



STATEMENT DP-257

PRACTICAL APOLOGETICS

F-A-C-T-S on Prayer

by Hank Hanegraaff

HOW IMPORTANT IS PRAYER IN SHARING THE GOSPEL? Absolutely vital! Engaging in cult apologetics without prayer is like entering the battlefield without a weapon. That is why the apostle Paul ends his great sermon on the armor of God by warning that the spiritual soldier must "with all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit" (Eph. 6:18). There is no magic formula for a dynamic prayer life. You must get back to the basics.

Not long ago I had an opportunity to play golf with U.S. Open champion Corey Pavin. Having loved the game since I was 14, I was looking for something in his golf swing that would set him apart from 99.9 percent of all golfers. But there was nothing unusual in his technique. I realized that Corey had a ferocious commitment to the basics.

There is an application here to what is happening today in the Christian church. Hordes of Christians are looking for divine encounters in all the wrong places. Some travel to Toronto in hopes the Holy Spirit has landed there. Others go to Detroit because they've heard that a pastor there is blessing water which triggers revival and miracles. Some make pilgrimage to Pensacola, Florida to the "outpouring" there. Many people falsely think that reality can be reduced to a personal experience of enlightenment, when all the while authentic spiritual experience is discovered in God's inerrant Word.

In subsequent issues, I will return to this theme of getting back to basics, but now let's turn to the foundational issue of prayer. If you want a real experience, then develop your relationship with your Creator.

No relationship can flourish without constant, heart-felt communication, and that includes our relationship with God. We must be in constant communication with our Redeemer through prayer. As F. B. Meyer remarks, "The great tragedy of life is not *unanswered* prayer but *unoffered* prayer."¹

Today there is much bad teaching regarding prayer. Some leaders in the Christian community even urge followers never to pray "Thy will be done." Frederick Price asserts, "If you add, 'If it be,' on the end of a petition prayer, it will not be answered."² In light of such falsehood, we need to grasp the facts. We can use the acronym *F-A-C-T-S* to remind ourselves of the basics of prayer.

FAITH

For prayer to be meaningful, it must be founded on biblical faith. True faith encapsulates *knowledge, agreement, and trust* in God alone. Ultimately it is the object of faith that renders faith effective — not faith in *faith* but faith in the *triune God*. The prayer of faith is rooted in God's Word. R. A. Torrey said, "*To pray the prayer of faith we must, first of all, study the Word of God...*As Paul puts it in Romans 10:17, 'Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God'" (emphasis in original).³

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ADORATION

Faith naturally leads to adoration that expresses our love and longing for God. Adoration in turn leads to praise and worship. The Scriptures overflow with descriptions of God's greatness. The Psalms, in particular, contain passionate prayers of worship, expressions of adoration to the King of Kings. "Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker" (Ps. 95:6).

CONFESSION

The Psalms are also replete with confessions, such as that of King David: "Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight" (Ps. 51:4). Confession means acknowledging that we stand guilty before God. There is no place for self-righteousness. We develop intimacy with the Lord through prayer when we confess our need for His pardon. The apostle John writes, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins" (1 John 1:9).

THANKSGIVING

Nothing is more basic to prayer than to "enter his gates with thanksgiving" (Ps. 100:4). Giving thanks is a function of faith, not feelings. It flows from the assurance that our heavenly Father knows and provides exactly what we need. Paul encourages us to "be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances" (1 Thess. 5:16-18).

SUPPLICATION

God desires His children to bring their requests with praise and thanksgiving. Scripture promises "that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us — whatever we ask — we know that we have what we asked of him" (1 John 5:14-15). Despite His provision, the purpose of prayer is not to pressure God into providing us with pleasures, but to conform us to His will.

As you internalize these F-A-C-T-S, remember that the *power* of prayer becomes a reality only through the *practice* of prayer.

NOTES

¹John Blanchard, *Gathered Gold: A Treasury of Quotations for Christians* (Durham, England: Evangelical Press, 1984), 231.

²Frederick K. C. Price, *What Every Believer Should Know about Prayer* (Los Angeles: Ever Increasing Faith Ministries, 1990), 4.

³R. A. Torrey, *The Power of Prayer* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), 123-24.