



Prayer: A Viable Option or an Absolute Necessity?

The vitality of your life in Christ is revealed daily. You can gain significant insight into this spiritual reality by evaluating “when” and “why” you pray.

There are three perspectives of life that require little or no prayer for a Christian:

- Live by one’s own wisdom, effort, and will power.
- Do hardly anything at all. Just “turn it all over” to the Lord and passively let God live His life through you (“let go, let God”).
- Live by the “Lord, help me when I call” approach. This pattern for living reveals a partial dependence on the Lord. A person thinks that he/she can live the Christian life up to a point but needs God’s help after that.

A fourth pattern of life can be described as “abiding in Christ” and is characterized by habitual prayer. Abiding in Christ is an on-going spiritual relationship between believers and Jesus that is comparable to the physical relationship that branches have with a vine. A vine supplies the nutrients of life for its branches, enabling them to grow and produce fruit. In the spiritual dimension, Jesus grants eternal life to those who believe in Him (John 3:16, 10:28); and, as believers abide in Him, Jesus sustains their growth so they will produce spiritual fruit (John 15:4-5).

If you are a believer (a spiritual branch) and want to be fruitful for Christ (the vine), abiding in Christ is a necessity. The Bible states that knowing Christ and abiding in Christ have a common attribute, which is obedience to Scripture (1 John 2:3-7). Those who practice sin as a way of life, however, demonstrate that they do not know Christ, do not obey Scripture, and do not abide in Him (1 John 3:6-9).

A believer abiding in Christ obeys God’s Word, not by self-effort, but by relying on the indwelling power of Christ (Galatians 2:20). Possessing human frailties, however, any believer may fail to depend on Christ to follow Scripture. When that occurs, personal failure (sin) will result. In order to restore unhindered fellowship with Christ, a dependent believer will confess his or her sins to God and receive His forgiveness (1 John 1:8-9).

A believer who recognizes personal dependency on Christ will pray throughout the day (1 Thessalonians 5:17), realizing that little or no prayer indicates self-reliance, a consistent barrier to spiritual growth. Believers who are growing in Christ will consistently pray, learning to be watchful and thankful in the process (Colossians 4:2). They will continually pray for others, especially fellow believers (Ephesians 6:18). Believers who pray as a way of life will not be crippled by anxiety and will experience the benefits of God’s peace (Philippians 4:6-7).

Is unceasing prayer simply an option or an absolute necessity for you throughout the day? Your answer is directly linked to whether or not you are abiding in Christ.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE:

John 3:16, For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

John 10:28, I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand.

John 15:4-5, Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

1 John 2:3-7, And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. Whoever says “I know him” but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.

1 John 3:6-9, No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him. Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous. Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God’s seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God.

Galatians 2:20, I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

1 John 1:8-9, If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

1 Thessalonians 5:17, Pray without ceasing.

Colossians 4:2, Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving.

Ephesians 6:18, Praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints.

Philippians 4:6-7, Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.