

# A Word from Pastor Chuck



## The Man God Uses—part 1

*Let my prayer be set before You as incense, the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.* Psalm 141:2

Do you want to be used by God? Do you want your life to count for eternity? If so, then it is essential to discover the characteristics of the people God used throughout the Scriptures. We will concentrate first on the area of prayer.

*Now Peter and John went up together to the temple at the hour of prayer ...* Acts 3:1

Prayer is the key here. God uses men who maintain regular communion with Him—men who are constantly speaking to and hearing from God.

Prayer was essential in the life and ministry of the apostle Paul. In his letter to the church at Thessalonica, he exhorted them to pray without ceasing. Paul often declared that he prayed for the people day and night.

How does God's Word teach us that we should pray? There are five basic elements seen in Matthew chapter 6: relationship, worship, confession, petition, and intercession.

**Relationship**—“*Our Father in heaven ...*” (v. 9a). Prayer is the privilege of God's children. When God is your Father, you have a right to ask.

**Worship**—Jesus taught us to begin our prayers with worship: “*Hallowed be Your name*” (Matthew 6:9b). Peter and John began their prayer in Acts 4:24: “*Lord, You are God, who made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them.*” They focused on God's character—worshipping Him for the mighty works He had done.

Adoration is an important component of worship because when we realize we are speaking with the Living God, the Creator of all things, our problems are reduced to their proper perspective. We often transfer our

human limitations onto God. What seems easy for me must be easy for God; what seems difficult or impossible for me must likewise be difficult or impossible for God. But when we worship the Lord, we discover that He is so much greater than our problems.

During my mother's final days, I went through a wide range of emotions. The x-rays revealed a growth the size of a grapefruit blocking her kidneys, which caused constant, excruciating pain. She had an intense love for the Lord, which made it hard to understand why God would allow her to suffer so much. It was extremely difficult to see her in that condition.

One morning, in a moment of emotional anguish, I prayed that God would relieve her from the pain. I asked Him to give it to me for a single day. The Lord gently reminded me that He had already borne all of her pain.

At that moment, God revealed His infinite greatness over cancer. I was no longer focusing on a disease that could reduce a perfectly healthy body to a sickly mass of skin and bone. I was standing before the throne of Almighty God. A few mismanaged cells are nothing compared to the One Who created the universe.

At the same moment my mother breathed a sigh of relief and exclaimed, “The pain is gone.” Over the next two days, my mother excreted 37 pounds of liquid from her system, as her unblocked kidneys began to function again. Within about a week, the x-rays showed that the growth was gone.

She began to sleep almost around the clock, waking up only long enough to say, “Oh, it's so wonderful to not feel pain anymore.” Ministers would visit and ask God to heal her. Then after they would leave, my mother would smile and say, “I wasn't agreeing with their prayers. I want to go be with the Lord.”

I began to pray for God's will to be done in her life. Soon afterward, she lapsed into a coma, and the Lord took her home. Sitting at the foot of her bed, I experienced the presence of the Lord in a greater way than ever before or since. Prayer was the natural outgrowth of my relationship. As I realized the magnificence of God, I worshipped Him; and as I worshipped, His love and power flowed through me in a fresh, new manner.

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**Confession**—“*Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors*” (v. 12). Although Jesus has already died for every sin we will ever commit—past, present, and future—God still wants us to come to Him when we realize we have sin in our lives. Sin grieves the Holy Spirit and hinders our prayer life, but confession restores our relationship with the Father and revitalizes our communication.

**Petition**—Petition is where we bring our own requests before the Lord. “*Give us this day our daily bread*” (v. 11). People who lack a personal relationship with the Lord often believe that God is too busy to be bothered with their individual needs, but this is to misunderstand His character and His love for us.

**Intercession**—“*Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven*” (v. 10). Finally, our prayers must ultimately move into intercession. If I only pray for my own personal needs, then there is something wrong in my heart.

Throughout the Bible, God has used men who have relied upon Him with a regular, fervent prayer life. And they key to effective prayer is faith, which we will consider in the next issue. ✠