

Chapters 4 and 5 (up to p 52)

Praying with Success

Steve Brown's definition of success in our prayers is "walking close to God and growing in holiness."

Let's start first with defining why we were created. Let's look at Isaiah 43:7 and 21, 1 Corinthians 10:31, Psalm 73: 25 & 26 and Romans 8:29.

Isaiah 43:6b & 7 "6 ...' Bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the ends of the earth-- 7 everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made."

1 Corinthians 10:31 "So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God."

Psalm 73:25 & 26 "Whom have I in heaven but you? And earth has nothing I desire besides you."

26 My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever."

What do you see here as the purpose of our lives?

Being successful in our prayer lives requires:

1. God's perspective – we get this from being immersed in Scripture
2. A Definite plan

Let's look at some specifics about our prayers:

Who – We pray for - our families, friends, the lost, leaders (political and spiritual) the sick, the afflicted, and for those who persecute or mistreat us. We also pray for ourselves, for growth in Christlikeness and for "daily bread" and other issues.

In all these things, we pray that God would be glorified.

Thinking rightly about God as we pray is essential – committing Scripture to memory is a very helpful means to this.

How – A – Adoration (praising God for His character)

C – Confession of our sins

T – Thanksgiving (thanking God for what He has done)

S – Supplication (our requests)

Before the Throne of God, Lesson 3 page 2

Carol will describe in a later chapter a modification of this that involves including Thanksgiving in everything because it is hard to separate from the others.

When and Where – Specific time and place – a time when you are alert, uninterrupted as much as possible, think through what works for you and form a habit.

How can carefully planning your prayer life actually increase spontaneity, enthusiasm, interest and appeal?

Creating a definite plan and aligning our desires to God's will, drawing closer to Him through Scripture, thinking right thoughts about Him – all essential to our prayer lives.

Look at the quote from A.W. Tozer on the bottom of page 49 and top of page 50.

What do you think about this?

Look at page 51, beginning with “yielding to the temptation.....so does our service.” What is this saying, what do you think about this? How is our service to the church and to God's people affected?

Worship should be our highest priority. Let's look at the bottom of page 51, starting with “We Christians tend to elevate.... And continuing through the first paragraph on page 52 ending in “...we can get to know God.” Do you think this is true? What do you think about this?

Only as we spend time in worship, marveling in His character, His attributes and His power, do we truly desire to glorify Him and not self. Only then can we align our desires to His will – as He uses Scripture, prayer and the other means of grace to draw us closer to Himself.

Using the ACTS format, then, let's pray from these passages –

Adoration – Psalm 147 –first just take some time to read this through, then we'll all just pray as we feel led – whatever verses speak to you – quote the words exactly or praise Him for the attributes these verses bring to your mind, thank Him for His character, for what He does and who He is.

Psalm 147:1 Praise the LORD. How good it is to sing praises to our God, how pleasant and fitting to praise him!

2 The LORD builds up Jerusalem; he gathers the exiles of Israel.

3 He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.

4 He determines the number of the stars and calls them each by name.

5 Great is our Lord and mighty in power; his understanding has no limit.

Before the Throne of God, Lesson 3, page 3

- 6 *The LORD sustains the humble but casts the wicked to the ground.*
7 *Sing to the LORD with thanksgiving; make music to our God on the harp.*
8 *He covers the sky with clouds; he supplies the earth with rain and makes grass grow on the hills.*
9 *He provides food for the cattle and for the young ravens when they call.*
10 *His pleasure is not in the strength of the horse, nor his delight in the legs of a man;*
11 *the LORD delights in those who fear him, who put their hope in his unfailing love.*
12 *Extol the LORD, O Jerusalem; praise your God, O Zion,*
13 *for he strengthens the bars of your gates and blesses your people within you.*
14 *He grants peace to your borders and satisfies you with the finest of wheat.*
15 *He sends his command to the earth; his word runs swiftly.*
16 *He spreads the snow like wool and scatters the frost like ashes.*
17 *He hurls down his hail like pebbles. Who can withstand his icy blast?*
18 *He sends his word and melts them; he stirs up his breezes, and the waters flow.*
19 *He has revealed his word to Jacob, his laws and decrees to Israel.*
20 *He has done this for no other nation; they do not know his laws. Praise the LORD.*

Confession: Silently confess our own sins to God, looking to Psalm 32 for an example—

- Psalm 32:1 Of David. A maskil. Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.*
2 *Blessed is the man whose sin the LORD does not count against him and in whose spirit is no deceit.*
3 *When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long.*
4 *For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer. Selah*
5 *Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD"-- and you forgave the guilt of my sin. Selah*
6 *Therefore let everyone who is godly pray to you while you may be found; surely when the mighty waters rise, they will not reach him.*
7 *You are my hiding place; you will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance. Selah*
8 *I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and watch over you.*
9 *Do not be like the horse or the mule, which have no understanding but must be controlled by bit and bridle or they will not come to you.*
10 *Many are the woes of the wicked, but the LORD's unfailing love surrounds the man who trusts in him.*
11 *Rejoice in the LORD and be glad, you righteous; sing, all you who are upright in heart!*

Thanksgiving – Praise God for what He has done – praise and thank Him for things He has done for us that we can recognize as good, or thank Him for bringing difficult

Before the Throne of God, Lesson 3, page 4

circumstances that we know come from His sovereign love for us – good weather, things going well at work, in our families, our own attitudes, thank Him for our homes, food, church, friends, whatever comes to mind – make this as brief or lengthy as you wish – and just pray as you wish.

Supplication – Pray for the people we listed earlier – Ourselves, others, Pray for our church, our leaders, both spiritual and political, and in everything pray for God's glory and for His will to be done on earth as it is in heaven.

In all these things, we pray that Christ would be honored, that God would be glorified in our lives, in our responses and in our hearts.