

What is prayer? Part 2

STUDIES IN PRAYER

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STUDY TWO: WHAT IS PRAYER?

PART TWO: PRAYER IS THE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF GOD

A. PERSONAL CONFESSION OF GOD AS OUR GOD

This is studied at length in Studies in The Lord's Prayer on this website. In the Lord's Prayer we confess and acknowledge that God is 'our Father in heaven'. We have seen in Study One in this current series of studies, in the two synonyms for prayer 'seeking the Lord' and 'waiting on the Lord', that both of these include acknowledging God as God to the exclusion of all other gods. When we come to God in prayer we come to him as the *only* God, the one, true God. Prayer is thus the personal honouring of God as God. Consider a just a few of the many texts in which prayer begins in this way

2 Samuel 22:2ff	The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation. He is my stronghold, my refuge and my saviour ... I call to the Lord, who is worthy of praise ...
1 Kings 8:23	O Lord, God of Israel, there is no God like you in heaven above or on earth below ...
2 Kings 19:15	O Lord, God of Israel, enthroned between the cherubim, you alone are God over all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth ...
1 Chronicles 29:10ff	Praise be to you, O Lord, God of our father Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. Yours, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendour, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, O Lord, is the Kingdom; you are exalted as head over all ...
2 Chronicles 14:11	Asa called to the Lord his God and said, "Lord, there is no one like you to help the powerless against the mighty. Help us, O Lord our God, for we rely on you, and in your name we have come against this vast army. O Lord, you are our God ...
2 Chronicles 20:6ff	O Lord, God of our fathers, are you not the God who is in heaven? You rule over all the kingdoms of the nations. Power and might are in your hand, and no one can withstand you ...
Nehemiah 1:5ff	O Lord, God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with those who love him and obey his commands ...
Nehemiah 9:5ff	Blessed be your glorious name, and may it be exalted above all blessing and praise. You alone are the Lord. You made the heavens, even the highest heavens, and all their starry host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. You give life to everything, and the multitudes of heaven worship you. You are the Lord God ...
Isaiah 63:14-64:12	... you are our Father ... you, O Lord, are our Father, our Redeemer from of old is your name ... no one has heard, nor ear perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you ..
Daniel 9:3ff	... I prayed to the Lord my God and confessed: O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with all who love him and obey his commands ..

For your study and worship: Read a selection of the Psalms. There you will find that many Psalms address God with similar affirmations of his unique and unparalleled deity and sovereignty.

B. PRAYER IS PRAISE AND ADORATION/WORSHIP

Of the 150 Psalms only 4 have no hint at all of praise, adoration or worship, and only 11 have just a slight hint; that leaves 135 with clear expressions of praise, adoration and worship, and a great many of these are powerful, full-on praise, adoration and worship. Take time to read the Psalms and enter into this aspect of prayer.

For your study and worship: go again to the Psalms, and starting at Psalm 1 read them through identify the elements of praise, adoration and worship, and use them as your own acknowledgement of God.

Related to this aspect of prayer is another aspect -

C. PRAYER IS REJOICING IN THE LORD

Prayer ought not to be a burden - it is joyous communion with our God and a rejoicing or exulting in who he is and what he has done; it is sharing with him the joy of who he is, the joy of how much he loves us and the salvation he freely gives, and the joy of our reciprocal love for him. In the Psalms alone this joy, this delighting in the Lord, this singing for joy in his presence, is referred to about 180 times. Below are a few varied examples of this joyful communion with the Lord:

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| 1 Samuel 2:1 | My heart rejoices in the Lord; in the Lord my horn is lifted high ... I delight in your deliverance ... |
| 1 Chronicles 16:10 | Glory in his holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice. Read also verses 31-33 |
| Psalms 5:11 | Let all who take refuge in you be glad; let them ever sing for joy. Spread your protection over them, that those who love your name may rejoice in you. |
| Psalms 9:2,14 | I will be glad and rejoice in you ... I will rejoice in your salvation |
| Psalms 13:5-6 | ... my heart rejoices in your salvation. I will sing to the Lord, for he has been good to me. |
| Psalms 16:11 | You will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand. |
| Psalms 43:4 | Then will I go to the altar of God, to God, my joy and my delight. I will praise you with the harp, O God, my God. |
| Psalms 71:23 | My lips will shout for joy when I sing praise to you - I, whom you have redeemed. |
| Isaiah 61:10 | I delight greatly in the Lord; my soul rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness ... |
| Isaiah 62:4,5 | ... for the Lord will take delight in you ... as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so will your God rejoice over you. |
| Jeremiah 15:16 | When your words came, I ate them; they were my joy and my heart's delight, for I bear your name, O Lord God Almighty. |
| Habakkuk 3:18 | ... yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my Saviour. |
| Zephaniah 3:17 | The Lord your God is with you ... He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing. |
| Luke 10:21 | At that time Jesus, full of joy through the Holy spirit, said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth |
| Romans 5:11 | .. we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation. |
| Philippians 3:1; 4:4 | ... rejoice in the Lord! ... Rejoice in the Lord always. |
| 1 Peter 1:6,8 | In this you greatly rejoice ... Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy, for you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls. |
| Revelation 19:7 | Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory ... |

For your study: as a project for a wet afternoon, read through the Psalms and make a list of those 180 references to delighting and rejoicing in the Lord, and singing for joy to the Lord. Maybe you will find more.