



TALKINGPOINTS WALKINGPOINTS

Talk together about the glory of God's kingdom. –Psalm 145:11
Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. –Joshua 22:5

September 20, 2026

The Purpose of Prayer Part 1

Questions for Reflection or Discussion

Observation — What does it say?

1. The “ACTS” acrostic (Answer: Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication) is a well-known guide to the key elements of prayer. 2 Chronicles 6:12-42 records one of Solomon's prayers. As a group, assign one or more of those four elements to each idea contained in that prayer.
2. Pastor Doug suggested that knowing God's moral will and being committed to obeying it result in a powerful and effective prayer life. How do you see those two issues in Solomon's prayer?

Interpretation — What does it mean?

3. How are God's sovereign will and His moral will distinguished?
4. How should understanding the distinction between God's sovereign will and his moral will shape our prayer life?

Application — What do I do with this?

5. Review question 1, tallying up the frequency of references to each element. What percentage of Solomon's prayer is Adoration? ...Confession? ...Thanksgiving? ...Supplication?

How do your typical prayers compare to the profile of Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving and Supplication modeled by Solomon?

6. What area of your life currently needs greater alignment with God's will?



Sermon Summary

The Purpose of Prayer - Part 1

Prayer is not primarily about getting God to give us what we want; it is about deepening our relationship with Him so that our will becomes aligned with His will—and as that happens, our prayers become more powerful and effective. When you observe how Jesus prayed, you will discover that there are at least four facets to prayer, and only one of them involves asking God for things. You can remember these different facets by memorizing the acrostic ACTS: Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving and Supplication.

1. **Adoration** - This is where we worship God for who He is. He is our Creator, our Redeemer, and our Provider. We worship Him for His attributes (Psalms 95-100).
2. **Confession** - This is where we humble ourselves before God and ask Him to examine our lives and reveal any areas of unconfessed sin.
3. **Thanksgiving** - This is where we thank God for all the good things He brings into our lives. We should even thank Him for the things that seem not so good to us, because we know that He will use even these things to bring about a good result in our lives.
4. **Supplication** - This is where we ask God for stuff, either for ourselves or for others.

God wants to know our hearts, our dreams, our concerns, our hopes and our relationship struggles. He wants us to share these things with Him because He wants a relationship with us. Prayer's primary purpose is to deepen your relationship with God; it is not to get stuff.

God Communicates With Us Through His Word

Your closeness to God will be greatly enhanced by spending regular time with Him in His Word.

We Communicate With God Through Prayer

The God who created the Universe, the most significant being in the world, wants to have a relationship with you! Through prayer, we can get through to our Heavenly Father anytime, anywhere.

Jesus taught us how to pray in Matthew 6:9-10. Jesus teaches a lot more about prayer in this passage, but He establishes up front that godly praying begins with a recognition of God's greatness and with a commitment to doing His will. As your will becomes more and more aligned with God's will, so will your prayer requests. You will begin asking for things that God wants you to have!

There are three different ways God responds to our prayers: 1. No; 2. Wait; 3. Yes.

Prayer is about figuring out what God wants us to have, and asking Him for that. When your will is aligned with God's will, you can have much greater confidence that God will answer your prayers (1 John 5:14-15; James 5:16). To have a powerful and effective prayer life, you must know what God's will is and you must be actively pursuing it. It is not knowledge of His will that God blesses, it is obedience to His will.

How Do We Know God's Will?

The Bible speaks of God's will in two different ways: (1) God's sovereign will and (2) God's moral will.

Sovereign Will

God's sovereign will involves His secret plan that determines everything that happens in the Universe. In other words, nothing happens in this world that God doesn't either cause or allow (Daniel 4:35; Prov. 21:1; Acts 2:23; Acts 4:27-28; Rom. 9:19; Rom. 11:33-36; Eph. 1:11; Rev. 4:11). Because God's sovereign will is secret, we are not responsible to figure it out and obey it. But we are responsible to figure out and obey God's moral will.

Moral Will

God's moral will is revealed in the Bible, particularly in the commands and principles that teach how we ought to believe and live (Matt. 22:37-40; James 1:19-20; Eph.4:32; Eph. 5:25; 1 Thes. 4:3). It is in the context of God's moral will that our wills are to be aligned with God's.

Where there is no Biblical command or principle, God gives us the freedom and responsibility to choose. Where the Bible has not clearly spoken, our goal is to make wise decisions, not perfect decisions (Eph. 5:15-16). The goal in cases like these is to make “wise” decisions that reflect biblical values. Many times we are faced with decisions where there doesn’t appear to be a right or wrong option. There may be several good options. The goal in cases like these is to make “wise” decisions that reflect biblical values.

How do we go about making wise decisions where the answer is not biblically obvious?

- Ask God for wisdom (James 1:5-6).
- Seek wisdom in the pages of Scripture (Psalm 119:97-100).
- Seek wisdom through personal research (Nehemiah 2:11-16; Joshua 2).
- Seek wisdom through wise counselors (Proverbs 15:22).

In areas where God has not spoken, you can't sin in your decision making, because you've not violated a biblical command. The goal is to make the wisest decision that you can, given the information that you have. That is all that God expects of you. When you are committed to living wisely, when you are committed to discovering and living out God's will, it will affect how you pray. And when you pray according to God's will, your prayer life becomes powerful and effective.

Key points to remember...

- Prayer is not primarily about asking God for stuff - remember ACTS.
- The purpose of prayer is to deepen our relationship with God so that our wills become aligned with His will.
- Therefore... When you pray, pray with this divine purpose in mind.

Notes

Digging Deeper in Your Daily Quiet Time

This week, let's put into practice what we're learning about prayer! Each day this week read passages suggested and then, allow those passages to shape a brief time of adoration, confession, thanksgiving and supplication.

Monday - Personal Needs

Matthew 6:9–13; Philippians 4:6–7; Psalm 139:23–24

Tuesday - Family & Friends

Colossians 1:9–12; Ephesians 3:14–19; 3 John 2–4

Wednesday - Job or School

Colossians 3:22–24; Proverbs 16:3; James 1:5

Thursday - Government & Culture

1 Timothy 2:1–4; Jeremiah 29:7; Proverbs 21:1

Friday - Personal Witness to neighbors & coworkers

Colossians 4:5–6; Matthew 5:14–16; 1 Peter 3:15–16

Saturday -Church & Mission

Ephesians 6:18–20; Colossians 4:2–4; Acts 4:29–31

Notes
