

What Kind of Prayer Pleases God?

Luke 18:1-17

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And he told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart.

- Luke 18:1, ESV

What kind of prayer pleases God? How can we pray in a way that connects with the will of God and reaches the throne of God's grace? Should we pray prayers to unlock the windows of the blessings of heaven? Should we pray for God to expand our territory? Should we formulate positive confessions of faith, affirming what we wish to be true about ourselves and our lives?

Many people have written books and made millions of dollars telling people how to pray. Some have been misguided, taking Scripture out of context (*The Prayer of Jabez*), while others have been dangerously un-Scriptural (*The Power of I Am*). Thankfully, Jesus has not left us without guidance. He teaches us repeatedly how we should pray. Based on today's passage, we can know what kind of prayer pleases God in specific ways:

1. Persistent prayer (vv. 1-6). One of the biggest challenges we face in prayer is losing heart and giving up. Jesus wants us to learn to persevere in prayer. Perseverance in prayer, when guided by Scripture, often sharpens, refines and sometimes changes our desires and our prayers. Sometimes we learn to wait on the Lord, as our desires and prayers are affirmed and strengthened. Sometimes we learn to change our prayers to better align with God's will.

2. Humble Prayer (vv. 9-14). God does not seek nor does He honor self-centered, self-righteous, self-affirming, self seeking prayer. But as Jesus said, "*For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.*"

3. Child-like Prayer (vv. 15-17). "*Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God.*" When we see ourselves as helpless and we trust in God to save and bless us according to His gracious power, in His sovereign goodness, we are beginning to approach God as a small child. This is the approach God blesses.

Learning to pray in a way shaped by Scripture is a life-long endeavor. Some excellent books can help us. Matthew Henry's [A Method for Prayer](#) and [Valley of Vision](#) are both excellent. Learning to pray the Psalms is an excellent daily discipline in this endeavor. As an example of praying the Psalms, here is Psalm 133 and then Psalm 133 as a prayer back to God:

*Behold, how good and pleasant it is
when brothers dwell in unity!
It is like the precious oil on the head,
running down on the beard,
on the beard of Aaron,
running down on the collar of his robes!
It is like the dew of Hermon,
which falls on the mountains of Zion!*

*For there the Lord has commanded the blessing,
life forevermore.*

Prayer Based on Psalm 133:

Lord, it is indeed good and pleasant when we, Your people, dwell together in unity-
when we are united in our hearts, minds and wills by Your Spirit-
it is a great blessing of Your Spirit, like oil running down the beard and onto the robes,
like incredible dew, heavy and refreshing, coming down on the dry and thirsty places.
Lord, You have commanded Your blessing to fall on our unity in You,
and when we are united, we see Your power and presence with us,
bringing us eternal life.
And so, Lord, unite us, by Your Spirit and for Your glory, Amen.