Prayer (What is it Good For?)

Introduction: Prayer is something that all of us are familiar with in one way or another, but do we really know what it is, how to do it, and why it’s so important. In this message and subsequent messages I intend for us to dive into what the scriptures have to say about prayer and restore our confidence in the awesome privilege of prayer.

**Focus Statement/Question: What is Prayer Good For?**

**Follow Up Question: Many of you have heard the phrase: “I guess all we can do now is pray”**

This statement does not exude much confidence in the power of prayer. This statement says that all other efforts that we thought would work have failed, so we might as well roll the dice and see if something happens if we pray. The reality is that we as believers have been given a means of communicating with our creator directly.

**So the first answer to the question, What is Prayer Good For is:**

***Fellowship With God***

*Psalm 27:4-8 NLT*

*The one thing I ask of the LORD— the thing I seek most— is to live in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, delighting in the LORD’s perfections and meditating in his Temple. [5] For he will conceal me there when troubles come; he will hide me in his sanctuary. He will place me out of reach on a high rock. [6] Then I will hold my head high above my enemies who surround me. At his sanctuary I will offer sacrifices with shouts of joy, singing and praising the LORD with music.* ***[7] Hear me as I pray, O LORD. Be merciful and answer me! [8] My heart has heard you say, “Come and talk with me.” And my heart responds, “LORD, I am coming.****”*

Conversation is important when building relationship i.e. during courtship leading up to marriage, friendships, therefore why would it be any different when it comes to our relationship with God.

**The Number One function of prayer is for us to spend time with our Creator.** We develop our trust in Him by the time we spend with Him. If you think about every human relationship you have had throughout your life, the people that you can say you trust are people who you have spent extended periods of time with, interacting with them in different ways. This is why we hear David talking the way he does throughout the Psalms, because he was a man that spent time with God. So even when his natural mind was being tested by trials and circumstances we hear Him crying out to the Lord for help because He knew His God.

**Prayer is meant to be a dialogue, therefore this involves us speaking and us listening. This is one reason why bible reading is so important, because if we do not know what God said in His written word, it is harder for us to distinguish His voice when we are seeking specific guidance for our lives. Conversely, as we develop in our knowledge of God’s Word we are in a better position to hear His voice clearly for specific guidance and instruction.**

**The second answer to the question, What is Prayer Good For is:**

***Releasing Burdens***

*Philippians 4:6-7 NLT*

*Don’t worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. [7] Then you will experience God’s peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.*

*Philippians 4:6-7 AMP*

*Do not be anxious or worried about anything, but in everything [every circumstance and situation] by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, continue to make your [specific] requests known to God. [7] And the peace of God [that peace which reassures the heart, that peace] which transcends all understanding, [that peace which] stands guard over your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus [is yours].*

An exchange that takes place in prayer {talking to God} giving thanks for the privilege of being able to talk with Him and thanking him for all that he has already done in your life.

Illustration-Recycling is the process of converting waste materials into new materials and objects-God takes our emotional waste products in prayer and produces new materials-**Faith, Hope, and Love.** Mention David in the Psalms & the instruction from Peter to Cast all our Care on Him 1 Peter 5:7)

*Psalm 73:1-28 NASBS*

*[1] Surely God is good to Israel, To those who are pure in heart! [2] But as for me, my feet came close to stumbling, My steps had almost slipped. [3] For I was envious of the arrogant As I saw the prosperity of the wicked. [4] For there are no pains in their death, And their body is fat. [5] They are not in trouble as other men, Nor are they plagued like mankind. [6] Therefore pride is their necklace; The garment of violence covers them. [7] Their eye bulges from fatness; The imaginations of their heart run riot. [8] They mock and wickedly speak of oppression; They speak from on high. [9] They have set their mouth against the heavens, And their tongue parades through the earth. [10] Therefore his people return to this place, And waters of abundance are drunk by them. [11] They say, "How does God know? And is there knowledge with the Most High?" [12] Behold, these are the wicked; And always at ease, they have increased in wealth. [13] Surely in vain I have kept my heart pure And washed my hands in innocence; [14] For I have been stricken all day long And chastened every morning. [15] If I had said, "I will speak thus," Behold, I would have betrayed the generation of Your children. [16] When I pondered to understand this, It was troublesome in my sight [17] Until I came into the sanctuary of God; Then I perceived their end. [18] Surely You set them in slippery places; You cast them down to destruction. [19] How they are destroyed in a moment! They are utterly swept away by sudden terrors! [20] Like a dream when one awakes, O Lord, when aroused, You will despise their form. [21] When my heart was embittered And I was pierced within, [22] Then I was senseless and ignorant; I was like a beast before You. [23] Nevertheless I am continually with You; You have taken hold of my right hand. [24] With Your counsel You will guide me, And afterward receive me to glory. [25] Whom have I in heaven but You? And besides You, I desire nothing on earth. [26] My flesh and my heart may fail, But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. [27] For, behold, those who are far from You will perish; You have destroyed all those who are unfaithful to You.*

*[28] But as for me, the nearness of God is my good; I have made the Lord GOD my refuge, That I may tell of all Your works.*

**The third answer to the question, What is Prayer Good For is:**

**Loving One Another (and loving others)**

*1 Peter 3:8-9 AMP*

*Finally, all of you be like-minded [united in spirit], sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted [courteous and compassionate toward each other as members of one household], and humble in spirit; [9] and never return evil for evil or insult for insult [avoid scolding, berating, and any kind of abuse],* ***but on the contrary, give a blessing [pray for one another’s well-being, contentment, and protection];*** *for you have been called for this very purpose, that you might inherit a blessing [from God that brings well-being, happiness, and protection].*

*Ephesians 6:18 NLT*

*Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all believers everywhere.*

When we pray for others, what is know as intercessor prayer we are loving them...An Illustration could be to think of an Intercessor as a person who is acting as a Spiritual Sniper to ward off attacks or traps set for people.

**Summary**

Prayer is an awesome privilege that we have to interact with Our Heavenly Father and Love our brothers and sisters in Christ along with mankind as a whole. So if some asks you, What is Prayer Good for, you can say it is good for: Fellowshiping With God, Releasing Burdens, and Loving Others.