

5 Misconceptions About Prayer That Need to Be Corrected

There are many misconceptions about prayer that often hinder individuals from fully benefiting from this intimate act in which God desires us to take part. Too often, we view prayer as a reverent, eloquent monologue during which we use “thee’s” and “thou’s” to ask God to help us. We have forgotten the true essence and purpose of prayer.

Here are five misconceptions about prayer that I believe need to be corrected:

1) Prayer isn’t about changing God, but rather it’s about changing you. We shouldn’t come to God in prayer so He will know about our situation or to inform Him of what he needs to do. God is omnipresent and omniscient and already knows our needs.

Prayer is the process by which God gives us His perspective. It’s a time to transform our hearts and minds and enable us to pray according to His will. Our desire should not be that our will is done but God’s will is done on earth as it is in heaven.

2) Prayer isn’t about your needs. In prayer, we should first seek God’s will to know where we should put our faith. Many people approach prayer with uncertainty of whether their prayers will be answered. Before we can pray effectively, we must attach faith to our prayers, and we can’t have that unless we are sure we are praying for what God wants.

A starting place is asking God about the gray areas of life. We should ask God to show us His will. Once we have answers of what He wants us to do, we can attach faith and know and trust God will answer our prayers because, He has already shown us His will.

3) Prayer isn't all about you. Make sure our prayer is focused on other people. It's easy to get bogged down with our own petitions and requests, but God longs for us to put other people before ourselves. This is specifically lined out in Scripture that we should esteem others better than ourselves. What better way to do this than by putting others first in our prayers.

4) Prayer is not just talking to God, but rather talking with God. Listening is a critical part of prayer. It's important to meditate, be quiet and not have a one-sided conversation. Nothing is more discouraging than engaging with someone who dominates a conversation. This is also applicable in prayer. God wants to speak to us. We should be all ears and practice the art of being quiet and still before God. When we do this, we will be amazed at how many times during meditation that God will speak in a small, still voice rather than by a loud trumpet.

5) Prayer isn't just about the future. It's vital that we express gratitude to God for what's already been done. It's easy to simply focus on our needs, but we should set aside part of our prayer time to always tell God how grateful we are for listening to us and having already heard and responded to our prior needs. We need to have a grateful heart.

When we begin to understand these truths about prayer, we will be more effective in aligning our hearts and conversations with God's will, rather than being held back from having a deep, personal conversation with Christ. God created us as a people who love community, and He wants to have that same intimate relationship with us.

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