



Pray the Grace Way: Part 2

In, *Pray the Grace Way: Part 1*, I taught how not to pray. We studied how Jesus taught His disciples how not to pray before He taught them the effective way. In this teaching I will teach you how to pray more effectively in accordance to the grace and the Word of God.

As wrong motivations and practices were peeled away, we were left feeling like all we knew about praying to God was taken and left with nothing. This comes to show that there was really no relationship but just an empty formula on getting God to do things He's already done (through the finished work of Christ) or give us spiritual blessings we already have (in Christ).

Jesus then proceeded to teach His disciples to pray effectively. He did it by teaching the disciples the Lord's Prayer, which was a sample of how to effectively pray during their time, which was the dispensation of the Old Covenant Law.

However, most believers in Christ dive in and apply it in their lives under the New Covenant Grace. Even though it was appropriate for the disciples then, I reckon that it's not the grace way to pray. That's not to say that we can't study the Lord's Prayer and bring some truths out in light of Grace. It's certainly is the Word of God but we must rightly divide the Word. Only then will it give us the spiritual context needed to fully understand it.

The reason why I say it's an Old Covenant prayer is because Jesus interprets the sole meaning of the prayer at the end with these words:

Matthew 6:14-15

For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

Everyone I know that believes it's appropriate to pray Lord's Prayer today, always leave out this last line from the prayer. They leave out the conclusion that conditions whether God will answer the prayer or not: If you forgive others, God will forgive you and bless you. I can just see the disciples putting so much fervor in reciting the Lord's Prayer, and, as they get to the last line, their hearts start to sink.

If the Lord's Prayer is just as applicable today as it was then, then it leaves us back at square one: getting God to answer prayers based on our performance.

Thankfully, like I said before, the Lord's Prayer is not according to the New Covenant Grace. Under Grace, Christ forgave us of all our sins; now we forgive because Christ has forgiven us.

My advice is, stop using the Lord's Prayer as a model for praying under the New Covenant Grace. Rather, let's start praying the grace way by using the Upper Room Prayer as a model.

- *How do we pray the grace way?*

Before Jesus left the disciples to be crucified, I believe Jesus gave the disciples the grace way to pray in the upper room. Contrast to the Lord's Prayer in the Old Covenant, this time He gave the joy and grace to pray to the Lord under the New Covenant Grace.

John 16:24

Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.

The disciples had been praying the Lord's Prayer all this time, but Jesus said that up until now they have not prayed in His name. They probably looked at each other confused like most reading this right now.

Then Jesus starts praying to the Father. They saw how Jesus addressed God as *Abba* (Father) and addressed Him boldly, intimate, and casual. The prayer's main theme is oneness and intimacy.

The most important aspect of prayer is that it's just spontaneous conversation with our heavenly Dad in order to have simple relationship at any time and place and condition. As a believer in Christ, He now dwells within you and is completely one with you. It is to be aware of His ever-present presence within you no matter what your outer circumstance is.

A great man of God says it in this manner:

- "The right way to pray is to stretch out our hands and ask of One who we know has the heart of a Father." – **Dietrich Bonhoeffer**

This was one of the first areas of liberation I experienced before the Lord showed me the extravagant grace of His Son's finished work. I was already a believer in Christ for years but for the first time I actually enjoyed prayer and experienced true relationship with Him. I stopped making appointments with God and developed intimacy with Him wherever and whenever.

I began to acknowledge His presence with boldness, intimacy, and without shame because I knew I was totally righteous, perfect without spot, and forgiven of all my past, present, and future sins in His sight because of what Christ did through His finished work. I know the Father was just so pleased with me always. I started loving and thanking Him from the heart. There are times when I don't say a word but just hang out and enjoyed His presence.

I believe Jesus modeled this same thing right in front of His disciples in the upper room and they finally experienced first-hand intimacy with God.

I believe the Holy Spirit will lead you to this type of experiential relationship. This is just half of what praying the grace way is about. It's the most important part.

By Joyner Briceño