

Why I Pray

I pray because I believe God listens. “Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us” (1 John 5:14).

I pray because God has told me that He cares and is able to help. “Casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you” (1 Pet. 5:7; see also Luke 12:6-7; Heb. 4:16).

I pray because I lack wisdom. “If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him” (James 1:5).

I pray because my Savior said I ought to pray. “Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart” (Luke 18:1).

I pray because I’m thankful for all the good things God has given. “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God” (Phil. 4:6; see also Col. 4:2; 1 Thess. 5:16-18).

I pray because I need pardon. “My little children, these things I write to you, that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous” (1 John 2:1; see also Acts 8:22; Ps. 51:1-9).

I pray because I adore and love my Father. “In this manner, therefore, pray: ‘Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name’” (Matt. 6:9).

I pray because I’ve read so many accounts of people who prayed to God with great results. “Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit” (James 5:17-18). “The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much” (James 5:16).

I pray because of Paul’s exhortation. “Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior” (1 Tim. 2:1-3).

I pray because I believe God has the ability to grant even more than I’m able to think and ask. “For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height; to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. 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, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen” (Eph. 3:14-21).

- by Warren Berkley

“Just As I Am”

The song *Just As I Am* is a commonly used invitation song. The idea in the song is that we cannot make ourselves right with God on our own; apart from Jesus’ blood we have no hope. That is precisely the New Testament picture (Eph. 2:8-9; Titus 3:5; etc.).

I fear, however, that some folks have an erroneous idea about Jesus saving us “just as we are.” They seem to think that He saves us without any change in our conduct. That is opposite to the New Testament picture.

Jesus' charge to the apostles was "that repentance for forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all the nations" (Luke 24:47). Forgiveness is extended to those willing to abandon sinful conduct, not to those who insist on continuing in it.

Paul wrote to the Corinthian Christians, "Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you..." (1 Cor. 6:9-10). He did not say such **are** some of you, but such **were**. They changed their conduct in connection with being washed, sanctified, and justified (v. 11).

"Just as I am," if referring to our own helplessness, is a comforting sentiment. But to suggest it means salvation without repentance is to hold out false hope.

- by Frank Himmel

Be Careful With Your Words

Solomon wrote, "Do not be rash with your mouth, and let not your heart utter anything hastily before God. For God is in heaven and you on earth; therefore let your words be few" (Eccl 5:2). Many need to work harder at applying this instruction.

There are really two warnings here. One caution concerns words that are hastily spoken: "Do not be rash with your mouth." How often have we uttered words without giving careful thought? The results can be hurt feelings, damaged relationships, even sin. James said, "let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak . . ." Remember that a word spoken can never be un-spoken. It's an irreversible action, and we may have to live with the re-action!

The other warning contained in this statement from wise Solomon is a warning about simply talking too much. "Let your words be few", he says. What a temptation it is to tell everything we know, about every subject under the sun. When we do so, we cause others to "tune us out", even during the rare occasions when we really do have something important to say. Someone has suggested that God gave us two ears and just one mouth - therefore we ought to listen twice as much as we talk. Think about it!

Eccl. 5:2 goes on to explain why we must be so cautious with our speech. "God is in heaven and you on earth." Never forget that you have an almighty Creator who is listening to your every word. Be careful (Matthew 12:36,37).

- by Greg Gwin