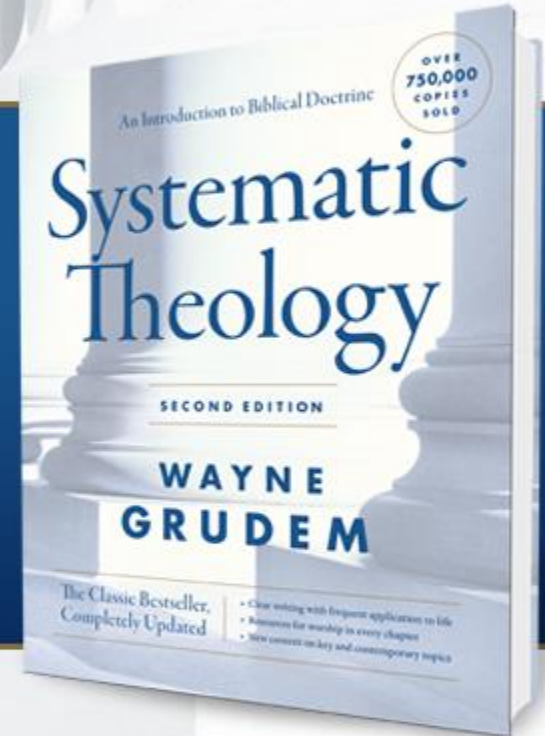


Prayer

Chapter 18



Explanation and Scriptural Basis

- Prayer is personal communication with God.
- This includes:
 - Petitions
 - Confession of sin
 - Adoration
 - Praise and thanksgiving
 - God communicating to us indications of his response

Why Does God Want Us to Pray?

- **Matt 6:8b:** Your Father knows what you need before you ask him.
- So why pray?
 - Prayer expresses our trust in God and enables our trust in him to increase.
 - Prayer expresses our belief in God's wisdom, love, goodness, and power—indeed, all of his attributes.
 - Prayer allows us to relate as persons to God as a person.

The Effectiveness of Prayer

- **Prayer Changes the Way God Acts**

- **Jas 4:2b:** You do not have, because you do not ask.
- **Lk 11:9–10:** And I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened.
- **1 Jn 1:9:** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

The Effectiveness of Prayer

- **Effective Prayer Is Made Possible by Our Mediator, Jesus Christ (1 Tim 2:5)**
 - In the OT, believers approached God in prayer through the future work of Jesus which was foreshadowed in the sacrificial system.
 - Today, believers can enter the Holy of Holies through Christ. (Heb 10:19–22)

The Effectiveness of Prayer

- **What Is Praying “in Jesus’ Name”?** (Jn 14:13–14; 16:23–24; Eph 5:20)
 - To come in the name of someone means that another person has authorized us to come on his authority, not on our own. (Acts 3:6; 4:7; 16:18; 1 Cor 5:4)
 - Praying in Jesus’ name is therefore prayer made on his authorization.

The Effectiveness of Prayer

- **Should We Pray to Jesus and to the Holy Spirit?**
 - NT prayers are usually offered to the Father, though most of these are prayed by the Son.
 - Yet, prayers to Jesus appear as well. (Acts 1:24; 10:9–17; 1 Cor 16:22; 2 Cor 12:8)
 - Nothing in Scripture forbids prayer to the Holy Spirit, therefore it does not seem wrong to pray directly to the Holy Spirit at times, particularly when we are asking him to do something that relates to his special areas of ministry or responsibility.

The Effectiveness of Prayer

- **The Role of the Holy Spirit in Our Praying**
 - **Rom 8:26–27:** Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.
 - **Eph 6:18a:** ... praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication.

Some Important Considerations in Effective Prayer

- **Praying According to God's Will (1 Jn 5:14–15)**
 - Prayer about issues on which God gives us commands or direct declarations of his will in Scripture. (e.g., praying for wisdom as per Jas 1:5–8)
 - On other issues, this is an admission that we do not know God's will, but that we yield to it.

Some Important Considerations in Effective Prayer

- **Praying with Faith** (Mk 11:24; Matt 21:22)
 - A settled assurance that when we prayed for something, God agreed to grant our specific request.
 - Only God can give us this confident assurance.

Some Important Considerations in Effective Prayer

- **Obedience** (Ps 66:18; Prov 15:29; 1 Pet 3:7, 12; 1 Jn 3:21–22)
- **Confession of Sins** (Matt 6:12; Ps 19:12)
- **Forgiving Others** (Matt 6:14–15; Mk 11:25)
- **Humility** (Jas 4:6; Lk 18:9–14)

Some Important Considerations in Effective Prayer

- **Continuing in Prayer Over Time** (Deut 9:25–26; Lk 6:12; Lk 18:1–8)
- **Praying Earnestly** (Heb 5:7)
 - If we begin to see situations as God sees them, it will be natural to pray with intense emotional involvement.
- **Waiting on the Lord** (Ps 27:14; 38:15; 130:5–6)
 - Prayer is a personal conversation, and like personal conversations, we often must wait for a response.

Some Important Considerations in Effective Prayer

- **Praying in Private** (Lk 5:16; Matt 6:5–6)
- **Praying with Others** (Matt 18:19–20)
 - The Lord's Prayer places its petitions in the plural form—"Forgive *us* *our* sins," or "Give *us our* daily bread."

Some Important Considerations in Effective Prayer

- **Fasting** (Neh 1:4; Dan 9:3; Acts 13:3)
 - Increases our sense of humility and dependence on God
 - Allows us to focus on prayer
 - Continually reminds us of the call to be living sacrifices
 - Serves as a good exercise in self-discipline
 - Heightens spiritual & mental alertness to God's presence
 - Expresses earnestness and urgency in our prayers

Some Important Considerations in Effective Prayer

- **What About Unanswered Prayer?**

- We do not know God's wise timing.
- We do not always know how to pray as we ought.
(Rom 8:26)
- We do not always pray according to God's will. (Jas 4:3)
- We do not always ask in faith. (Jas 1:6–8)

Some Important Considerations in Effective Prayer

- **What About Unanswered Prayer?**

- Yet, we join the company of Jesus and Paul and David and many martyrs in history. (Lk 22:42; 2 Cor 12:8–9; 2 Sam 12:20, 23; Rev 12:11)
- We must continue to trust in God. (Rom 8:28)
- We must continue to pray. (1 Sam 1:19–20; Lk 2:25–35)

Praise and Thanksgiving

- **Matt 6:9:** Pray then like this: “Our Father in heaven, *hallowed* be your name....”
- **Phil 4:6:** Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication *with thanksgiving* let your requests be made known to God.

Praise and Thanksgiving

- **Col 4:2:** Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it *with thanksgiving*.
- **1 Thess 5:18:** *Give thanks in all circumstances;* for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

Special Terms

- faith
- “in Jesus’ name”
- prayer
- waiting on the Lord