



## I AM A CHURCH MEMBER

### MOUNT CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH

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*Church Theme: “Let’s ‘BE’ The Church” (2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 6:16; Matthew 5:14 – 16)*

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*Discovering the Attitude that Makes the Difference*

### Notes on the Homework Scriptures from “Principles on Prayer”

1. **Luke 18:1** – “And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint;”

➤ *The continuousness in the precept.*

The precept calls for a continuous prayer life – “*always*”. It does not mean to pray once in a while when you feel like it.

- **First**, the *schedule* for continuousness. “*Always.*” This does not mean you must be praying every single moment of the day. Rather it means that you should at least have a regular prayer time every day like Daniel who prayed three times a day (Daniel 6:10)
- **Second**, the *seasons* in continuousness. “*Always.*” We should pray in both good and bad times, in both prosperity and in pain.
- **Third**, the *spirit* in continuousness. “*Always.*” A third application of this word “*always*” in this teaching about prayer means to be in the spirit of prayer so whenever a crisis comes, we immediately pray about it.

➤ *The ceasing in the precept.* “*Not to faint.*” Fainting is an ever-present problem in one’s prayer life. “The efficacy of prayer is continually exhibited in the sacred writings, and every incitement to it is afforded us; nevertheless we are prone to faint in the performance of it”.

We note six common causes for fainting in our prayer life.

- First, **defilement**. “*If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me*” (Psalm 66:18). Sin will not only deafen God’s ear to our prayers, but it will decline our interest and effort to pray.
- Second, **doubt**. “*Let him ask in faith*” (James 1:6). Faith is essential for a dedicated prayer life. Unbelief does not promote prayer but stops it.
- Third, **danger**. Danger can stop praying. The lions’ den did in Daniel’s time, but it did not stop Daniel (Daniel 6:10).

- Fourth, **distractions**. The devil is a master at producing distractions during our prayer time in order to keep us from praying well. We can become so busy with the cares of this world that we ignore our prayer times.
- Fifth, **delay**. Few things are a bigger cause for fainting in prayer than a delay in the answer to prayer.
- Sixth, **disease**. When a person is sick, he does not feel like doing anything, especially praying. But if we are to pray without fainting, we will have to pray even when sick.

## 2. **1 Thessalonians 5:17** – “Pray without ceasing.”

- **Toleration**. “*Be patient toward all men.*” (I Thessalonians 5:14). The previous exhortation about comforting and supporting the ones who are weak and wobbly is very related to this exhortation, too. It is very difficult to be patient with the weak and wobbly, but when a young child is learning to walk, the parents must exercise much patience. So, it is with the weak saints. One will need much patience if he is going to help them.
- **Retaliation**. “*See that none render evil for evil*” (I Thessalonians 5:15). Retaliation is defended vigorously in society and the flesh always desires to “get even.” However, Scripture forbids it for the believers.
- **Sanctification**. “*Ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men.*” (I Thessalonians 5:15). The tendency of natural man is to pursue evil. But the believer is to pursue good. When pursuing some object, it is not “What’s wrong with it?” but “What’s right with it?”
- **Jubilation**. “*Rejoice evermore*” (I Thessalonians 5:16). Rejoicing is better than grumbling. It is also therapeutic for both the physical and the spiritual. “*A merry heart doeth good like a medicine*” (Proverbs 17:22).
- **Supplication**. “*Pray without ceasing*” (I Thessalonians 5:17). This does not mean to pray every moment of every day. That would be impractical. It means to be regular, faithful and steadfast in your prayer life.
- **Appreciation**. “*In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus*” (I Thessalonians 5:18). This is a difficult command but a Divine command.
  - First, a **Difficult** command. “*In everything.*” It is easy to thank the Lord for some things but it is very difficult to thank the Lord for everything.
  - Second, a **Divine** command. “*This is the will of God.*” Some folk complain they do not know the will of God. The problem is they do not want to practice the will of God. Scripture tells us plainly what the will of God is in some matters. As an example, “*This is the will of God ... that ye should abstain from fornication*” (I Thessalonians 4:3). Do the will of God in areas that are plain and you will discover the will of God in areas that are not so plain. Whatever the will of God is, you must obey or you will be in trouble with God.

• **Suffocation.** “*Quench not the Spirit*” (I Thessalonians 5:19). Quenching the Spirit does not mean that God is so weak that you can stop Him, but it means to take yourself out of the place of blessing. It is not that God can’t; it is that God won’t when you quench the Spirit. Quenching the Spirit involves any action that hinders the work of the Lord in your own life or the life of others. Many church dissidents are guilty of quenching the Spirit when they throw cold water on the enthusiastic desire of their church in doing the work of Christ.

3. **Hebrews 4:16** – “Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”

The final verse of this chapter is a great text to encourage praying by the believers.

- **The *precept* for praying.** “*Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace.*” The word “*therefore*” says that in view of the fact of Who our High Priest is, we should be encouraged to pray. “*Therefore*” says we have no excuse for not praying.
- **The *plainness* in praying.** “*Come boldly.*” The word translated “*boldly*” means to be open, plain. Boldness is involved in this plainness obviously. Having the High Priest that we do encourages us to pray as openly and plainly as we can. We need not withhold anything from Jesus, for He understands all about our life and encourages us to pray.
- **The *place* of praying.** “*Throne of grace.*” This also encourages us to pray. We are not coming to a place of stern justice in which our prayers must be sure that every jot and tittle is correct.
- **The *product* of praying.** “*Obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*” In regards to the product of praying, we are told what we will receive and when we will receive it.
  - First, **what** we will receive. “*Obtain mercy, and find grace.*” This is a most encouraging product. It means we will get more than we deserve. Mercy and grace are not based on the merit of the one praying.
  - Second, **where** we will receive it to the “*throne of grace,*”
  - Third, **when** we will receive it. “*In time of need.*” The thought in these words is that the product will come in timely fashion. It will be on time and in time. Sometimes it seems God is late or delaying beyond the needed time in regards to answering our praying. But God suits His answers to our needs in a timely way. He will never be late but always on time. God’s time is the best time but it is often not our preferred time.

4. **Matthew 14:30** – “But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me.”

*The Sinking in the Storm* (Matthew 14:30)

Peter’s stunning miraculous walk ended ignominiously as he began to sink in the water.

- The **reason** for the sinking. “*When he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink*” (Matthew 14:30). Peter got his eyes off Christ and instead on the circumstances. Seldom are circumstances comforting but they cause much fear and loss of faith. Focus on circumstances instead of Christ and you will do a lot of sinking in life.
- The **reaction** to the sinking. “*He cried, saying, Lord, save me*” (Matthew 14:30). Peter may have blundered in looking at the circumstances, but his reaction to cry to Christ for help was commendable. Charles Spurgeon said, “To walk [on] the water is not an essential characteristic of faith, but to pray when you begin to sink is.” If we sought Christ more in our troubles, we would experience more deliverances from our troubles.

5. **Luke 23:34** – Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.

Christ desired that His Heavenly Father would forgive the people doing the crucifixion. It is a magnificent prayer.

- **The peculiarity of the prayer.** Though He has been so horribly mistreated, Christ prays for His detractors. This is very uncommon. Most of us would be praying maledictions upon our cruel enemies. But Christ prays for their forgiveness.
- **The prophecy of the prayer.** This praying for the transgressors was prophesied hundreds of years earlier. The prophet Isaiah said, “*He hath poured out his soul unto death ... and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors*” (Isaiah 53:12).
- **The person in the prayer.** Christ had experienced great injustice in the trials. Now on the cross, He is suffering untold physical and spiritual agony. Yet He prays for another person first. Later He does pray about His own suffering. It is not wrong to seek relief from one’s own sufferings through prayer. Scripture encourages us to pray for these problems. However, in one of the most unselfish acts of time, Christ prays first for His detractors.
- **The persistency of the prayer.** “*Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them*” (Luke 23:34). The word “*said*” in the Greek is in the imperfect tense which means Christ prayed this prayer over and over.
- **The priority in the prayer.** “*Forgive them*” (Luke 23:34). The greatest need of mankind is Divine forgiveness. With it we go to heaven for eternity; without it we go to hell for eternity.

- *The **peril** in the prayer.* “*For they know not what they do*” (Luke 23:34). Ignorance can really hurt you. Ignorance caused men to crucify Jesus. You may know ten thousand things, but if you are ignorant spiritually, it can be a terribly great peril.
- *The **product** of the prayer.* “*Father, forgive them*” (Luke 23:34). This prayer was answered. Arthur Pink says evidence of the answer was on the day of Pentecost in which three thousand souls were saved. Peter’s sermon that preceded the conversions especially mentioned ignorance in crucifying Christ. “*Through ignorance ye did it*” (Acts 3:17). The conversion of three thousand souls from a single sermon was not a result of Peter’s eloquence but of the Savior praying.