

Prayer Rules: The Don'ts

In last week's bulletin, we examined some prayer rules which come from the Bible and let us know how to have expectable prayer with God. Now, let's look at some things we should not do when we pray.

We should not pray for display (Matthew 6:5ff). We are not to pray to be "seen" (public display) or "heard" (vain repetition) of men. Sincerity and humility will keep us from violating this guideline (Luke 8:9-14; James 4:6-10). We must approach God in prayer with a humble and contrite spirit (Psalm 51:17).

We should not pray with the wrong motives (James 4:3). This kind of prayer is not asking "according to his will," but according to our will. Our wishes (motives) must be consistent with God's will. What are our motives in prayer? What are we going to do with what God gives us? There is nothing wrong, for example, with praying for material possessions (Matthew 6:11) or physical health (3 John 2). But, how are we going to use the material possessions and physical health, for our own selfish pleasures, or for God's glory?

Why doesn't God hear my prayers? It may be that God is giving us a different answer than we expect, or it may be that we are not praying right. We must follow the guidelines of prayer laid down by the Lord. Jesus knows how we ought to pray. Lord, teach us to pray! - *Chris Reeves*

Sentence Sermons

- The man who is never very strong against anything is never very strong for anything.
- A little man can be wrong, but it takes a big man to admit it.
- There will be no crown-wearers in heaven who were not cross-bearers here below.
- Many undisciplined children are being raised by undisciplined parents.
- Dress your children to be chaste rather than to be chased.

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Sunday: 9:30 am, 10:30 am, 6 pm
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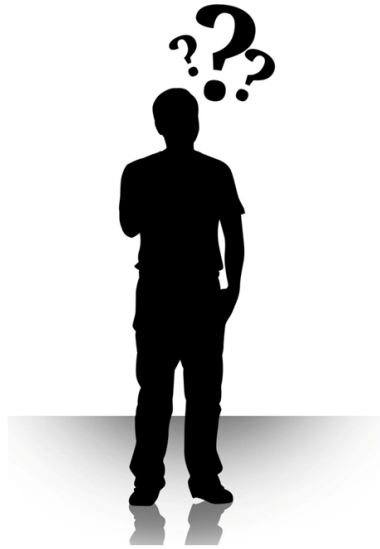
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For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.
- 2 Corinthians 10:3-4 -

Why Many Don't Think



My father used to say to me when I was growing up: “Son, use your head! Stop and think!” I would be doing something foolish and he wanted me to stop and consider what I was doing and correct it.

Man Is A Thinking, Rational Being

God made all of us to be thinking people. We are made in the “image” of God and it is our ability to think (reason and rationalize) that separates us from the animal kingdom (Genesis 1:26-27).

In fact, when mankind does not think properly, they are compared in scripture to animals. Both Peter and Jude speak of evil false teachers as animals and “creatures without reason” (2 Peter 2:12; Jude 10).

God says that sober thinking is required of us. Paul wrote that Christians are to offer up a “spiritual service” to God (Romans 12:1-3). A “spiritual service” is literally a service “belonging to the reason”. God also says that right thinking is required of us.

Paul wrote: “*Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things*” (Philippians 4:8).

So, are you thinking properly? Is God in your thoughts each day? The Psalmist wrote that the fools says there is no God and God is not in his thoughts (Psalm 10:1-11).

Some Don't Think Right

Instead of thinking properly, many people in the world don't think right at all. Many are engaged in evil thinking. For example, Jesus faced some religious leaders of his day who didn't like him and Jesus said that they were thinking evil in their hearts (Matthew 9:4).

Others have warped thinking. For example, those who killed Jesus' apostles actually thought they were doing service to God (John 16:2). Saul of Tarsus is a good example of this before his conversion (Acts 9, 22, 26), as well as the modern-day Jihadi terrorist.

Still others have over-confident thinking.

They think that they are standing spiritually when in fact they are falling (1 Corinthians 10:12). And, there are those with deceived thinking. They think they are right with God when in fact they are not (Galatians 6:3; James 1:26).

Others Don't Think At All

While some today don't think right, others don't think at all. It's as if they were never trained to think properly about the different situations in life that they have to face. They don't face each stage of life with a God-centered attitude.

For example, there are those in childhood who are too undisciplined and unruly (Proverbs 29:15). There are those in their youth with a worldly, care-free attitude (Ecclesiastes 11:9 – 12:1). There are those in their adulthood that are too busy to serve the Lord (Luke 10:40; 12:16-21). There are those in the prime of life that are too worried for the things of this life (Matthew 6:25). There are those in their old age that are too spiritually weak to make it to the end (1 Kings 11:4). There are those on their deathbed that are too late to obey the gospel (Luke 16:25-26).

Stop and Think!

Jesus is going to come when many people are not thinking (Luke 12:40). Don't put off thinking about him today! - Chris Reeves