

Bill's Book

On

Prayer

How to Pray
When
Where
What to Expect

Written by William H. Cooper at Arlington, Texas
Completed 11-19-2009 Last Revised 8-22-2014

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Love,

William H. Cooper (Bill)

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Adventures in Spiritual Living

Prayer Project

Written by William H. Cooper at Arlington, Texas. Completed 11-19-09. Last revised 8-22-2014

Introduction:

I have spent considerable time debating with myself whether I should tell you only what you need to know about prayer or what I want you to know about prayer. There is a difference. I want you to know much more about prayer than you need to know. Prayer will do its work (if you pray) even when you know very little about it. So what you need to know is very little. There are risks in my saying too much. Some of the things I want you to know may conflict with what you believe about prayer and may disappoint you and even discourage you from praying if you do not value what prayer really does. The last thing I want to do is discourage

you from praying because every serious and sincere prayer has spiritual benefits for the person praying.

On the other hand, I am concerned that popular concepts of what we can pray for and expect God to grant are so misguided and so corrupted with expectations of material rewards and miracles that they will have the effect of ultimately discouraging prayer because of disappointed expectations. Wrong expectations will not be met. Disappointment will lead many to lose faith in prayer and even in God. Your prayers are heard and prayer does work but most often in unexpected and unrecognized ways. My conviction and my experience is that if we know how to pray, what to pray for and what to expect; then we will recognize the answers to our prayers and our faith and our desire to pray will grow. I am further encouraged to tell you more rather than less about prayer because I am concerned that if you do not know how to pray, what to pray for and what to expect, then you may conclude that your prayers are not heard or answered, that no one cares and even that God does not exist. None of these possible conclusions is true. You are heard. You are loved. All of your prayers are answered - with spiritual blessings.

Objective:

What follows is a fairly lengthy essay on prayer. It is intended to do more than tell you the facts about prayer. It is my fervent hope that as you read and contemplate, you will experience confirmation of the truth in what I am saying.

Much of what I have written, you can confirm in your soul and embrace. In affirming, you will actually be participating in a prayer for these qualities. Sensing the truth in anything makes it relevant, real and alive. I want you to have prayer experiences while reading this essay which will leave you wanting more contact with your heavenly Father through prayer. It is your experience of the spiritual consequences of prayer that is important. The spiritual consequences of prayer are joyful urges to be helpful, tolerant, unselfish, forgiving, encouraging, optimistic, generous, empathetic, etc. The extent of your knowledge about prayer matters very little unless you use that knowledge to encourage yourself and others to pray for spiritual consequences.

I want you to recognize, appreciate and enjoy truth and pursue it in prayer. Truth is not mere fact. Truth is the way all things fit together according to God's spiritual laws of love and mutual unselfish service. The experience of **Fatherly / brotherly love is the core of all reality and it is the proof of God's truth.** Many experiences harmonize with love and therefore with God's truth. Mercy, forgiveness, service, tol-

erance, justice, beauty, goodness and fairness are only a few of these love related values which resonate harmonically with love in your soul. You can sense this resonance if you try. I sometimes sense it as a calm conviction of God's will. At other times I sense it as a pleasant lightness or flutter just below my heart. It brings a sense of being treasured, of being included and of being connected. It is a bit like the joyful feeling of being in love. As you read what I have written, I want you to feel for the truth of what is being said. Open your heart and feel the harmonies in your soul. Emotions, feelings about events, circumstances and thoughts are where we experience life. I hope what I write will tune you into your own higher emotions of love, trust, faith, forgiveness, tolerance, generosity, hope, unselfishness, loyalty, etc.

About Prayer:

Jesus wanted his followers to pray, especially for others. Why? Who benefits from our prayers? We benefit physically because prayer is a tonic for health. We benefit psychologically because prayer focuses our attention on finding solutions to the matters we pray about. We benefit spiritually because prayer deepens the channels of our receptivity to spiritual blessings. **(Spiritual blessings include capacities**

and desires for loving service, unselfish devotion, courageous loyalty, sincere fairness, enlightened honesty, undying hope, confiding trust, merciful ministry, unfailing goodness, forgiving tolerance and enduring peace. These blessings all relate to righteous behavior because **God's will for each of us is that we lead a life of action motivated by our personal attunement with the spirit of God who indwells each of us personally.)** True prayers are dispatched in faith that they are heard and answered, so the independent and substantial power of faith is involved with the consequences of prayer. These are all benefits to the one who prays.

Benefit to others prayed for:

When we pray for others, what benefit do they receive if they do not know they are being prayed for? Praying for another person expresses love for that person. There is spiritual power in Fatherly/brotherly love which flows to the soul, mind and / or physical energy of the one prayed for. This spiritual power creates a spiritual blessing available to the one prayed for if they are willing and receptive. Our prayers for another enhance their capacity to receive spiritual blessings.

Spiritual power is energy and desire to love and serve others and to love God and become like him. Spiritual power motivates us and gives us faith and energy to live according

to what has meaning and value to us. It does this by influencing our emotions and our process of thinking. It has the ability to transform a person from within by confirming rightness and by bestowing warm spiritual pleasure as a consequence of righteous desires and behavior. It works in at least three circumstances:

1. When a person chooses to do unselfish good for others, that opens a channel from spiritual sources that empowers the person to express spiritual blessings such as tolerance, faith, forgiveness, service, etc. These behaviors and attitudes simply seem more appropriate and become easier.
2. When a person is present where another is expressing spiritual blessings, spiritual power causes an attraction or lure for the observer to live that way too.
3. When one person prays for spiritual blessings for another, spiritual power touches the mind and soul of the other person and causes these blessings to become more easily available to the other person and the other person is helped to realize that they have choices to live more spiritually, more fully and more joyously.

Love for others, unselfish attitudes and behavior, has attractive and motivating power associated with it which is a reliable lure to more unselfish behavior. Potentially, it attracts and motivates anyone exposed to it. Spiritual power comes from spiritual sources and is experienced as a joyous and affirming emotion. This power of spiritual attraction spreads like a benign virus which infects the souls of all observers thereby encouraging them to be of service to others and this spreads the virus again by example and experience.

As children of God, we are given modest spiritual power so that we can learn to use and to appreciate it. **We are given the spiritual power associated with dependability, loyalty, fairness, love, doing God's will, righteous living, loving service and faith.** The power that flows from these attitudes and actions is deity power we are given to exercise because we are growing children of God. It is given to be used, not merely preserved. As we learn to manipulate spiritual power, more will be given until in the far distant future, all will be given.

Prayer is a spiritually powerful technique for self transformation of the one who prays and then those inner consequences have social and cosmic consequences through our attitudes, actions and service to others.

Prayer energizes the spirit life. Prayer is like recharging the spiritual batteries of the soul. Worship is like tuning the soul into the universal broadcasts of the Father.

Prayer is a technique of detachment from daily routine. It is an avenue of approach to spiritualized self-realization and individuality of intellectual and religious attainment.

Prayer, as Jesus taught it, is an antidote for harmful introspection and this is a beneficial ministry to the soul. There is benefit to praying for one's fellows. Jesus usually prayed in the plural, not in the singular and he almost never prayed for himself.

Prayer is:

- *The sincere and longing look of the child to its spirit Father
- *A psychologic process of exchanging the human will for the divine will
- *Part of the divine plan for making over that which is into that which might be

Inner Teacher:

Children of God have a spiritual teacher to be listened to and followed. The teacher is one's personal inner spiritual mentor. We must learn how to listen for the Spirit's leading and how to assess the truth of what we "hear" or sense. Do our insights bring us to God and God to us? Do they

portray the love and the mercy of God? Do they enhance our understanding of truth, beauty and goodness? **Relationship with the Spirit within is the most important thing we can achieve in this life and prayer is the best technique for pursuing relationship with the Spirit within.**

What to Expect:

Genuine prayer is a spontaneous outburst of God-consciousness. It adds to spiritual growth, modifies attitudes and yields that satisfaction which comes from communion with divinity.

One who prays can effectively and immediately approach the threshold of the realm of contact with their Spirit of God within. Meditation often favors contact with the Spirit within but wholehearted and loving service is even more favorable to such contact.

Prayer is the most potent spiritual growth stimulus. God answers man's prayers by giving him an increased revelation of truth, an enhanced appreciation of beauty and an augmented concept of goodness. The deity response to all prayer is the gift of enhanced ability to bear (express) fruits of the spirit and then there are many beneficial consequences of bearing fruits of the spirit including better health, more energy, joy in living, optimism, charm, de-

pendability and trust. **All of these generate positive power for success in all aspects of life.**

All sincere praying done in faith makes the praying person more and more receptive to spiritual blessings which in turn manifest spiritual power. Prayer gradually enables us to exercise more and more spiritual power (spiritual lure and attraction) arising from our characteristic attitudes and behaviors of **loving service, unselfish devotion, courageous loyalty, sincere fairness, enlightened honesty, undying hope, confiding trust, merciful ministry, unfailing goodness, forgiving tolerance and enduring peace.** These are fruits of our connection with the Spirit within. They are the consequences Jesus told his followers to expect as a result of maintaining an inner communion with the Spirit of God indwelling the soul of each person. Prayer is the technique for maintaining that inner communion. **Prayer digs deeper channels of receptivity for these spiritual gifts.**

God is almost never going to fix things for us. He will help us get through anything and everything that comes our way for whatever reason, even if our burdens are our own fault. We should recognize and accept that sincere prayer has many benefits other than getting God to fix things for us. It is the most potent spiritual growth stimulus. It does a lot to help us solve our own problems. It has very valuable health and social benefits. Prayer enables the human ego

to look both to self and to spirit for help. For material help it initiates receptivity to the subconscious reservoir of mortal experience, memory and wisdom. For inspiration and guidance, prayer encourages receptivity to contact with spiritual intelligence.

Some prayers can be unethical, morally wrong. A prayer is unethical when the petitioner seeks for selfish advantage over his fellows. Selfish praying transgresses the spirit of all ethics founded on loving justice. Be fair in all your praying. Do not expect God to love you more than his other children. When a prayer seeks nothing for one's self or for others, then such an expression of the soul's attitude tends toward true worship. Egoistic prayers involve confessions and petitions and often consist in requests for material favors. Prayer is somewhat more ethical when it deals with forgiveness and seeks wisdom for enhanced self control.

Prayer must never be a substitute for action. **All ethical prayer is a stimulus to action and a guide for the progressive striving for idealistic goals.**

The nonselfish type of prayer is strengthening and comforting but materialistic praying is destined to bring disappointment and disillusionment because humanity lives in a physical universe of law and order which God will not violate. Primitive, selfish and materialistic praying is childish.

Such prayers are beneficial only to the extent that they lead to human efforts and exertions that contribute to achieving the goals of those prayers. But the real prayer of faith always contributes to augmentation of the technique of living even if the petitions are not worthy of spiritual recognition. Therefore it is important to be cautious in discouraging unworthy prayer.

Prayer does not change God but it often effects great and lasting changes in the one who prays in faith and confident expectation. Prayer is the ancestor of much peace of mind, cheerfulness, calmness, courage, self mastery and fair-mindedness.

Only under very rare circumstances does prayer have any direct effect on one's physical circumstances. The zone of effectiveness of prayer requests is very limited and relates most directly to the spiritual and psychological attitudes of the person praying, but this is not equally true of the faith of those who pray. Faith has spiritual power of its own.

Prayer will not cure real and organic diseases but it contributes enormously to the enjoyment of abundant health and to the cure of numerous mental, emotional and nervous ailments. Even in bacterial disease prayer often adds to the efficacy of other remedies. Expectant and faith dominated persons who are under the immediate and inspirational in-

fluence of a strong, positive and beneficent personality whose ministry banishes fear and destroys anxiety, may experience transformations of mind and spirit which cure illness in apparent miracles.

The sincere prayer of faith is a mighty force for promotion of personal happiness, individual self-control, social harmony, moral progress and spiritual attainment.

Prayer is an efficient technique for approach to the realization of the reserve powers of human nature stored and conserved in the unconscious realms of the human mind. These include insight, experience, custom, education and wisdom. Prayer is a sound psychologic practice even aside from its religious implications and its spiritual significance.

Don't ask God to solve your difficulties but don't hesitate to ask him for wisdom and spiritual strength to guide and sustain you while you resolutely and courageously attack your problems. Problems are learning opportunities God intends to use for our benefit. God is not absent, passive, overburdened or distracted. He is actively and constantly involved in every aspect of every person's life. He uses the problems we face as opportunities for our character development. While it is not appropriate to ask God to make your problems disappear, it is appropriate to pray for help in

learning the available lessons and for calm and reassurance in the midst of the turmoil.

Words, Posture and Attitudes:

Prayer is intentional communication with God. Most people use words silently or out loud most of the time, but words are not really necessary. You can pray in feelings or images or music so long as you are communicating from your soul/heart your sincere longings, goals and desires for good, your love of truth or your appreciation of beauty.

Jesus prayed silently and in the spirit – in the mind and in the spirit. In the mind probably involves words. In the spirit is probably wordless. In the spirit might be feelings or love related emotions such as acceptance, inclusion, empathy, forgiveness, patience, peace, harmony, appreciation...

Praying with faith, hope and trust brings expectations of divine assistance which encourages personal effort and thereby makes the desired result more likely. One who steps out in faith and takes the risks is sometimes successful even in the absence of divine intervention. One who does not act has no opportunity to succeed.

Pray in spirit and in truth – sincerely and in accordance with your enlightenment – wholeheartedly and intelligently – earnestly and steadfastly. Be persistent in your prayers.

Neither ornate repetitions, eloquent phrases, fasting, penance nor sacrifice add effectiveness to prayer. Jesus counseled his followers that there was too little thanksgiving in their prayer and worship. Jesus did not consider recitation of set prayers to be real praying.

Prayer to Jesus was the personal and spontaneous expression of the soul toward the Spirit. He taught that prayer should be a communion of the child with the Father and the expression of fellowship. Prayer, when from the spirit, leads to personal cooperation in the spiritual progress of one's self and others. The ideal prayer is a form of spiritual communion (intimate spiritual sharing of thoughts and feelings) which leads to intelligent worship. True praying is the sincere attitude of reaching heavenward for the inspiration and attainment of your ideals.

Prayer is the way we make contact with our souls. This benefit of bringing the contents of our souls to our conscious attention should motivate us to be persistent in our prayerful attempt to ascertain the Father's will. The answers to our questions about spiritual reality are in our souls. God is a willing and generous giver of spiritual blessings and spiritual power. Persistence is not to change God's attitude but to change our preconceptions and prejudices so that our conscious minds may be receptive to God's blessings. Per-

sistence gives spiritual insights repeated opportunities to drop into place.

Jesus observed to his apostles that when they prayed they exercised so little faith. Faith is more than belief. It is trust in God to do his part in achieving his goals. [Explore how to exercise more faith when praying.] Genuine faith will remove mountains of material difficulty which may be in the path of soul expansion and spiritual progress.

Pray as Jesus taught his disciples – honestly, unselfishly, with fairness and without doubting.

No prayer can hope for an answer unless it is born of the spirit and nurtured by faith. Pray prayers of spirit longing.

Just talk things over with God in a purely personal way. Do it often and regularly. Don't be afraid to talk to God, but don't undertake to persuade or change God.

Words are irrelevant to prayer. God answers the soul's attitude, not the words. Words can have benefit because they are self suggestive in private devotions and they are socio-suggestive in group devotions. Therefore, words lead to solutions from human sources.

Jesus liked to pray in nature among the small creatures, so I expect he often prayed with his eyes open. Jesus prayed in Gethsemane lying prostrate. In other circumstances he sat.

Posture probably doesn't matter unless it matters symbolically to you. Attitude does matter. **Our attitude should be faith filled and trusting.** We should sincerely believe in God's good and loving wisdom in answering our prayers. We should have no withholds in truly wanting God's will, not our own, to be done. His will is the best of all possible outcomes.

Jesus often went apart by himself to pray and commune. He could be seen praying long and often but his prayers were silent. He would spend entire nights in prayer and worship. His apostles sometimes could see rapid changes in his face indicating inner experience and they were very curious about the nature of his prayers. When Jesus spent whole nights in prayer, it was mainly for his disciples and particularly for the twelve. **Jesus rarely prayed for himself but he engaged in a lot of worship of the nature of understanding communion with his paradise Father.**

Jesus taught the twelve always to pray their personal prayers in secret in the quiet of nature or in their rooms. Jesus gave his followers the Lord's Prayer because his apostles petitioned him for a prayer to teach the multitudes. John the Baptist had a simple prayer that his apostles taught the crowds. The Lord's Prayer was for group prayers and was intended as a form or guide rather than as a set prayer to be recited.

Jesus taught that to be effective, prayer must be:

Unselfish – not for oneself alone

Believing – according to faith

Sincere – honest of heart

Intelligent – according to one's light

Trustful – in submission to the Father's all wise will

Jesus taught that the earnest and longing repletion of any petition when sincere and uttered in faith, no matter how ill advised or impossible of direct answer, nevertheless always expands the soul's capacity for spiritual receptivity. The soul's spiritual capacity for receptivity determines the quantity of heavenly blessings (fruits of the Spirit, consciousness of God's presence, peace, joy, etc.) which can be personally appropriated and consciously realized as an answer to prayer.

Prayers are Heard and Answered:

Opening the human end of God-man communication makes the ever flowing stream of divine ministry immediately available.

Our sins are forgiven by God even before we ask but our experience of having our sins forgiven is conditioned on first forgiving our fellows of their transgressions. It is a basic law

of justice that the unselfish glories of Paradise are not possible of reception by a thoroughly selfish creature of the realms of time and space. It is another basic law that you can not have more respect for yourself than you have for others.

The **sincerity** of any prayer is the assurance of its being heard. The **spiritual wisdom and universe consistency** of any petition is the determiner of the time, manner and degree of the answer. God will not give us the requests of our foolish prayers. Prayers in accordance with God's will are answered. While prayer does not change the divine attitude, it does change our attitude toward our Father. The unselfish motive of a prayer gives it right of way to the divine ear.

Sincere prayers of the longing of the heart are always answered. Sometimes the answer is greatly delayed while the spirit world devises the best answer to meet the needs of the spirit of man. Sometimes prayers are so vast they can only be answered later in our progressive spiritual growth; sometimes only when we reach Paradise.

Prayers are addressed to spiritual beings and must be answered in spiritual terms and all such answers must consist in spiritual realities. Spirit beings cannot bestow material answers to the spirit petitions of even material beings. Ma-

terial beings can pray effectively only when they pray in the spirit.

All spirit born petitions are certain of an answer. Full personal reception of the answer may be time delayed. The answer is seldom exactly what you asked for but the answer is never “No!” The answer will bring comfort, calm and reassurance of personal spiritual safety. It will be something spiritually and emotionally beneficial.

What to Pray For:

Guard against the great danger of becoming self centered in your prayers. Avoid much praying for yourself. Pray more for the spiritual progress of your brethren. Avoid materialistic praying. Pray in the spirit and for the abundance of gifts of the spirit. Pray for the sick and afflicted but don’t expect this to replace the benefit of loving and intelligent ministry to their needs.

A prayer from Psalms which Jesus liked was “Create in me a clean heart. Renew a right spirit in me. Purge me from secret sins and restrain me from presumptuous transgression.” He also liked “Prevent my careless and offending speech. Help me speak with tolerance and mercy.”

The most important prayer is for knowledge of the will of our Father. The next most important prayer is for guidance

over the pathway of earthly life. This in reality is a prayer for divine wisdom To do the Father's will.

Material things are not the province of prayer.

The truest prayer is in reality a communion between man and God.

True prayer always stands for man's communion with a personal and superior being.

Prayer is not a technique of escape from conflict but rather a stimulus to growth even in the face of conflict. **Pray for values, not things; for growth, not for gratification.**

Pray for the welfare of family and friends and others but especially pray for those who curse you and make loving petitions for those who persecute you. It is easy to pray even for those who misuse you to bear fruits of the spirit. After all, what you are praying for is for the desire to do good for others to take hold in their lives and to transform them. This feels right and good for either a friend or an enemy.

When and Where to Pray:

When should you pray? Pray whenever the indwelling Spirit moves you to express your inner relationship with the Father of spirits. Any time or any circumstance is appropriate. Pray when in trouble but not just then. Pray also when all is well.

Your real petitions, your personal prayers, should be in secret. Prayers of thanksgiving are appropriate both in personal prayers and group prayers. Prayers of the soul are a personal matter (secret). All believers should pray sincerely for extension of the kingdom of heaven. The kingdom of heaven exists when and where the believer encourages and allows the spirit within to lead the believer in doing the will of the heavenly Father.

What prayer was to Jesus and can be to you:

Jesus never prayed as a religious duty; never because he ought to or because it was prayer time. His prayer/communion was frequent and lengthy, essentially constant because he employed it to lead his unified material, emotional and spiritual life. **Prayer/communion was the way Jesus managed his emotions, his decisions and his life of unselfish service.**

Prayer to him was his sincere expression of spiritual attitude.

He committed his soul loyally to service of his heavenly Father's goals.

He reaffirmed his personal devotion to God.

He expressed his thanksgiving.

He applied prayer to relax and to avoid emotional tension.

He used prayer to prevent and resolve inner and outer conflict.

He enlisted prayer to elevate his thinking to the highest spiritual meanings and values level.

He used prayer to align his desires with truth, beauty and goodness. (To ennoble his desires)

He used prayer to test and confirm the rightness and reasonableness of his moral decisions. (Morality is your rules for how you treat other individuals. "Love one another and do good to every one" is the ultimate moral rule. But applying the rule wisely benefits from a lot of prayer.)

He used the inspiration received from prayer to enrich his thoughts.

He used prayer to add strength and energy to his higher inclinations.

He used it to convert his worthy impulses into worthy spiritual purposes and objectives.

He used prayer to achieve clarification of his viewpoint.

In prayer, he declared and molded his faith in God and man to expand it and to make it wiser.

In prayer he surrendered his will on a spiritual level to adopt God's will.

He used prayer to assert his confidence in truth, beauty and goodness at the highest spiritual level.

He used prayer to discover and reveal courage.

He would tell his Father about his discoveries.

In prayer he would admit and describe his complete devotion.

In prayer he would feel the rightness of his consecration and draw power from this.

He used prayer to sort thru and adjust difficulties.

He used prayer to mobilize his combined soul powers to withstand all human tendencies toward selfishness, evil and sin.

He did all these repeatedly and repetitiously.

The secret of Jesus' unparalleled religious life was his consciousness of the presence of God. He achieved this consciousness by intelligent prayer and sincere worship – unbroken communion with God.

Laws of Prevailing Petitions

1. Sincerely and courageously face the problem.
2. Industriosly exhaust human capacity to adjust.

3. Surrender everything to the transforming embrace of spiritual growth. (Expect insights into truth, beauty, goodness, meanings and values.)
4. Wholeheartedly desire God's will.
5. Dedicate yourself to action to do God's will.
6. Pray only for divine wisdom to solve specific human problems in the Paradise ascent.
7. Have Faith that your prayers will be answered.

There is quite a variety of types of prayer including:

Prayers expressing pure gratitude and thanksgiving

Petitions for help

Communion – intimate spiritual sharing of thoughts and feelings with God

Consecration of self to God's way

Consultation with God – thinking with God

Praying to elevate thoughts to a higher and more spiritual level

Praying for clarification of view point

Praying for faith, optimism, hope, courage

Praying for healing of mood, attitude or body

Praying to make spiritual goals and means more vivid

Prayer for inspiration and guidance to resolve the matters you are praying about

Prayer for wise leadership

There are many good reasons why we pray including:

We pray for the comfort, reassurance and courage prayer brings to face life and to fight the battles against evil and doubt.

We pray to feel like we have done something.

We pray because it elevates our mood.

We pray because we feel the comforting love of God.

We pray because it reduces a burden or shares a joy.

Prayer Project Assumption:

If we fail to pray, we forfeit the substantial spiritual, psychological and physical benefits our Father has arranged to flow from our sincere praying in faith for spiritual blessings for others.

Bill's personal conclusions

Prayer is an all important practice. It stimulates greater receptivity to spiritual gifts and it is the most potent spiritual growth stimulus.

Since we are encouraged to pray unselfishly in secret for groups of others, there must be benefit for them in our prayers. I like to think there is some influence on the people lovingly prayed for that will help them to be of good cheer or good character and loving in attitude and behavior. I think of this like electrical inductance where electricity flowing in one wire causes there to be potential for flow in an adjacent wire. In the case of prayer for others, the inductance might take place through mind circuits or spirit circuits which we all share. But even if this is not so, prayer in faith for others has tremendous beneficial results in the life of the praying person. Better physical, psychological and emotional health as well as spiritual growth and maturity are essentially guaranteed to the praying person. God has so designed us that it is spiritually beneficial for us to pray even when our prayers are primitive, selfish or material.

There is a lot of material praying we develop in our childhood and youth which is not going to be answered in the terms requested. But there are also many **consequences of**

prayer which are highly beneficial and are insufficiently appreciated as answers to our prayers. These include:

Prayer relieves stress.

Prayer elevates your mood and attitude.

Prayer brings inner peace.

Prayer clarifies and corrects confusion about meanings and values.

Prayer focuses your talents and mental and material assets on your problems, enabling you to answer your own prayers.

Prayer brings comfort, reconciliation and acceptance of what can not be changed.

Prayer relieves loneliness.

Prayer reinforces optimism, steadfastness and dependability.

Prayer helps you reach for anything you value.

Prayer enhances self control.

Prayer helps you value and love others.

Prayer helps you feel valued and loved.

Prayer improves your decision making ability.

Prayer and faith together cure many emotional and psychological illnesses.

Prayer often makes medical remedies more effective.

Prayer builds hope, confidence, expectation and trust.

Prayer supports action and achievement.

Prayer stimulates spiritual growth.

The ideal form of prayer is a personal communion of fellowship with our heavenly Father. Communion with God is simply an event of intimate spiritual sharing of our inner life of aspirations, hopes, fears, loves and feelings. Imagine God's presence. Imagine God's responses. Expect him to suggest in all circumstances how you can express loving and unselfish motivations. Actually what you are imagining is true. God is in fact present and hearing and responding to your prayers in a guiding, nondirective way.

Ultimately, it is a colossal spiritual mistake not to pray and commune with God frequently. The benefits are too great.

Appendix of Qualities and Attitudes to Pray About

Rodan's List:

Rodan, the Greek philosopher of Alexandria, who was an early follower of Jesus, noted many qualities in Jesus which he identified as qualities of a spiritually mature person. These qualities make an excellent list of spiritual growth opportunities to pray for to benefit ourselves or others. **As you read these, ask your inner Spirit to help you really understand them and to affirm in your heart that you want these qualities.** In this way you will be praying for them. Since this list is long, I have divided it into parts so that you may study it in manageable pieces.

Rodan A

1. Talk to God about wisdom of mind and charm of personality to deal lovingly with life.
2. Ask to develop talent for persuasiveness with your fellows.
3. Talk to God about tact and tolerance.
4. Pray for strength, energy, interest and enthusiasm to solve the higher problems of a moral and spiritual nature.

5. Pray to recognize and to seek to satisfy your hunger and thirst for true righteousness.
6. Pray for insight regarding the problems of living.
7. Pray for wisdom and energy to spend in service to others.
8. Talk to God about consciousness of contact with divinity.

Rodan B

1. Let's talk about new and better methods of adjusting to the ever-changing situations of living existence.
2. Ask for reconstruction and readjustment of personal attitudes.
3. Pray for enhanced insight into everything worthwhile and real.
4. Pray for God's will to be done.
5. Pray for relaxation and mind renewal.
6. Pray for illumination and soul inspiration.
7. Pray for courage to face problems.

8. Pray for self understanding to cope with overpowering emotions (such as sadness, guilt, fear, hate, revenge, jealousy, envy, lust or greed.)

Rodan C

1. Let's talk about experiencing consciousness of union with divinity.
2. Pray to achieve inner assurance of sonship with God.
3. Pray for courage/confidence to dare to be Godlike.
4. Pray for more constant communion with the Spirit within.
5. Pray to relieve tension.
6. Pray to remove conflict.
7. Pray for augmentation of the total resources of personality.
8. Pray to remove prejudice.

Rodan D

1. Pray to recognize truth wherever it is found.
2. Pray to experience unselfish thoughts and actions.
3. Pray for dedication to the service of a worthy cause/goal.

4. Pray for abandonment of self seeking.
5. Pray for joy in the search for God.
6. Pray for pleasure in the progressive attainment of divinity.
7. Pray for realization of values that are the highest and most real.
8. Pray for acceptance/awareness that the goals of destiny grow and progress.

Rodan E

1. Pray for stability of personality.
2. Pray for eternal, Paradise and divine goals.
3. Pray for spiritual guidance and to be an intelligent follower.
4. Pray to grow a personal religion of spiritual experience in the soul.
5. Pray for enhancement of insights.
6. Pray for elevation of ideals.
7. Pray for eternal adventure in service.
8. Pray to have friendships and associations of mutual affection.

Rodan F

1. Pray to have friends with whom to share noble thoughts.
2. Pray for modest recognition and appreciation.
3. Pray for character development – loyalty to living expression of fruits of the spirit.
4. Pray for the love of a home.
5. Pray for a good friend to share life with.
6. Pray to augment spiritual values from the shared insights of others.
7. Pray for respect for others to avoid distortion of vision, prejudice of viewpoint and narrowness of judgment.
8. Pray for avoidance of fear, envy and conceit.

Rodan G

1. Pray for contact with other minds.
2. Pray for enthusiasm for living.
3. Pray for courage to fight the battles (with spiritual weapons of love, forgiveness, tolerance, service) necessary to ascend to higher levels of human living.

4. Pray for enhancement of the joys and triumphs of life.
5. Pray to suffer without sorrow.
6. Pray to endure hardship without bitterness.
7. Pray to enhance beauty.
8. Pray to exalt goodness.

Rodan H

1. Pray to quicken and enlarge appreciative capacities.
Give thanks.
2. Pray for stimulation of imagination.
3. Pray to have friends and associates who are conscious of wholehearted devotion to the common cause of loyalty to God.
4. Pray for righteous exercise of spiritual power.
5. Pray to live for the welfare of others.
6. Pray for a glimpse of the circle of eternity.
7. Pray for inspiration to achieve one's best and utmost.
8. Pray for a glorified social structure.

Rodan I

1. Pray for civilization based on mortal maturity.
2. Pray for peace on earth.
3. Pray for goodwill among all mankind.
4. Pray for strength giving and worshipful habits.
5. Pray for spiritual maturity.
6. Pray for humility and readiness to learn.
7. Pray for avoidance of fanaticism.
8. Pray for adaptability to change.

Rodan J

1. Pray for good physical and emotional health.
2. Pray for clear and clean thinking.
3. Pray for skill in doing something well.
4. Pray for ability to withstand defeat.
5. Pray for spiritual enlightenment, meaningful experience and wisdom.
6. Pray for sufficient wealth.
7. Pray for wise planning.

8. Pray for honest achievement.

Rodan K

1. Pray to produce something useful.
2. Pray to remember worthwhile episodes of life.
3. Pray to fail gracefully and lose cheerfully.
4. Pray not to fear disappointment.
5. Pray to admit failure freely.
6. Pray to face failure and adjust to defeat.
7. Pray for experience with spiritual realities.
8. Pray to do something excellently/expertly.

Jesus' Teachings about Prayer

Here are some suggestions from Jesus about what to pray for.

Jesus A

1. Pray for faith in the love and goodness of God and their ultimate success in transforming everyone.
2. Pray for love for one's fellows.
3. Pray for skill at revealing goodness.

4. Pray to be an evangel of true inner religion of spiritual communion with God.
5. Pray to balance the ideal with the practical.
6. Pray to resist holding grudges.

Jesus B

1. Pray to withstand brooding when confronted with deep sorrow. [Brooding is thinking deeply about something that makes you unhappy.]
2. Pray for righteous thinking and righteous doing in the face of defeat, mistreatment or danger.
3. Pray for avoidance of unnecessary social misunderstandings.
4. Pray for emotional adjustment.
5. Pray to accept love freely and to give love freely.
6. Pray for brave endurance.

Jesus C

1. Pray to be unafraid of life.
2. Pray to be uncomplaining of inescapable hardship.
3. Pray not to weary of well doing because of being thwarted.

4. Pray to be undaunted.
5. Pray that difficulty will whet one's ardor.
6. Pray to feast, fatten and enthuse on the spiritual growth opportunities of adversity.

Jesus D

1. Pray to be taught by the Spirit.
2. Pray for the spiritual progress of one's self and fellows.
3. Pray for knowledge of the Father's will.
4. Pray to have attention and energies directed away from temptations.
5. Pray for a growing love of truth – God's way of love, forgiveness, mercy, etc.
6. Pray to overcome evil with good.

Jesus E

1. Pray for growth in faith, love and devotion to truth.
2. Pray for a wholehearted desire to find God and be like him.
3. Pray to forget one's mistakes.

4. Pray for a long distance view of destiny.
5. Pray for your spiritual longings and purposes.
6. Pray for moral power and spiritual energy to be an advocate for good.

Jesus F

1. Pray to demonstrate an endless, unselfish, outgoing bestowal of love.
2. Pray to increase a whole soul belief in the triumph of righteousness.
3. Pray to be undoubting of eternal salvation.
4. Pray to engage in frequent worshipful communion.
5. Pray to discover, adopt and master a positive and constructive technique of meeting all vicissitudes and harassments of mortal living.
6. Pray to enjoy living your life spiritually.
7. Pray consistent with your knowledge of the established laws of spirit, mind and matter.