not into temptation [which means “into trial”] but deliver us from evil [that is the “bad”] for yours is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever [for the ages]. Amen.”

• **Matthew 9:13**

Jesus then says **“Amen,”** the technical term for “so be it” or “let it be so” at the end of any prayer of this nature.

Jesus said in John 14:13–14, when later He taught His disciples, that when you pray and ask God the Father for anything, He said to do it **“in my name,”** the name of Jesus Christ. He stated that several times. That simply means to do it by the authority of Jesus Christ [Matthew 18:5, 20; Mark 9:37, 39, 41, 16:17; Luke 9:48; 15:16, John 16:23–24, 26.] You may not have any authority of yourself, except that which God may give to you. But when you come to a spiritual relationship with God the Father, through His firstborn Son Jesus Christ, then you suddenly take on the mantle of Jesus Christ Himself. When you use the term or the phrase, **“in the name of Jesus Christ,”** you are actually saying “by the authority, and in the authority, of Jesus Christ” may these things be done.

Therefore, I would weigh my words very carefully to God before I would say something of that nature. But if you are assured what you are saying is in conformity to the will of the Almighty God; if you are paying attention to these principles, and know **“your will be done on earth”** under all circumstances, then you will know, whatever happens in your life is the way that God wants it. Yes, things can change, if He wills it, but your and His will shall come into conformity. In fact, His will always predominates in all circumstances. I will show you this as we go along.

The Purpose and Operation of Prayer

Prayer is not for you to get something He did not want you to have in the past, or that you have to remind Him of, because He knows everything that you need. That is what Jesus said, even before talking about this prayer here. Prayer is a means of acknowledging your conformity to His will on these matters. It is a daily affair that you have with him, and it is an affair of talking with your Father, and He responds as a father to a child. It is a family relationship, and that is most important for us to understand.

There are prayers in the Bible, particularly in the Old Testament, but also in the New, where dedications are made by a king in which he petitions God, as the king, for the whole of the people. It is perfectly proper to do it that way. But under normal circumstances, an individual comes in prayer to the God of heaven and earth in a personal relationship of father to child. And that is how the relationship should be.

If you say at the end of your prayer, “by the authority of Jesus Christ,” that is the same as saying “by the name,” or “in the name of Jesus Christ,” you are bringing into the relationship the firstborn son of the Living God who, as we read in other Scriptures is none other than the Creator of the heavens and earth. Do you know that the Father gave to Jesus that power and authority? You have the right to be identified with that firstborn One? That is most important because God will listen to His children. He will listen to His firstborn. Do you know who God’s firstborn is? It is Jesus Christ.

Later revelation shows us that you and I are **“in Christ.”** We are in Him in a spiritual sense and in a legal

⁵ Most modern translations render **“deliver us from evil”** to personify the evil as **“deliver us from the evil one.”** The Greek has the definite article, **“the evil [one]”** as shown in the contexts here in Matthew 6:13, as well as in Matthew 5:37, 13:19, 38, Luke 11:4, John 17:15, Ephesians 6:16, 2 Thessalonians 3:3, 1 John 2:13–14, 3:12, and 5:18–19. DWS

sense. When we petition God in prayer — and I will show you as we go along, based upon this preliminary introductory type of prayer here — even more sophisticated prayers will come forth. But the sophisticated prayers never deviate from the one-on-one relationship of Father to child. The Father to child relationship is that you are not just one child out of a multitude of others, but you are an individual child of His, recognized as His firstborn through Christ Jesus.

Realize that everyone else who is a Christian, is in the same relationship with God the Father. Your whole attitude should be that He is most interested in His firstborn son or daughter. He is most interested in you, and if you petition Him as a father, He will listen to you as your father. It does not mean an infant. Please understand that. It means a person who is educated, who is intelligent, who may be 60, 70, 80 years of age, or 20, or 15, or 10. It makes no difference. It means a person who is a part of the very family of God.

The last essential that I will give you, and I will give you a prologue now, is the fact that you should recognize who you are. When you pray, if you know who you are, you will not have any trouble in praying. If you do not know who you are, you will always be asking yourself: “Should I ask for this? Should I ask for that? Should I pray this way? Should I be in this attitude of mind, or this physical attitude, or whatever.”

You can think of a thousand different things that you would ask, but if you know who you are, a child of the Living God, and you come in the authority of Jesus Christ (see John 14:13, and several other Scriptures), you have that authority to come to God the Father Himself on a one-to-one relationship without anyone between, except Jesus Christ. He is the actual firstborn, and you are in Him, and He is in you, and both of you are in the Father.

That is the divine trinity, if you want to know what a trinity is. (The Holy Spirit, the power of God, is not a part of a trinity separate from you, and God the Father and Christ.)⁶

God the Father, Christ Jesus, ... and You

I will tell you the true trinity, though the word “trinity” does not occur anywhere in the Bible, as I hope you understand. At the same time, I will tell you what the “trinity” is and what the relationships are. It is God the Father, it is Christ Jesus the firstborn, and you; you in the singular, as the firstborn. You have a divine trinity right there, and do not let anyone take that power and authority away from you. That is what Jesus Christ told the apostle Paul, and Peter, and John, after He told the Jews before His death and resurrection. He taught this model prayer within an environment of their expectation of the Kingdom of God to come.⁷

In fact, Matthew 6:9–13 is not the model prayer for you, or for me. We can learn certain principles in it, which we can adapt into our own lives, that is true. But it is not the model prayer intended for you. However, it does start out with “Our Father,” and that you are a child, an adult child of God.

Later we will find that when you have Christ Jesus in the midst of you, and you are in Him and He is in you, all of us are reckoned by the Father as being firstborn ones. Remember that fact. When we come to a better prayer that is an example for us, and the manner of prayer, we must already know that God is our Father and His will must be done. Matthew 6:10: **“Thy [God’s] will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.”**

The apostle Paul continually says this. In Romans 12:2, we find that he is writing to Roman Gentiles, telling them about the power of God through Christ Jesus. Paul said for them NOT to be:

“... conformed to this world, but be you transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove [test] what is the good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”

YOU must know what the will of God is. Let me ask a question right now, and think about this. How many of you know what the will of God is in your life right now? Or at any given moment?

⁶ That 3-way relationship is not exclusive. It exists for every other human being who is a believer now, in the future, and for those who never knew God and Christ since Adam until the last child descended from of Adam is born at the end of Christ’s reign of 1,000 years. This is further explained in Chapter 32, “[The Absurdity of the Trinity](#)“ in Dr. Martin’s [Essentials of New Testament Doctrine](#). DWS

⁷ Again, see footnote 3 above for information on the religious situation when Jesus and the apostles lived. DWS

Right now, think about any given circumstance affecting your life at present. Realize that what you ought to be asking for is the ability to know what is the will of God, and then to walk in it. That is one of the things you should be asking for, that the will of God be manifest and obvious in your life.

Paul says for you to start proving something. Prove what? Well, **“be not conformed to this world.”** That means to this society, to this age that we are in, that is in rebellion to God in most cases.

“... but be transformed by the renewing of your mind that you may prove what is the good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”

Almost on all occasions — I will be rather bold right now, or a better word is “confident” — I can be very confident that in almost all occasions of my life at this present time I have proved what **“the good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God”** is in my life. Believe it or not, I have done this.

God’s spirit is what guides you. Not in all occasions certainly, but when I made that statement I have enough Scriptures that come all together in my mind, that tell me what the will of God is, [1] first of all in nature, [2] what the will of God is for mankind, [3] what the will of God for me as far as the future is concerned, what I will be, [4] who I am now, all of these things.

Yes I know, I am confident by faith, as to what the will of God is for me at this present time. You can know too, if you think about it. If you have any problems on that, just continue to the end of this [article]. And you will learn how to prove what the perfect will of God is in your life. You see this information all over Scripture, but I am concentrating primarily on the New Testament. **[Editor’s Note:** I quote 1 John 5:14–15 below from the Concordant Literal New Testament, which is more expressive and true to the Greek than the King James Version. *DWS*] The apostle John says in 1 John 5:14–15:

“And this is the boldness which we have toward Him, that if we should be requesting anything according to His will, He is hearing us.

And if ever we are aware that He is hearing us, whatever we may be requesting, we are aware that we have the requests which we have requested from Him.”

• 1 John 5:14–15, CLV

We can have **“boldness ... toward Him,”** (“confidence” is the word in the King James Version). I can have “boldness” toward God. And John says, **“that, if we should be requesting anything ... he hears us.”** There is one thing I left out: **“according to his will ...”** What you have to know is, what is His will?

You know, almost on all occasions I know what His will is. And on the occasions I do not know His will, it comes to a matter of knowledge and education. Overall, I know exactly what His will is for my life. I know exactly where I have been. I know exactly where I am going. I know exactly who I am here and now. I know exactly that I will be saved without any doubt in the world. I know many things which I accept through faith. I am absolutely certain, and so can you be.

The prime factor we must consider when praying is what Jesus said in His example prayer, His model prayer for the Jews. It is **“thy will”** [God’s will] **“be done in Earth, as it is in heaven.”** Once you acknowledge that you are talking to your Father, that He is holy, that He recognizes you as a son or a daughter (not only an ordinary son or a daughter, but a “firstborn” son or a daughter “in Christ”) — once all of that is recognized, then the inner part of prayers that you utter, must be the prevailing attitude that God’s will shall be done. Do not put anything in your prayers that says “I want my will to be done.” You may do that on occasion, but remember whose will certainly will prevail, so be frank with God and tell Him, **“Your will be done in all occasions.”** You do that, and you will be heard by our Father.

We need ought to prove what is the acceptable will of God. There is where education comes in. You have to know what is the will of God. First John 5:14 says **“this is the boldness which we have toward Him.”** I hope you have this confidence when you approach God. I am sure you do. If you do not have such boldness by the end of this [article], all you need do is to ask God for that confidence. Once you ask Him, then believe He will give it to you, and He will (Matthew 7:7–11). Then go on with your life. Every time you pray, pray with

boldness. This is the confidence we can have in Him, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. What you have to do is to find out what His will really is.

The way you find His will is first find out the general will of God for all humanity, then break it down until it comes to you. This is the final essential I will give you. Because you must recognize, the Bible has made it clear who we are, and better yet, who you are.

Who Are You — Really?

If you do not know who you are, just go to a mirror, look at the reflection of yourself, point a finger at yourself and say, “You are you.” Once you know who you are, then ask God “who am I?” God tells you who you are. You are His child. You are not an ordinary child; you are His firstborn in His eyes (with many other firstborn children around). That is how precious, beautiful, and wonderful you are to Him. He has a role for you to play in this world. What He wants you to know is this — His will is for you, under all circumstances, no matter what trials you are going through, or what difficulties you have, He is there with you, and for you. This is what you should recognize.

Jesus, when He prayed to His Father the night before His crucifixion said, “**Nevertheless not my will, but yours be done**” (Luke 22:42). He wanted in His own physical way to get out of the pain and the excruciating ordeal of the crucifixion. He asked three times to be released from it, but on every occasion He said “**your will be done.**” That is what made Jesus Christ our elder brother so we can have confidence in Him and use the authority of using His name at the end of our prayers, we will absolutely put the divine stamp of approval upon what you ask for. Remember, do as Jesus did. “Your will be done Father, and not mine.”

I mentioned also that Jesus prays to the Father for us at this present time. According to Paul in Romans 8:27, Jesus is before the Father, pleading on our behalf. But do you know what it says? Jesus Christ prays through His spirit (Romans 8:9, Philippians 1:19; and 1 Peter 1:11):

“And he [Jesus] that searches the hearts knows what is the mind of the spirit, because he makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”

• **Romans 8:27–28**

This passage expresses similar thoughts as 1 John 5:14. The will of God benefits you. The will of God benefits me. But it does not do so in the way that we think it does. That is why you must always express in your prayers, as Jesus said, “**thy will be done,**” and not my will. We must learn and know His will. I will give you some of the Scriptures that show His will so you can boldly ask of Him in accord with His will.

Realize that God’s will is for your good. Not only at the end, but even right now at this moment, even through trials, troubles, and difficulties. Even when we find Christ in heaven pleading with the Father on your behalf at present, Jesus still prays according to His Father’s will. Together they are working their plan for each of us. We are all part of it, and it is proceeding beautifully, just as God wants it to go. Although we look around and we find all types of troublesome things and difficulties, and we understand that our Father is in charge of everything, which He is, we can know we are here for a purpose.

The main reason that we have trials, tribulations, and difficulties, is for our education — to teach us the things we need to know about the consequences of good, the consequences of evil (and we have experience in all of those things), all are proceeding according to the will of God.

Evil and God’s Will for Every Child of Adam

Do you really understand that it is the will of God that there be evil in the world? It is also the will of God that there be good in the world. He is in charge of it all, you are not. Evil is something that is a part of nature, so to speak. God says flee from evil, but He is very much in charge of it, all the time. That is why sometimes He uses evil for your own good, to teach you, to teach us all lessons. Just as we as parents sometimes punish a child for things he or she may do, to teach lessons to them, to keep hands off the hot stove, from running

into the street, or things like that. God does the same, though with more severity than we might have to deal with our own children. The point is this, we should always pray that God's will must be done. God's will shall be done, and we should align ourselves with His will.

Secondarily, we must not only find out what God's will is, we must prove and test what is the will of God. [See Romans 12:2 on page 8 above. DWS] This is where study of the Holy Scripture comes in, both of the Old and the New Testaments, but particularly those sections of Scripture that pertain to us, we who are under the adult understanding of God, through the mystery that He gave to the apostle Paul, and others, in 63 AD onward. We should have enough basic understanding, as well as mature and adult understanding, to realize many things others do not. We should be able to realize God's will is very noticeable in everything we do.

Now, here is a cardinal Scripture that we should always understand, and that is Philippians 2:13. The apostle Paul here speaks about Jesus Christ and His role of coming into this Earth. First, by lowering Himself from the great power and authority He had before, coming down to earth according to the will of God, to do certain things for man. Some of what God ordered Jesus to endure were horribly painful. He suffered tremendously, all according to the will of God.

Some of us suffer according to the will of God; that is true. But Jesus Christ came forth out of that grave with a more powerful existence than He had before. That type of existence will be given to you and to me. Because we are all **"in Christ,"** we should also suffer with Him from time to time. That is part of the will of God, believe it or not, but it is. It is not the will of God that you just have a "Scot-free" existence of no pain, of no difficulties, or no problems.⁸

One prominent legislator in the United States Congress said, **"You know what we have in life? Life is nothing more than one crisis after another."** You know, that really is the case. Yet God is in control. That is why Philippians 2:13 is most important for us to understand. The apostle Paul says: **"For it is God which works in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure."** God is the one working in you, causing you to do certain things, according to His will, and the will that you express, many times is nothing more than the will that God has placed in you, coming directly from Him. You may not realize it, but it is true.

We need to know what His will is. Now whatever His will is, in any given circumstances, we should ask God for knowledge of what His will is, why He is doing the things He is doing right now. And maybe you might not be able to understand every little detail at this present time, but you are always going to know that everything is according to His plan, according to His will, and you are going to come out, even now, a winner, even though it may not seem like it at the present time. You will be a winner because God is working in you.

Now when you pray, you should pray to walk in God's will for your life, and to accept His will as working in your life. That is the number one essential factor that God is at work in you: find out what God's will is. It is by study of the Holy Word of God. You must grow in grace and knowledge. When you find what the will of God is relative to your life and the lives of the human race, you find His will for us is glorious indeed.

The First Essential of Prayer: God's Will for Mankind, the Salvation of All

I want to show you one essential element of God's will that you can know without doubt, that you can have confidence in, no matter what happens. No matter what circumstances are around you that might lead you to believe this is not the will of God, it is God's will because the Holy Scripture says it is, and it cannot fail: 1 Timothy 2:4–6. Here is what it says, **"Who [and that pronoun there is referring to God] WILL have all men to be saved ..."** In the original Greek it clearly says what His will is: His will is to save all mankind. Some say, "well, that is just His desire, but He does not have the power, or the will, to carry it out."

I beg your pardon. This word here is **"thelo"** in Greek. What *thelo* actually means — is **"will"** not wish or desire. It is the same word used time and again for God's will. For example, John 17:24: **"... I will that they also [the apostles], whom you have given me, be with me where I am ..."** The word **"will"** is **"thelo"** If Jesus

⁸ My October 2013 Commentary, **"Nasty, Brutish, and Short"** describes the human condition of universal suffering. Only God can solve that situation for mankind. DWS

Christ wills it, they will be there with Him. You see, that is one of the acts of will God shall perform and has in store for your life. He had that for the original apostles. He has the same thing in mind for YOU. That is why you can have confidence in it and **you know that is His will.**

You can say, “my goodness, it does not look like it is His will right now, because of the circumstances I am going through,” but faith shows that your current circumstances are not the end. His will is to save you for glory. His will, as Jesus said, includes you and me:

“Neither pray I for these alone [the apostles], but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they ALL may be one; as You, Father, are in me, and I in You, that they also may be one in us: that the WORLD may believe that You have sent me.

... Father, I will [*thelo*] that they also, [all those] whom You have given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which You have given me: for You loved me before the foundation of the world.”

• **John 17:20–21, 24**

Now you know the will of Christ and God the Father. Can you have confidence in that? Of course, you can. *Thelo* is one of the most important words in Scripture. For example, “**if I will that he tarry till I come ...**” (John 21:22, repeated in verse 23). Take note of Acts 18:21 when the apostle Paul said, “**... I will return unto you, if God wills ...**” Then consider Romans 9:18: “**... has he [God] mercy on whom he will [Greek root *thelo*] have mercy and whom he will [root *thelo*] he hardens. All use the Greek verbal root word “*thelo*,” the same word in 1 Timothy 2:4–6, where it says that God wills for all men, all mankind, to be saved.**

You now know what God’s will is relative to all mankind. You can study further that God’s will for all human beings trickles down to you. You are able to call Him a Father in an intimate sense, as I quoted before: “**God works in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure**” (Philippians 2:13), again using the word, *thelo*.

Go to James 4:15: “**For that you ought to say, ‘if the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that’**” (James 4:15). Well, in this case God does will you to be saved. He will bring you up in a resurrection from the dead. That is absolutely willed by God, and it shall occur as He wills it. It makes no difference what happens to you in life, for you will have a resurrection body: “**But God gives it [you] a body as it has pleased him [*ethelesen*, from *thelo*, “as He wills”], and to every seed his own body**” (1 Corinthians 15:38).

Peter said in 1 Peter 3:17, “**if the will of God be so**” Peter always put it that way. Whatever happens is the will of God. I selected the Scriptures above to feature the word “*thelo*,” but you can prove clearly if you believe the Word of God, that all mankind will be saved. It is not God’s wish. He wills it.

The Second Essential of Prayer

A second essential we must know is this: nowhere in the Scripture do you find Jesus saying that prayer is to be accepted as a ritual or as a ceremony. That is most important. So many of us have accepted it that way, but prayer is on a personal level. The original teaching that Christ gave to his apostles at the beginning of His ministry was for them back then, but the principles apply also to our situation. In Matthew 6:1–4, before He gave His model prayer, so to speak, Jesus spoke about the Jews giving alms. He said their reward is to receive glory or notice from men, but it is meaningless to God. In Matthew the same principle applies, the word “hypocrites” means “actors.”⁹

“And when you pray, you shall not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues [where people gathered to socialize] and in the corners of the streets [where preachers spoke or prayed], that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward.”

• **Matthew 6:5**

⁹ The word “hypocrite(s)” is used 31 times in the New Testament. It is a common Greek term denoting an “actor.” All actors wore masks in ancient classical Greek and Roman theater presentations, portraying characters and not their true selves. Hence they were acting to be what they were not in real life DWS

Or they go to eat, drink, or socialize, and you can see such people bowing their heads, publicly praying. Christ says not to do that. That is not the place. You know this is exhibitionism. This is making a ritual or a ceremony out of prayer — with the intent to be seen, supposedly setting an example for others.

“But you, when you pray, enter into your closet, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father which is in secret; and your Father which sees in secret shall reward YOU openly. But when you pray, use not vain repetitions ...”

• **Matthew 6:6**

Vain repetitions would be like doing a rosary recitation. You have one bead in one hand when you say something there. Move to another bead, you say another one. Another bead, you repeat and you have repetition, repetition, repetition. Many traditional Christians today do the opposite of what Christ says to do. It seems no wonder their prayers are not answered when you get down to it. They are going contrary to what Christ has actually said to do:

“But when you pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do [that is, the nations]: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. [But] be not you therefore like unto them: for your Father knows what things you have need of, before you ask him.”

• **Matthew 6:7–8**

Then Jesus gives the model of the so-called Lord’s Prayer in Matthew 6:9–13. God already knows what you need. You recognize that He knows when you say **“your will be done”** in Matthew 6:10. You know you do not have to spend very much time expressing yourself, do you? You can do so if you wish, but that is for your own sake, not for God to be convinced. No. You have work to do.

That does not mean you should not pray, but some people will pray for hours and hours in vain repetition. It takes them an hour to get worked up in their prayers. I do not pray that way. I have confidence God hears me immediately. He knows what I need before I even begin. I honor Him by recognizing who He is.

The Third Essential of Prayer: Knowing Who You Are

Now for the third essential, and this is the most important of all! God knows who He is. God knows who you are. You need to know and understand who you are. If you know, then you will have no trouble praying. Let me give one verse out of many that will tell you who you are. Once you know, you should have no trouble praying to God. Turn to First John chapter 3 and read Scriptures that tell you who you are:

“Behold, what manner of love the Father [now notice John goes directly to the Father] has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God ...”

• **1 John 3:1**

In fact in the Greek it is **“children of God.”** Man, woman, the genders makes no difference, you are a child of God — **now**: **“... therefore the world knows us not, because it knew him not.”** The world did not think Jesus was the Son of God, the firstborn Son. Most people do not think you are a child of God either. Well, it makes no difference what people think. It is important what you think. God knows who you are. Even Ernest Martin knows who you are. But do you know who you are? Most people in the world do not know who you are, or who they are. But you should know. You are a child of the living God, and it does not mean an infant. It means an adult child, a member of the very family of God. That is who you are. John goes on:

“Beloved, now are we the sons [or children] of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be: [right now in this physical realm] but we know that, when he shall appear [that is Jesus Christ at the Second Advent], we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is [!!!] ...”

• **1 John 3:2**

He is coming in all glory. At that time, we will be resurrected from the dead and glorified as He is now. The apostle Paul said, through the revelation of the mystery, in Romans 8:29 and Colossians 1:15, 3:10 (look

these verses up), that we have been predestined before the foundation of the world to be conformed to the very image of Jesus Christ.

And do you know where we are seated now? We are sitting, in Him, in Christ, in the heavens — with Him, legally. Ephesians 2:6, says we are now legally sitting with Christ, on the right hand of the Father in heaven (Ephesians 1:20).

Who are you? Look in the mirror and put your name in front of it. But you are not just that person. You are a child, an adult living child of Almighty God. We find in Hebrews 12:23, that every single one of us have the rank of firstborn on him or her, and where are we sitting right now, as far as God the Father is concerned? At His right hand with Christ Jesus.

Figuratively, all you have to do is look over your left shoulder, and in prayer, talk to your Father. Do you know something? He is sitting there not as a blob of green smoke, or pulsating energy, or a spirit where you cannot see Him. He is sitting there appearing just like a human being. After all, we are created in His image and likeness (Genesis 1:26, 5:1), just as all Adam's descendants are in his image and likeness (Genesis 5:3). Jesus Christ is sitting on the right hand of the Father right now, and you are in Him, you are in the same position He is. That is how you should talk to your Father. That is how close you are to Him.

When you know who you are, you will not have any trouble speaking to Him. You would not make a ritual out of it, with a little bead in your hand, would you? “Wait a minute, Father, I have got to get this bead out, and talk to You.” He will sit over there and say “well, get on with your business then.” You do not talk to your own father that way, do you? My son does not talk to me that way. It is about time you start talking to your Father in the proper way.

Jesus Christ, right now at this very moment is a man, an “*anthropos*” in heaven (1 Timothy 2:4–6). At the same time, He is God the Son, sitting next to the Father and He is “*anthropos*.” The Greek word “*anthropos*” simply means “man.” (Anthropology is the science of human beings, the study of man, which you and I are.) We are also children of God, members of the very family of God, because we have the Holy Spirit within us. We differ from unbelievers in the world at the present time because we have His Holy Spirit.

All are destined, however, by the will of God, to be the same way we are, and eventually as Christ is today in resurrected glory. All ought to know who they are. When you know who you are, the responsibility you have is different from most people in the world. Once I understood this divine truth, I never again thought myself to be a representative of God to the world. I will tell you who I am, I am a firstborn son of the Living God, and a member of the family of God.

But wait, there is more. So are you. I am not just selecting myself out, so are you. Since you are a member of the family of God, it is proper for you to talk to the Father, and even to your elder brother, often. That is what prayer is. You should pray that the will of the Father is always in action. That is essential number one.

Essential number two is the fact that there is no ritual or ceremony. There are spirit underlings to do those functions. The slaves, those who are the ones out yonder, away from the Father they perform such tasks. You are sitting next to the Father, in Christ. That is who you are.

All you have to do every morning, at noon if you wish, in the evening, wherever you are — talk to the Father, knowing who you are. That is essential number three. Talk to others knowing who you are. Talk with all humility, recognizing other people are children of God also, even if God has not revealed it to them yet.

When we start to understand these principles, the main essential being that once you know who you are, then you just go over your left shoulder, so to speak (understanding that is a symbol, a figure of speech at present — but a future reality), and talk to your Father who is sitting next to you. He looks like a human being, just like you do (or rather we look like Him), but He is our God. He is the Father. That is what you need to realize. Once you do, you will know the essentials of prayer. Prayer is coming into divine communication with God the Father (1 Corinthians 8:6). **You are** His firstborn son or daughter.