

“Praying On the Hand”

By Reverend Philip C Brown
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Since we were young children, we have heard “The Lord’s Prayer” which is arguably the best know prayer in the world. All of us have prayed this prayer countless times, but do we really know how to pray? What we know as the “Lord’s Prayer” was given by Christ Jesus on how to pray correctly. Let us read the relevant passage, which is found in the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 6 verses 5 through 13:

“And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.

Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.

**After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.**

And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.’

(Bolding, Colorization and Highlighting of text added.)

It is interesting that before Christ teaches us how to pray, He first teaches us how not to pray thus avoiding ineffectual prayer. Avoiding praying in vain and becoming frustrated at the fact that our prayer(s) is not being heard, which in fact is the case. During our personal prayer time we are not to pray openly, instead we are to sequester ourselves and pray to God in private; sincerely, humbly and confidently. We pray to God the Father in secret, God hears us privately, and he does reward us openly. God knows what we need long before we come to Him in prayer, so we don’t need to repeatedly ask it. Now before anyone starts thinking that I am promoting the concept of “name it, claim it” which is so popular in the prosperity doctrine. That I am saying that God in Heaven is taking orders from us and rewarding simply because we desire something, again, an extremely popular tenant of the prosperity doctrine. The truth is simple, I am telling you, I am pleading with you, I implore you to do exactly what Jesus has already taught us about how we are to approach successful prayer in our individual lives. The formula is easy, it is not at all complicated and once you learn how to pray “on the hand”... my dear friends you will never forget how to approach successful prayer in your personal life. We will get back to praying “on the hand” in a little bit.

Let’s briefly turn our attention towards the “Lord’s Prayer”, the actual instructions from the Son of God himself on how to approach God the Father successfully and reverently in prayer.

- “Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.”
Personalizing the prayer,
“My Father who is in heaven, Holy is your name.”
- “Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.”
Personalizing the prayer,
“Your kingdom come; Your will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.”
- “Give us this day our daily bread.”
Personalizing the prayer,
“Give me today my daily bread.”

- “And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.”
Personalizing the prayer,
“Forgive me my debts (trespasses), as I forgive my debtors (those who trespass against me).”
- “And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever.”
And again, personalizing the prayer,
“Lead me not into temptation, but deliver me from evil: For Your’s is the kingdom, and the power and the glory, forever.”
- “Amen”

There are five parts to the “Lord’s Prayer”, and it so happens that there are four fingers and a thumb, a total of five, on each hand. So regardless of you being left-handed or right-handed this will work for you, just another example of God’s wonderful planning for each of us. Let me show you how this actually works, it is simple, and it is amazingly easy. Once you understand how this comes together, after just a little practice you will never have to worry about where you are in your daily prayer. I promise you will truly find praying on the hand extremely useful. Now let me show you how all of this works. On either hand you have the Thumb; the forefinger or “pointer finger”; the middle finger; the ring finger and the little or “pinky” finger. Each has a special function as you pray.

We start with the Thumb. Why? Because it is the part of the hand that allows for so much functionality in everything that we use our hands for and tend to take for granted. Therefore, it logically serves to remind us that we need to acknowledge, praise, and humble ourselves when we come to God in prayer. It reminds us of the five parts of the “Lord’s Prayer” and sets the foundation for progressing in our personal daily prayers. Allowing us to proceed in an organized flow of our daily petitions to our Heavenly Father. From the Thumb we move to the forefinger or the “pointer finger”.

The forefinger or “pointer finger” is important in the flow of our daily prayer time because it reminds us to pray for those individuals who lead and guide us as well as for those whom we lead and guide. These individuals are not in our family, we will be praying for family a little later in the process. Rather these individuals are our bosses, our local, state and national leaders. Regardless of them being friend or foe, liked or not, advocate or adversary we are to pray for them each and every day. In truth this might well be the most difficult part of our daily prayer life. The simple truth of the matter is this; we are to sincerely pray for them regardless of our personal feelings. This aspect, or point, is clearly made in the Book of Romans, chapter 12, verse 17 through 21.

“Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody.
If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.
Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written:
 ”It is mine to avenge; I will repay,” says the Lord.
On the contrary:
 “If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink.
 In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.”
Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”

Because this often proves to be exceedingly difficult in practice, it is precisely why we must pray for those who lead and guide us first. To put it another way, “God has said it, that settles it, there is no need to debate it, simply and sincerely get it done.” This is one of those areas where being a soldier in the Army of God comes into sharp focus.

We have made it to the middle finger, we have made it halfway through our morning prayer. And now we are going to be praying for those individuals who have been the greatest influence in our lives, the special ones who have positively guided, nurtured, mentored, and encouraged us throughout our lives. Now you might be wondering why the middle finger is used for those who have had the greatest influence in our lives, why not the forefinger or “pointer finger”? This is a great question, and the answer is simple. This finger, the middle finger is the longest finger on the hand and therefore it serves to remind us to remember and be thankful for those who have been a true mentor, a true friend, a true confidant, the ones that we aspire to emulate in our lives.

Now we come to the ring finger, the fourth finger on the hand. This is an incredibly special and truly sensitive time in our daily prayer time. While we are praying on the fourth finger we are praying for our family and our friends alike. We are praying for those who are blood relatives, family by birth, we are praying for our in-laws, family by marriage, we are praying for our closest friends, family by deliberate choice. During this time, we are praying for those family members who are estranged from us, for those family members who are apart from us for various reasons. During this time, we are praying for restoration, guidance, continued blessing, grace and mercy. We are praying for God's protection of our "entire family". I believe in my heart that this part of our daily prayer time is a far greater challenge for men then for women. Let me briefly explain. As a "universal generality", women are taught from early childhood be forthcoming in their nurturing and their desire to opening nurture their family and friends. They are taught how to make a house a home, the culmination of this position is found in the Book of Proverbs, chapter 31, verse 10 through 31. As a "universal generality", men are initially taught how to nurture from their mother's until they are 4 or 5 years old and then are entrusted to their father's, so they learn how to provide for the family, to defend the family, how to protect the family, how to make the family safe. Men are taught how to face and endure hardship, how to overcome harsh opposition. Men are taught to keep their emotions in check in the vast majority of circumstances. Men are taught not to exhibit outward signs of weakness to the world.

It is now time to move to the fifth and final finger, the little or "pinky" finger. This is the smallest finger on the hand, and it serves to remind us to pray for ourselves last. We pray for our needs last, not out of a sense, a position, an attitude or spirit of false humility. We pray for our needs last based upon the assurance we have been given by Christ Jesus himself in The Gospel of Matthew, chapter 6 verse 8:

"Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need, before you ask."

(NIV version)

(Bolding, Colorization and Highlighting of text added.)

When we approach God the Father from this mind set, we have our best assurance that we are praying for what we truly need, we are praying from a position of being in God's will. During this time in our daily prayer, it is absolutely okay to spend time in silence anticipation in the presence of the Almighty. For there are times when we are not sure what to pray for or about. In truth these times often prove to be the most cherished time, why? Because we are spending time in the presence of God the Father, wrapped in the protective cover of His being and it during these times when we are given a moment of rest from our earthly sojourn, while continuing on the path which God has asked us to follow on His behalf.

As you can see praying on the hand is not at all difficult nor complicated, yes, it is methodical, but it affords a framework to remember where we are in our prayers. Now you might be wondering why we use the hand to pray upon, and this is another excellent question which also has a straightforward and simple answer. The hand itself serves to remind us of many things. Here are just a few to keep in mind. The hand reminds us first that we as Children of God, are truly in His care, the hand reminds us to be helpful to others when and where we are able. When the hand is turned palm upwards that we truly receive everything from God the Father, and when the palm is turned palm downwards that we are to let go of the things which we have turned over to God.

So, in conclusion when we pray on the hand we start with the Thumb, next we go to the "Pointer finger", from here we proceed to the middle finger, once we complete our daily prayer for these areas. we move first to our family and friends, and finally we pray for ourselves. The hand itself reminds us of the strength of righteous prayer. Quoting from the Amplified Bible in the Book of James, chapter 5 verse 16b:

"... The earnest (heartfelt, continued) prayer of a righteous man makes tremendous power available [dynamic in its working.]"

Praying on the hand can be done anywhere, at any time, and in the vast majority of circumstances. It is a subtle, non-offensive, gentle, way to pray without drawing unnecessary attention from the rest of the world.