

# PRAYING In The Bible

Prayer in the Bible: Daniel prayer

What makes a prayer good? Is it sincerity? What about the level of concern? Should our prayers be like the ones in the Bible? This is careful ground? The Bible is full of sinners doing sinners things. That includes prayer. Saul is mentioned asking for things that go against Gods way like speaking to the dead. Here in Daniel 9, we have an example of a good prayer. This is very similar to Jehoshaphat and his prayer.

Verse 3 of Daniel 9 says *“So I turned to the Lord God and pleaded with him in prayer and petition, in fasting, and in sackcloth and ashes.”* Jehoshaphat says the same thing. What makes this a good prayer? It is all in how it begins. Daniel comes to the Lord in fear and reverence. Although fear and fasting are not required, the passion behind it is. You do not have to tear your sackcloth but you do need to put God on His throne. Daniel begins by acknowledging the Lord’s place above and his place as a sinner below.

Leviticus 26:33 *“You, however, I will scatter among the nations and will draw out a sword after you, as your land becomes desolate and your cities become waste.”*

Daniel opens his prayer by acknowledging Gods word. That the Lord said He would scatter His people if they disobeyed Him. Look at verse 5 as Daniel says *“we have sinned, been wicked, turned away from Gods laws.”* In verse 6 he goes further by saying they have not listened. A good prayer puts God and the person praying in their rightful place. Verse 4 says

“*Lord, the great, and awesome God.*” A God of character that “keeps His covenant of love.” Yet, not just love alone. No, God loves those who keeps His commands.

Daniel has fully admitted that they “all” have not kept the commands of God. They have all not followed Gods laws. I would like to point out something of the prophets and servants of the Lord. Daniel is leaving no stone unturned. Someone said to Jesus to do a miracle. He in-turn replied “*If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.*” Daniel is in full confession mode now. We are to come before the Lord in confession and humbleness. Yet, we should leave no stone unturned. I have not listened. I neglect the word. I should leave my offering at the alter until I have made right with people. God wants us to come clean before we pray.

Many of the great prayers in the Bible also use the “we” factor. The other day someone asked in a group why some prayers are not answered. Most of the time we just do not know why God chooses as He does. Yet, sometimes we can know why. Do I pray for others? Do I put myself second to the needs of others and second to the Lord’s needs. Why am I focusing on me when Jesus always focused on the world around Him? I feel that many prayers are not answered directly because we are putting ourselves first. Daniel is careful to use the words we and us over I.

Daniel 3:17-18 “*If this be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king.18 But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.*”

Good prayers relay good things. God will deliver us one way or the other. They say that faith gets results. Is faith believing hard enough? We get faith all wrong. Faith is knowing that Gods word and character will win. It will endure. No matter what happens we will passionately be subject to the God we love and obey. Listen to Daniel’s prayer in verse 18 of chapter 9 “*We do not make requests of you because we are righteous, but because of your great mercy.*” That is great faith and trust in the Lord.

Finally, I want to reiterate faith in God’s word. I said in our last study that it was intended to not return void. We do not read the Bible exclusively for our health. This word was meant to return to the Lord. It will usually return in prayer. The great prayers of the Bible remind God of His word. There is no exception here in Daniel 9. Look at verses 12 and 13 “*You have fulfilled the words spoken against us and against our rulers by bringing on us great disaster. Under the whole heaven nothing has ever been done like what has been done to Jerusalem. 13 Just as it is written in the Law of Moses, all this disaster has come on us, yet we have not sought the favor of the Lord our God by turning from our sins and giving attention to your truth.*”

Daniel is saying your word (God) has done its job against us. We are humbled and we repent. Verses 18 and 19 are an honest request. “*We do not make requests of you because we are righteous, but because of your great mercy.*” Think about why you are praying? Think about how you prayed last week before trouble came? Maybe we all need to revisit our prayers. Do we honor God first? Do we use “all of us” more than “I.” Is our prayer life about us more than others? Daniel’s prayer has given us cause to rethink our reasons for prayer and how to pray them.