

Title: Is Prayer Really Necessary? Text: Isaiah 55:6 – 11

Intro. Repeat Laminated Card – Prayer of Serenity:

GOD GRANT ME THE SERENITY TO ACCEPT THE THINGS I CANNOT CHANGE,
COURAGE TO CHANGE THE THINGS I CAN, AND THE WISDOM ALWAYS TO
TELL THE DIFFERENCE. # 1

U.S. News teamed up with the Internet site Belief.net on a survey to learn more about why, how, where, and when people pray. Here is a summary of the more than 5,600 responses to the survey.

75 % of those who responded are Christian.

64% say that they pray more than once a day

65% say that when their prayers relate to health, they pray about mental health such as worry, anxiety, depression, discouragement etc.

56% say that they most often pray for family members.

3.3 % say that they pray for strangers.

38% say that the most important purpose of prayer is intimacy with God.

41% say that their prayers are often answered.

1.5% say that their prayers are never answered.

73% say that when their prayers are not answered, the most important reason is because they did not fit into God's plan.

79% say that they pray most often at home.

67% say that in the past six months, their prayers have related to giving thanks to God all the time. Gary D. Foster # 2

Topics: Prayer, Spiritual Formation, Belief

Source: www.usnews.com, December 20, 2008

Is Prayer Really Necessary?

1. Yes, because it is the most intimate way to commune with God.
 - a. vs. 6 – “Seek the Lord while he may be found; call on him while he is near.”
 - b. Blaise Pascal Once asked, “If man is not made for God, why is he only happy in God? If man is made for God, why is he so opposed to God.”
 - c. Story – Prayer: The Prayer Telescope –# 3
 - d. Would you like to be closer to God? – Then every day, in every way, pray. (Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.) 1 Thess. 5:16 – 18
2. Yes, because it helps me Obey God in trying times.
 - a. vs. 7 – “Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the Lord, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will freely pardon.”

- b. Three Stages of Prayer – (not to imply greater value)
 - i. The first stage is a simple childlike faith to request something needed or desired.
 - ii. The second stage is a form of meditation (keeping company with God).
 - iii. The third stage is submission to God's agenda and will.
 - c. Story – Judge William Constagney Superior Judge Constagney presides in Charlotte, North Carolina AP # 4
 - d. Do you struggle to obey God? - Then every day, in every way, pray. (Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.) 1 Thess. 5:16 – 18
3. Yes, because it aligns my daily life with God's Agenda.
 - a. vs. 8 – “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the Lord.
 - b. Andrew Murray once said, “Prayer is the power to bring to pass that which otherwise would not take place.”
 - c. Story – After the deadly Christmas tsunami of 2004 National Public Radio interviewed a Buddhist, Muslim, and Christian for their perspectives on the tragedy – Yancy Prayer 128 # 5
 - d. Does your life lack purpose? - Then every day, in every way, pray. (Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.) 1 Thess. 5:16 – 18
 4. Yes, because it creates Spiritual Growth.
 - a. vs. 9 – 11 – “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.
 - b. Daniel Yankelovich – the shift of the 1970's from self-denial ethic to self-fulfillment ethic. (Yancy Prayer p. 164) # 6
 - c. Story - Prayer Last-Ditch Prayer A group of businessmen were flying in an aircraft when there was a sudden decompression.... # 7
 - d. Do you want to grow spiritually? - Then every day, in every way, pray. (Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.) 1 Thess. 5:16 – 18

Conclusion - “Through his prayers, George McCluskey effected far more than one family, he effected your family. # 8