

PRAYER -- LESSON SEVEN

SOME ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS OF ACCEPTABLE PRAYER

I. INTRODUCTION:

Prayer involves a great many things as we have already noticed from studying our previous lessons. It is certainly more than just asking or merely saying "please give me...". In praying we must recognize there are definite principles of procedure to be followed. We must understand there are certain attitudes and qualities of character which God demands of us in our speaking with Him. For this reason we shall consider some of the essential requirements of acceptable prayer.

II. DISCUSSION:

- A. Reverence -- prayer is to GOD!
1. One must be aware of God's greatness:
 - a) As Creator He possesses infinite power and is divine -- Rom.1:20.
 - b) As Judge before whom we will all stand -- Heb.12:23; Eccl.12:14.
 - c) As Father to whom we owe our existence and upon whom we are dependent -- Heb.12:9; Matt.7:11.
 2. In view of this we must be aware of our own insignificance and our attitude in service must be one of reverence -- Heb.12:28.
 3. Adoration and praise is an expression of reverence.
 - a) The model prayer given by Jesus serves as an example -- Matt.6:9; [see also Psalms 111:9 and 113:1-3.]
 - b) Note other examples -- I Chron,29:11; Psalms 104:1; 149:1; Jer.32:17; Matt.11:25; Acts 2:47; Jude 24-25; Rev.4:11; 19:1.
- B. Humility --
1. The teaching of Luke 18:9-14:
 - a) We are not to be characterized by arrogant pride which causes us to parade our own goodness or profess our own holiness.
 - b) To the contrary we must possess a sense of sin and unworthiness -- James 4:8-10.
 2. As manifested in life and prayers of Jesus -- a spirit of submission!
 - a) In His life -- Phil.2:5-11.
 - b) In His prayers -- Matt.6:10; Matt.26:39, 42.
 - c) We must follow this example -- I John 5:14.
 3. See 2 Chron.7:14; and 34:27.
 4. Mere assertions of humility will not suffice.
- C. Sincerity --
1. Emphasized in Matt.6:5-13.
 - a) We are not to pray to be seen of men -- vs. 5.
 - b) We are not to use vain repetitions -- vs. 7. [Compare this with Luke 18:1-8; and Matt.26:36-44.]
 - c) The model prayer cited here in verses 9-13 is a model in brevity, simplicity, and directness.

2. The publican's prayer in contrast to the Pharisee's prayer was characterized by spiritual reality [humility] and brevity -- Luke 18:13-14.
3. See Matt.15:8-9.

CONCLUSION:

Here we have three essential requirements of acceptable prayer. We shall consider some more later, but remember this, perhaps the greatest condition of prayer is the simplest: **IT'S JUST TO PRAY!**