

OakGrove Church of Christ Newsletter - 2022.10.23

Sermon recordings

Scan the QR codes, type the QR code short URL, or visit oakgrovecofc.org/Recordings/.

Speaker-AM: Brad Bunyard

Title: Authority

Recording:

tinyurl.com/bunyardauthority



Speaker-PM: Steve Helterbrand

Title: Spiritual Wellbeing

Recording:

tinyurl.com/steveoct



“Be strong and
courageous. Do not
be afraid or terrified
because of them,
for the LORD your
God goes with you;
he will never leave
you nor forsake you.”

DEUTERONOMY 31:6

Unanswered Prayers 1/31/2009, By Lewis Willis

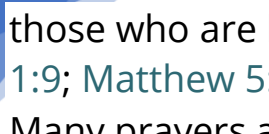
When I think of prayer, I think of it as the very essence of the Christian's relationship with God. It is our link of communication with him, as the New Testament is his link of communication with us. I, therefore, regard prayer as a sacred, individual right and privilege. Because of this view of mine, I have always been hesitant to say much about the Christian and his prayers. We must teach what the Bible teaches about prayer, leaving the application of that message to each Christian. I try to do that.

Jesus taught that men ought always to pray ([Luke 18:1](#)). Paul said that we should pray without ceasing ([I Thessalonians 5:17](#)). James taught us to pray for one another ([James 5:16](#)). In the application of these instructions, there are certain things that we must keep in mind. We must prepare our minds to pray by setting aside worldly cares and concerns. We address the prayer to God who is our Father. We are not praying that our will might be done, but that God's will be done ([I John 5:14](#)). We are to pray in faith that God will do as his word says he will do ([James 1:6-7](#)). Scriptural prayers are offered with humility, in the name of Christ, that is, by his authority and unto his glory ([John 14:13](#); [Colossians 3:17](#)).

When Paul wrote to Timothy ([I Timothy 2:1](#)), he told him that he should offer supplications, prayers, intercessions and giving of thanks for all men.

"Supplications" are our requests regarding our needs. "Prayers" are any discourse with God, which would include petitions, praise, and thanksgiving. "Intercessions" are our pleas to God on behalf of others. "Thanksgiving" obviously expresses our thanks for the multitude of blessings, both physical and spiritual, which we enjoy in this life. When we offer our prayers, we always want to remember to be thankful for the multitude of blessings God has bestowed upon us. Christians are saved by the grace of God, through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, and through compliance with the terms and conditions set forth in the New Testament. Someone was concerned enough about us to tell us of the love of God and show us the things that we need to do to be saved. Certainly, Christians are thankful for this blessing. But, we are also given great privileges, opportunities, and comforts that are physical in their nature and it would be an act of utter ingratitude if we were not thankful for these physical blessings as well.

Intercessions, our prayers for others, will include petitions unto God in behalf of many. We intercede for our brethren, our family, our enemies, our rulers, the sick,



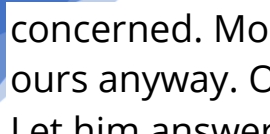
those who are lost and for elders, deacons and preachers (Philippians 1:9; Matthew 5:44; I Timothy 2:2; Romans 10:1; James 5:13; II Thessalonians 3:1-2). Many prayers are prayers of intercession. I believe in the power of prayer (James 5:16). I, therefore, would encourage and admonish all of God's people to be regular and fervent in prayer. For some reason, God appointed that we should tell him of our petitions for others, and express to him our gratitude. I could reason that, being God, he knows our petitions and our thanksgivings. But my "reasonings" do not constitute the rules governing prayer. Thus, we must simply do what he told us to do -- pray!

Something interesting happened the other day. I was listening to the radio and I heard a new song by a country singer. I have thought about a line or two in the song ever since. I doubt that it was his purpose to make it so, but it contained a powerful message. I was so impressed with it that I have planned this article for two weeks. The line said, "Some of God's greatest gifts are unanswered prayers." Think about that a moment.

Suppose a person prayed for wealth. If he got the wealth in answer to his prayer, would he be able to handle the changes it would work in his life? Have you noted some of the problems people have had who have won great lottery prizes? Some of them are in prison for writing "hot checks." A great temptation would come to the wealthy. Could you keep your faith intact in the face of these temptations? "Some of God's greatest gifts are unanswered prayers!"

Or, consider the prayers that we offer for people who are very old or sick. We often pray that they would enjoy a greater length of life. But, old age and sickness can be a great burden, not just for those who suffer these things, but for their loved ones as well. Suppose a family member is suffering from cancer. He grows weaker daily, and his pain is immense. Not wanting to give up our loved one, we pray that he might live awhile longer. If the prayer is answered, he has more days of weakness and pain. "Some of God's greatest gifts are unanswered prayers!"

There are times when we think we know best. Based on that assumption, we petition the throne of God for the things we desire. However, we are aware that we certainly do not always know what is best. That God does know is the essence of our trust in him. When we offer our prayers according to his will, we are not only asking as the Bible teaches us to ask, but we are also asking that his will override ours in the provision of what is best. This is the simple process of, in our minds, granting to God his inherent supremacy in deciding what is best for all

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concerned. Most of us, if honest, will readily confess that his will is better than ours anyway. Our prayers will always reflect that truth. Continue to pray to God. Let him answer your prayers. But, be prepared when he does not answer as you ask.



Five Smooth Stones Of parenting 10/21/22, By Sewell Hall

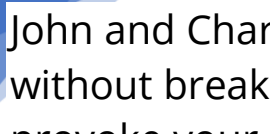
In Goliath, David faced what seemed an indomitable foe. David's goal was not so much to kill the giant as to protect the children and honor God. He took five smooth stones from the brook to achieve his purpose. In the pervasive humanism of our society, parents face what appears to be an equally unconquerable giant who is determined to destroy their children. They have five stones with which to protect them.

Purpose

"A child left to himself brings shame to his mother" (Proverbs 29:15). Consequently, Wisdom says, "Train up a child in the way he should go..." (Proverbs 22:6). This requires first determining "the way he should go," then pointing the child in that direction. For Christians, one direction supersedes all others: eternal life in heaven via Christlikeness on earth. Scores of agencies with different goals challenge us for control of our children. My father used to say, "I will not let the schools take my children away from me." Today there are many additional threats: TV, internet, video games, iPods, scouts, sports, neighbors, etc. These must be constantly monitored and controlled. Parents of good children are often told, "You are just lucky." No, good children are not the product of luck, but of purpose — relentlessly, sacrificially, and pro-actively pursued.

Training

"Bring them up in the training...of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4). Training a plant requires knowing where you want it to go and then patiently bending it, pruning it, and perhaps even tying it. Training an animal involves knowing what you want it to do, using force at first, then patiently guiding, correcting, and finally rewarding and punishing. In both instances, training means establishing authority and maintaining control. Training children begins with example and sometimes physical force, then guidance, correction, and eventually reward and punishment when the child understands what is expected. Above all, it means establishing the parents' authority and letting the child know who is in control. This must begin very early. Once willful rebellion is tolerated, a wrong direction is established and the necessary "bending, pruning, and tying" becomes all the more difficult. The mother of



John and Charles Wesley described good discipline as “shaping the will without breaking the spirit.” This agrees with the Spirit’s counsel: “Do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up...” (Ephesians 6:4).

Instruction

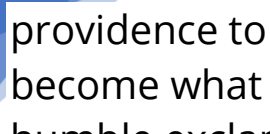
"Bring them up in the...admonition (instruction – NASB) of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4). Unlike plants and animals children can be admonished and instructed. This, also, parents must do. The very intellect that enables children to be instructed also enables them to exercise their free will as they grow older. Parental control constantly diminishes, and unless God’s control is established, their lives will be out of control. God’s control is established by teaching them the scriptures. Long after Timothy was beyond the control of his mother and grandmother, their faith dwelt in him (II Timothy 1:5). How was this accomplished? Paul reminded Timothy, “From childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith that is in Christ Jesus” (II Timothy 3:15). Faith in older children is the result of early instruction in righteousness. Parents should take advantage of the classes offered by the church, but this is not enough — they must teach their children personally. A mother once told me of overhearing her husband saying to their young infant in the crib, “Let me tell you about Jesus.” Not surprisingly, that young infant is now a godly young teenager.

Affection

Training and instruction must be administered with love—a love that “suffers long and is kind,” that “does not behave rudely,” and above all, “does not seek its own” (I Corinthians 13:4-5). Children will forgive many mistakes if they can always be sure of their parents’ love. “Love will cover a multitude of sins” (I Peter 4:8). Affection without firmness is disastrous but equally disastrous is firmness without affection.

Prayer

David did not attribute his defeat of Goliath to the stone, to his sling, or to his skill. “The battle,” he said, “is the Lord’s” (I Samuel 17:47). So it is with the training of our children. God is concerned with the outcome and we are servants whom He has entrusted with our little ones. We must pray daily for the wisdom that He has promised to supply (James 1:5) and for His

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providence to overrule our inevitable mistakes. And when our children have become what we hoped for, we have no ground for boasting, only for the humble exclamation, "to God be the glory!"

David succeeded, using only one stone; parents will need all five.