



ASSOCIATED BIBLE STUDENTS
of Paterson
 29 Mt. Pleasant Avenue
 Wallington, New Jersey 07057

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PRAYING WITHOUT CEASING

Our lives should be a prayer. As we wake till the time we sleep at night, we should have an attitude of conscious awareness of our Heavenly

Father's presence. "In everything give thanks. . ." (1 Thessalonians 5:17, 18) Prayer is the vital breath of the new creature in Christ. How often do we breathe? Do we claim in prayer His rich promises as revealed in His Word?

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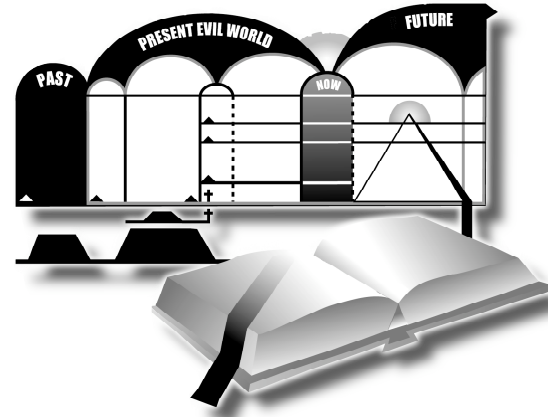
Please send me a copy of your 360 page book entitled, "*The Divine Plan of the Ages*" for which I enclose \$1.00

Please send me a free copy of your 24 page booklet entitled, "*How God Answers Prayer.*"

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PRAYER BEFORE SCHOOL...

As long as man has walked on the face of this earth, he has reached up to God in prayer. "Then men began to call upon the name of the Lord" (Genesis 4:26). The poet has once said, "Prayer is the soul's sincere desire — uttered or unexpressed." To the extent that a man or woman is still in the "image of God," prayer is a natural inclination.

Adam, of course, communicated with God in the Garden of Eden. But sin changed this precious fellowship. Abel brought an acceptable sacrifice in worship when he "brought of the firstlings of his flock" (Genesis 4:3,4). Why did God have "regard for Abel and for his offering" — but not Cain's vegetables from his fields? It was because Abel worshipped God while acknowledging sin and the need for blood to be shed.

PRAYER IN THE BEGINNING

The Prophets of old, of course, communicated with God all the time. They showed their faith by their works and were counted righteous (James 2:21-23). As friends, they could speak to God in prayer. But by faith, they looked forward to the coming of a Messiah who would redeem them from their sins as well as bless the world. Jesus said, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad" (John 8:56).

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Later on, God entered into covenant relationship with the children of Israel under the Law Covenant at Sinai. The whole nation of Israel, the descendants of Jacob, were received as God's people and were treated as if without sin. They had the privilege of going to him in prayer. But the sins of the Jewish nation were only typically blotted out from year to year. The blood of bulls and goats could never really take away sin, and the Jews held only the relationship of servants to God.

In the Tabernacle and then the Temple, the High Priest would offer sweet incense — representing prayers — on the Incense Altar. "Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense. . ." (Psalm 141:2). However, yearly he would also bring blood atonement under the Second Veil to sprinkle on the Ark (Leviticus 16:11-14).

However, the Gentiles were altogether without God. They had no privilege of prayer. Yes, they could praise or acknowledge the God of Israel. . . But if they petitioned Him, he was not under any obligation to answer.

JESUS OPENS A NEW WAY FOR PRAYER

Jesus, of course, opened up "a new and living way" when he himself died as an offering for sin. So now we can "draw near"

in prayer in full assurance we are being heard as sons of God.

Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And having an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. Heb 10:19-22

But Jesus warned that Christians should not pray “as the hypocrites” — or use “vain repetitions as the heathen do” (Matthew 6:5,7). We might ask ourselves, Do we just use forms of words in our prayers without our hearts being in them? Do we just repeat words without their meaning anything to us? Do we just “say prayers”? We need to enter into our “closets” alone with God. With sincere hearts, we are to come “boldly unto the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need” (Hebrew 4:14-16).

OUR LORD’S SAMPLE PRAYER

In the prayer taught us by our Lord, we first give honor to God — recognizing Him as “Our Father” — acknowledging His greatness and expressing the desire that His name be hallowed (Matthew 6:9-13). We remember the Kingdom that is promised. We tell Him that our desire of heart is for that Kingdom to come. We pray that His will may be fully done on earth. (This implies that we have given up our own will, that we wish to have God’s will completely done in our mortal bodies.)

In this prayer there is a brief mention of our daily temporal needs: “Give us this day our daily bread.” There is no request for our “wants” or delicacies, etc., but simply the necessities for our day. We ask no more — we wish no more. Then we pray that our “trespasses” may be forgiven

“even as we forgive.” How can we ask our Heavenly Father’s forgiveness if we have not forgiven others ourselves? We cannot. . . .

Finally, comes the petition for our protection from evil influences. There are temptations everywhere from the powers of evil: the powers of the air, from our own flesh and the world all around us. We ask for this divine aid in prayer.

ASKING FOR THE HOLY SPIRIT

Are we to ask for temporal wealth and health? If God had promised the Christian temporal prosperity and healthy bodies, then we should pray for them. But He did not promise the Christian these earthly rewards. James says that when you pray for them, “Ye ask amiss” (James 4:3). While we must be wise stewards over our temporal advantages, Jesus has invited us to “suffer with him” (Romans 8:17) and walk in his footsteps. While Israel under the Old Law Covenant was promised prosperity if they would follow the Law (Leviticus 26:4-12), the Christian is invited to “to fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ” (Colossians 1:24; 2 Corinthians 1:5). Ours is a way of sacrifice: “Present your bodies a living sacrifice. . . .” (Romans 12:1)

Yes, the good gift Jesus told his disciples to pray for was the holy Spirit (Luke 11:13). Just as parents know how to give appropriate and good things to their children, God gives us the holy Spirit for wisdom, peace and strength in all our affairs of life. “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God. . . .” (James 1:5). God has promised wisdom.

In the early church “gifts of the spirit”— such as healing and tongues — were given to establish the infant church. The power of conferring those gifts was vested in the apostles — and to them only. None others in their day or since have been able to confer those gifts (Acts 8:13-20). Instead of miraculously expecting

gifts as at first, we now should pray for the Lord to help us grow the fruits of the spirit — meekness, gentleness, patience, brother kindness, love (1 Corinthians 12:30,31-13:1-8; Galatians 5:22).

WATCH AND PRAY

Perhaps if we pay no attention to our prayers after they are uttered it would indicate that we might not have really appreciated the answer if and when we received it. In fact, the Lord sometimes makes us wait for the answer. Remember the Lord’s answer may be yes, or no, or wait. But He is never indifferent to the pleading of his children. However, when we have to watch and wait, we learn patience, and even hunger more for the answer.

In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus told his disciples, “Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation.” He knew his crucifixion would be a severe trial to his followers. He himself prayed to the Father, “Not my will, but thine be done.” Likewise, today we must still be sober and pray for the Lord’s will to be done in our lives. So there is a condition to the promise, “If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you” (John 15:7). Only if we are abiding in Christ — like Jesus wanting only the Father’s will — can we expect to ask in prayer and receive our answer.

CHILDREN PRAYING IN SCHOOL

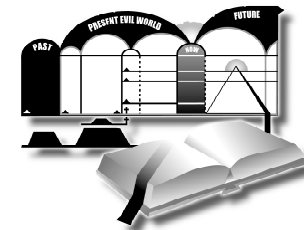
Can anyone else pray and expect to be heard besides fully committed, consecrated Christians? Yes. “For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy” (1 Corinthians 7:14). The children of all believers are justified through the faith of their parents up to the time they reach years of mental maturity. Family prayer is very desirable in the homes of the Lord’s people. Children should be taught from earliest age to thank the Lord for their blessings and ask Him to help them in time of need. If we would have our children actively and properly pray, we should not expect others to bring or guide them to the “throne of grace”— especially in a secular setting. Daily — morning, afternoon and night — we as parents can pray together with our children about our thankfulness, our needs and our cares. Children learn best when parents actively and properly pray together with them.

Should children pray in school? Of course, they should. But they do not need to have formal legislation that allows for community prayer in the classroom. In fact, it would be unfair to impose such a religious practice in a public school. Children should be encouraged to pray anywhere, any time — before school, on the bus, in the cafeteria, the classroom, etc. — as well as in their bedrooms before sleep at home.

The ASSOCIATED BIBLE STUDENTS of Paterson

Who are they?

The Associated Bible Students is a completely autonomous, non-denominational Christian fellowship. This fellowship has no central head, office or central publishing house. It maintains an association through conventions and enjoys a fellowship that is worldwide.



We welcome all to share with us in the study of God’s Word. There is no organization to join and no creed to affirm. Our services are as simple as those of the early church. Our congregation benefits from the prayer support of one another and our fellowship is warm and friendly.