

Praying through Problems

1. Be careful not to make God the source of your problem.

- a. It is a sad commentary on the church as a whole that this would have to be a “first step” in a prayer formula.
- b. Matt. 7:7-11 – God is not the one who causes hunger or creates unsupplied needs. He is the One who solves the problem by supplying the need when asked.
- c. Sadly, too many have made God the source of their problems by citing His “sovereignty” as the reasons for their problems. Such statements like “God is in control” or “all things happen for a reason” have been responsible for God taking the blame for things He had nothing whatsoever to do with.
- d. It is difficult to seek and believe God to intervene in a difficult circumstance when we believe that He is the cause of it. Such ideas are a detriment to faith. God is the problem-solver, not the problem bringer.
- e. Psalm 46:1-5 – God is our helper in trouble.
- f. Psalm 91:2, 14-16 – We are to recognize God as our refuge, our helper in times of trouble. It is only then that we can call upon Him in faith and expect His deliverance.

2. Identify the problem accurately

- a. Once you have removed from your mind the false idea that God is the source of your problem then begin to identify that problem accurately.
- b. Contrary to the false accusations of some critics of the faith message, faith does not deny that there are problems. In order to overcome the problem it needs to be accurately identified.
- c. Mark 10:46-52 – Jesus made Bartimaeus identify his problem before He responded to his request.
- d. Don't just talk to God about symptoms of a problem. Deal with the real issue. Some examples:
 - (1) Don't just ask God to “bless my marriage”. Exactly what is the problem or area of your marriage that you need help with? Does one spouse have a temper? Is one insensitive to the needs of the other? Is there a sexual issue?
 - (2) Don't just pray, “God, help my finances?” What is the cause of the problem? Are you unemployed? You may need to pray 2 Thess. 3:10 and Ephesians 4:28. Are you in debt?

God dropping a boatload of money on you will not solve the problem if you are irresponsible with finances. Perhaps you are lacking wisdom so you need to pray James 1:5-7.

(3) Problems on the job? Problems with children? Whatever the problem, identify it accurately. If you do not feel that you can identify it accurately then ask the Holy Spirit for His help. He is called alongside us to help us and guide us (John 14:26).

e. Mark 2:1-12 – Jesus pointed out the man’s *real* problem, which was a need to receive forgiveness for his sins. Only after that could the *symptoms* of the real problem be dealt with.

3. Find a corresponding promise in which God has pledged to deal with the problem.

a. Once you have accurately identified the problem then look through your Bible to find a promise that deals with the situation.

b. The Bible provides us with numerous examples of this. Let’s like at two out of several:

(1) 2 Chron. 20:5-12 – King Jehoshaphat prayed a promise given to Solomon by the Holy Spirit (see 2 Chron. 6). God’s answer is seen in 2 Chron. 20:22-23. Praying the promise solved the problem.

(2) Gen. 32:11-12 – When Jacob felt that he was in danger to be killed by Esau he reminded God of His promise. God came through for him.

c. Every promise from God contains within itself its own seed for fulfillment:

(1) God’s Word is a seed – Luke 8:11; 1 Pet. 1:23-25

(2) Gen. 1:11-12 – Every seed produces after its own kind. Every promise of God produces the thing promised (Psalm 119:9-11; John 15:3; 2 Cor. 7:1; Eph. 5:26).

(3) God’s seed-word is guaranteed to produce the thing which He sent it to do – Isa. 55:10-13; Psalm 107:17-21.

4. Strengthen your faith further by meditating on passages of Scripture that teach us about God’s character and nature.

a. The Bible describes God’s character in so many ways and so many places. Here are just a few faith-building passages:

(1) Titus 1:2; Heb. 10:23; Rom. 4:21

- b. David shows us how this worked in His own praying to remember the character of God – Psalm 138:1-8; Psalm 89:19-26.

5. Take God’s own words to Him and plead your case

- a. Christians cannot be lazy and just pray haphazard prayers, hoping that by a stroke of luck, God might answer. The Bible is clear that God wants us to take His very words to Him if we expect to get something from Him:

(1) Hosea 14:2-4; Deut. 26:5, 13, 15.

- b. Ex. 8:11-13 – Moses “cried” unto the Lord:

(2) The New Living Translation says, “So Moses and Aaron left Pharaoh, and Moses **pleaded** with the LORD about the frogs he had sent” (v. 12).

(3) Pleading is not “begging” but making an appeal in a court. We are invited to the throne of God to make appeals based on God’s promises – Isa. 43:25-26

(4) “To plead God’s faithfulness to His own word is the mightiest of all the arguments we can use at the throne of grace. *‘My faithfulness will I establish in the heavens’*” (J. P. Millar)

6. Claim the promise as already yours by faith

- a. True faith actively claims the answer as already his before there is any visible realization (Heb. 11:1, 6).

(1) Mark 11:24

(2) “...whatever you are asking, believe that you have taken it, and it will be there for you” (The Power New Testament).

(3) The word “receive” in the KJV is an action word which actually means to “take” or “claim”. “Receiving” is the responsibility of the recipient (John 3:27; Matt. 11:14; 19:12; Mark 10:15; Luke 18:40-43).

- b. Psalm 6:2, 8, 9; 10:17; 61:1-6; 116:1-10 – The supplicant should consider that the Lord has heard Him the moment he has asked. If God hears then we are guaranteed an answer – 1 John 5:14-15.

7. If you have claimed an answer in faith then your attitude should be one of praise and thanksgiving before you see the visible, tangible results of your petition.

- a. Phil. 4:6-8 – Here we are taught to add thanks giving right along with our petition to God.
- b. John 11:42-44 – Jesus provides us with a wonderful example of claiming the answer to prayer by adding His “thanks” into the petition to His Father.
- c. 1 Cor. 15:57 – An example of giving God thanks for what He has given even before we see it. Thanksgiving to God is the language of faith.