

PLAIN SPEECH

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“Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech” (2 Cor. 3:12)

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PRAYER THAT PLEASURES GOD & BENEFITS MAN

Take a moment to read the following portion of text: “*And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, ‘God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.’ And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying ‘God be merciful to me a sinner.’ I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.*”

One lesson we can learn from the words uttered by our Lord is that there are times when our prayers simply do not amount to much at all. Certainly God could not have been pleased with the Pharisee’s hot air... I mean the Pharisee’s “prayer.” Folks, prayer is a wonderful, wonderful blessing afforded to us. Since I’m sure we all want our time in prayer to mean something, I have decided to note, in this week’s article, qualities which make for prayer that both pleases God and benefits man: Below are some of the necessary ingredients:

HUMILITY

Certainly God was not pleased with the self-righteous attitude of the Pharisee in the text cited above. How things would have been different had he humbled himself before God! Paul understood this very well. He said... “*For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*” (Eph. 3:14). Let’s recall that these are the words of an apostle!

GRATITUDE

In the long ago, Paul – writing from prison mind you – commanded the saints in Colosse on this wise: “*Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving*” (Col. 4:2). Also note: “*Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God*” (Plp. 4:6).

GODLY LIVING

No matter how much you may cry out to God, if you are living a reprobate lifestyle then you are in a sad predicament. Scripture records: “*He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination*” (Prv. 28:9); “*...The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much*” (Js. 5:16); “*Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered*” (1 Pet. 3:17).

PROPER MOTIVE

“*Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts*” (Js. 4:3). I just wonder if those “preachers” who are always encouraging people to pray for a “bazillion” dollars and a fleet of sports cars have ever read what James recorded.

SINCERITY

“*Hear the right, O LORD, attend unto my cry, give ear unto my prayer, that goeth not out of feigned lips*” (Ps. 17:1). When I think of feigned lips, I think of the typical, “God, if you will do _____ for me, then I will do _____ for you” type of prayer. How many ever follow through?

A PROPER UNDERSTANDING OF GOD’S WILL

John wrote: “*And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us*” (1 John 5:14). All need to be careful here. Folks, without a proper understanding of God’s will our prayers can become ineffectual and give us a false sense of hope and security. For instance, how many people are waiting for a miracle to occur because of prayers they’ve lifted, while not realizing that the age of the miraculous has long been over with (1 Cor. 13:8-10)?