

# A Guide to Prayer

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# A Guide to Prayer

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*Yea, he that...prayeth continually without ceasing: unto such is given to know the mysteries of God; yea, unto such it shall be given to reveal things which never have been revealed.*

*Alma 14:103*

Throughout different faiths, cultures, and backgrounds, it can be said that people generally love mystery and intrigue. Unfortunately, this can result in mankind looking beyond the mark. For example, remember the old question, “Which weighs more, a pound of feathers or a pound of gold.” Perhaps for many, the first impulse was to reply with a pound of gold because gold weighs more than a feather. However, this is a classic example of how we can occasionally overthink things, for a pound of feathers and a pound of gold both weigh the same, namely a pound. Indeed, we occasionally do the same with God and forget that He speaks to mankind in plain and precious ways, “For the Lord God giveth light unto the understanding: for he speaketh unto men according to their language, unto their understanding.”<sup>1</sup>

The 1828 Webster’s Dictionary defines the word mystery as “a profound secret; something wholly unknown or something kept cautiously *concealed*, and therefore exciting curiosity or wonder.” Interestingly, we read in the twenty-fifth chapter of Proverbs, “It is the glory of God to *conceal* a thing; but the honour of kings is to *search out* a matter.”<sup>2</sup> In other words, as we read in the sixteenth chapter of Romans, the third chapter of Ephesians, and the first chapter of Colossians, there is light and truth which God has hid from the foundation of the world. Nonetheless, it is important to understand that it is the Lord’s desire for mankind to obtain this knowledge. Moreover, the mysteries of God are not a complex system of equations and theories, but are truths that are so plain that we often look beyond them. Please read the following Scriptures from Colossians 1:26-27, Romans 16:25-26, and Genesis 5:44-45:

**1:26** Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now in made manifest to his saints; **1:27** To whom God **would make known** what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; **which is** Christ in you, the hope of glory;

**16:25** Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to the gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, **16:26** But **now is made manifest**, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the **obedience of faith**

**5:44** And thus the gospel began to be preached **from the beginning**, being declared by holy angels, sent forth from the presence of God; and by his own voice, and by the gift of the Holy

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<sup>1</sup> 2 Nephi 13:5

<sup>2</sup> Proverbs 25:2

Ghost. **5:45** And thus all things were confirmed unto Adam by an holy ordinance; and the gospel preached; and a decree sent forth that it should be in the world until the end thereof; and thus it was. Amen.

The Scriptures above all have one common theme, namely that it is God's desire for mankind to acquire knowledge, which is why He has revealed His mysteries, and in particular that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, from the foundation of the world. Apostle Arthur Oakman once said, "Only God can tell you who He is, only God can tell you what He will do." In Alma, chapter nine, we read, "But God did call on men, in the name of his Son, (this being the plan of redemption which was laid,) saying: If ye will repent, and harden not your hearts, then will I have mercy upon you, through mine only begotten Son. Therefore, whosoever repenteth, and hardeneth not his heart, he shall have claim on mercy through mine only begotten Son, unto a remission of his sins; and these shall enter into my rest."<sup>3</sup>

However, the Lord told Isaiah, "I am found of them who *seek after me*, I give unto all them that ask of me; I am not found of them that *sought me not*, or that *inquireth not after me*." In addition, we read from the Book of Mormon, Wherefore, I said unto you, Feast upon the words of Christ; for behold the words of Christ will tell you all things what ye should do. Wherefore, now aft I have spoken these words, if ye can not understand them, it will be because *ye ask not, neither do ye knock*.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, it is both important that we search diligently to know the riches and glories of the mysteries of God, which as Paul wrote, "is [Jesus] Christ in you," and to understand that the Son of God is accessible to all of us if we seek Him with all our heart.

Thus, God has provided a means by which we can communicate with Him in order that we might truly come to know His Son, Jesus Christ, who is the way, the truth, and the life, and specifically, that means is the instrument of prayer. In particular, prayer is perhaps one of the greatest and most powerful tools that God has given to mankind. Unfortunately, many people, whether they believe or do not believe in God, struggle with the instrument of prayer. Nor do many of us understand why we should pray, how to pray, and what we should pray for. This chapter will attempt to answer these questions through the Scriptures.

## Why I Should Pray

It is important when studying a spiritual topic, such as prayer, to first start at the beginning. In doing so, we discover that God first set the precedence for prayer from the foundation of the earth, and that the reason why we should pray is simply that God, the creator of both heaven and earth, commanded it.

The third chapter of Genesis provides the account of Adam and Eve's transgression in the Garden of Eden, which we read caused them both to be cast out of the Garden. Shortly after, Adam and Eve began to call upon God in the name of the Lord. In response, God spake and gave them commandments that they were to worship Him and to offer the firstlings of their flocks as a representation of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. In Genesis, chapter four, we read that Adam was obedient to the Lord, "And after many

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<sup>3</sup> Alma 9:54-55

<sup>4</sup> 2 Nephi 14:4-5

days, an angel appeared unto Adam, saying...thou shalt do all that thou doest, in the name of the Son. And thou shalt repent, *and call upon God, in the name of the Son for evermore*.<sup>5</sup>

In other words, Adam was commanded to pray to God *in the name of the Son* without end, and thus the commandment of prayer was instituted. Moreover, in the fifth chapter of Genesis, we read, “And Adam ceased not to call upon God; and Eve also his wife.”<sup>6</sup> We would ask the reader, if Adam had not used the instrument of prayer, how would Adam and Eve have ever known the commandments of God. and how would have they known of the joy of their redemption or the knowledge of “eternal life which God giveth unto all the obedient?”<sup>7</sup> It was only through obedience and prayer that Adam and Eve were able to know God and receive the commandments which led them to eternal life, and as Jesus said to the disciples, “What I say unto one, I say unto all men.”<sup>8</sup>

Nevertheless, not only has God given us the commandment to pray, but He has provided us the example we are to follow in His Son, for “Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should *follow his steps*; Who did no sin...Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed.”<sup>9</sup> In addition, the prophet Nephi wrote in the Book of Mormon, “That unless a man shall endure to the end, in following the example of the Son of the living God, he can not be saved.”<sup>10</sup>

Consequently, Jesus Christ has given us many examples of prayer throughout the Scriptures, including the Lord’s Prayer [Matthew 6:9-15 and Luke 11:1-4, the prayer at the close of the Last Supper [John 17], and the prayer in the garden at Gethsemane [Matthew 26:33-39, Luke 22:39-44, and Mark 14:36-40]. Nonetheless, we wish to direct the reader to the following passage from the Book of Mormon, in 3 Nephi 8:46-49, and read the teachings of Jesus in the Americas:

**8:46** Therefore blessed are ye if ye shall keep my commandments, which the Father hath commanded me that I should give unto you. **8:47** Verily, verily, I say unto you, **Ye must watch and pray always**, lest ye be tempted by the devil, and ye are led away captive by him. **8:48** And as I have prayed among you, even so **shall ye pray in my church**, among my people who do repent and are baptized in my name. **8:49** Behold I am the light; **I have set an example for you**.

Thus, we learn that God has commanded all mankind to pray and that Jesus has set the example for us, and this is for our benefit. Through prayer, we are able to know the Father and the Son as Adam did, and we are able to receive strength that we might not fall into temptations and be led astray. Prayer can lift us up, bring us comfort and peace through blessings and the power of the Holy Spirit, and allows us an avenue to give praise and thanksgiving to our Heavenly Father. Moreover, because of Christ we have an advocate with God, meaning that we can pray and repent so that we too might receive knowledge and eternal life. For “all men, everywhere, must repent, or the can in no wise inherit the

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<sup>5</sup> Genesis 4:6 and 8

<sup>6</sup> Genesis 5:3

<sup>7</sup> Genesis 4:11

<sup>8</sup> Mark 13:52

<sup>9</sup> 1 Peter 2:21-22 and 24

<sup>10</sup> 2 Nephi 13:21

kingdom of God. For no unclean thing can dwell there, or dwell in his presence.<sup>11</sup> [For more information, read **Chapter Two**]

### Why Should We Pray

Reference	Scripture
Psalms 34:17-19	The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles. The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit. Many are the afflictions of the righteous; but the Lord delivereth him out of them all.
Philippians 4:6-7	Be afflicted for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.
Alma 14:103	Yea, he that repenteth and exerciseth faith, and bringeth forth good works, and prayeth continually without ceasing: unto such is <b>given to know the mysteries of God</b> ; yea, unto such it shall be given to reveal things which never have been revealed.
DC 3:1e	but be diligent unto the end; pray always that you may come off <b>conqueror</b> ; yea, that you <b><i>may conquer Satan</i></b> , and that you may escape the hands of the servants of Satan, that do uphold his work.
DC 18:4a-c; 6b	And again, I command thee that thou shalt pray vocally as well as in thy heart; yea, before the world as well as in secret; in public as well as in private. And thou shalt declare glad tidings; yea, publish it upon the mountains, and upon every high place, and among every people that thou shalt be permitted to see. And thou shalt do it with all humility, trusting in me...Pray always and <b><i>I will pour out my Spirit upon you</i></b> , and great shall be your blessing; yea, even more than if you should obtain treasures of earth and corruptibleness to the extent thereof.

### How to Pray

Equally important as why should we pray, is the question of how to pray. Unfortunately, it appears that many people do not know how to pray, or if they do, there are some that do not know why we pray in that manner. Again, rather than give opinions, let us look to both God and Jesus Christ for the answer.

From the previously read Scriptures in the fourth chapter of Genesis and the eighth chapter of third Nephi, the reader will have noticed that we have been commanded in both passages to pray in the name of Jesus Christ. However, how do we do this? For an example, in the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, also known as the Restoration, prayers are either closed with the phrase, “In the name of Jesus Christ I pray,” or something to the effect. The Restoration Church members pray in this manner because the Scriptures inform us that Jesus is the only Mediator between God and man, and because the Master has said that we should do all things in His name. Please read from 1 Timothy 2:1-6 and 3 Nephi 12:18-19:

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<sup>11</sup> Genesis 6:59-60

**2:1** I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving thanks, be made for all men; **2:2** For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceful life in all godliness and honesty. **2:3** For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior; **2:4** Who is willing to have **all men to be saved**, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth which is in Christ Jesus, who is the Only Begotten Son of God, and ordained to be a Mediator between God and man; who is one God, and hath power over all men. **2:5** For there is one God, and **one mediator** between God and men, **the man Christ Jesus**; **2:6** Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.

**12:18** Have they not read the scriptures, which say, Ye must take upon you the name of Christ, which is my name? for by this name shall ye be called at the last day; and whoso taketh upon him my name, and endureth to the end, the same shall be saved at the last day; **12:19** Therefore, whatsoever ye shall do, ye shall do it in my name; therefore ye shall call the church in my name; and **ye shall call upon the Father in my name**, that he will bless the church for my sake; and how be it my church, save it be called in my name?

According to Webster, a mediator is “one that interposes between parties at variance for the purpose of reconciling them,” and as Paul wrote, there is only one mediator between God and men, who is Jesus Christ. Therefore, it is important that we always pray to God the Father through the Son, for God “hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ.”<sup>12</sup>

### Form and Elements of Prayer

The reader has learned that we are commanded to pray in Jesus’ name, but then what? Are there further commandments on how to pray? Is there method or form for how we are supposed to pray? Interestingly, the disciples asked Jesus the very same question in the eleventh chapter of Luke. “And it came to pass, as Jesus was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, *teach us to pray*.<sup>13</sup>” This might seem like a strange question for the disciples to ask, but it is important to understand that at this time, Jewish prayers were only written and read, thus they did not know how to pray from their heart as lead by the Holy Ghost. Read Jesus’ response from Matthew 6:5-16:

**6:5** And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites; for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be **seen of men**; for, verily, I say unto you, they have their reward. **6:6** But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut the door, pray to thy Father who is in secret; and thy Father who seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. **6:7** But when ye pray, use **not vain repetitions**, as the hypocrites do; for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. **6:8** Therefore be ye not like unto them; for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him. **6:9** Therefore **after this manner shall ye pray**, saying,

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<sup>12</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:18

<sup>13</sup> Luke 11:1

**6:10** Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. **6:11** Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is done in heaven. **6:12** Give us this day, our daily bread. **6:13** And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. **6:14** And suffer us not to be led into temptation, but deliver us from evil. **6:15** For thine is the kingdom and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen. **6:16** For if ye forgive men their trespasses, who trespass against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive you your trespasses.

In other words, when we pray, it is important that we do not pray to be heard by men, but instead, that we pour out our heart to God in our closets and secret places. In so doing, Christ teaches us to develop our own personal relationship with Him. Moreover, the Master gave a similar teaching on this subject in Luke, chapter eighteen, with the parable of the Pharisee and the publican. In the parable, the Pharisee prayed stood proudly before God, saying, “God, I thank thee that I am not as other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers; or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week; I give tithes of all that I possess.” Conversely, the publican stood afar off and “would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God, be merciful to me a sinner.” Jesus then concluded the parable by saying, “I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other; for every one who exalteth himself, shall be abased; and he who humbleth himself, shall be exalted.”<sup>14</sup>

Further, Jesus said that we are not to use vain repetitions or be long winded, but rather to pray with a sincere heart. A long and elegantly worded prayer can be nice to hear, but without true intent of heart, it does not have meaning with the Heavenly Father. The intent of our heart is absolutely crucial, please read from Moroni 7:5-7:

**7:5** For behold, God hath said, A man being evil, can not do that which is good; for if he offereth a gift, or prayeth unto God, except he shall do it with real intent, it profiteth him nothing. **7:6** For behold, it is not counted unto him for righteousness. **7:7** For behold, if a man being evil, giveth a gift, **he doeth it grudgingly**; wherefore it is counted unto him the same as if he had retained the gift;

In the Lord’s Prayer, we can find certain elements that we might incorporate into our own prayers as Jesus once again gave us a template to follow. In particular, the reader will notice that He did not speak for a long period of time, but kept His prayer simple and plain. Note also that before He did anything else, Jesus first gave honor to God, followed by a prayer for the Kingdom of God. In so doing, Christ showed the significance in praying in this manner. It is very important that we always give glory and thanks to God in whatsoever we receive, and seek first to build the Kingdom of God before praying for temporal blessings. [For more information on the Kingdom of God, see **Chapter Eight**]. The elements of the Lord’s Prayer were as follows:

- Offer of praise to God
- Pray for the Kingdom of God
- Pray for daily sustenance

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<sup>14</sup> Luke 18:9-14



- Pray for forgiveness
- Pray to not enter into temptation, but to be delivered from evil
- Close with praise to God

It is important to understand, that though we do have commandments to pray to God in the name of Jesus Christ, to pray humbly, to pray with real intent, etc., there are no strict set of guidelines on how a prayer must be given. Instead, each individual generally develops their own style of prayer as they grow in their prayer life, and as with most things, it simply requires practice.

## What to Pray For

In the Lord's Prayer, Jesus demonstrated the importance for all mankind to pray for both temporal and spiritual things, such as our daily bread, forgiveness, and to not be led into temptation. This begs the question, are there certain things to pray for? Once more, let us look first to the example that Jesus Christ set by reading Luke 21:34-36:

**21:34** Let my disciples therefore take heed to themselves, lest at any time their hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and that day come upon them unawares. **21:35** For as a snare it **shall come on all** them who dwell on the face of the whole earth. **21:36** And what I say unto one, I say unto all, Watch ye therefore, and pray always, and keep my commandments, that ye **may be counted worthy to escape** all these things which shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man when he shall come clothed in the glory of his Father.

As we read in Genesis, chapter six, no unclean thing can enter into the presence of God. Thus, in order for us to receive the gift of eternal life, we must be cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ, which requires us to keep His commandments. However, we are told in the Scriptures that everyone will face temptations in life and that "there is a possibility that man may fall from grace and depart from the living God. Therefore let the church take heed and pray always, lest they fall into temptations; yea, and even let those who are sanctified, take heed also.<sup>15</sup>" Wherefore, it is important for us to pray for those spiritual blessings, such as the strength to overcome temptations. Let us again turn to the Book of Mormon and read 3 Nephi 8:50-52:

**8:50** And it came to pass that when Jesus had spoken these words unto his disciples, he turned again unto the multitude, and said unto them, Behold, verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye must watch and **pray always, lest ye enter into temptation;** **8:51** For Satan desireth to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; therefore ye must always pray unto the Father in my name; and whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, **which is right**, believing that ye shall receive, behold it shall be given unto you. **8:52** Pray in your families unto the Father, always in my name, that your wives and your children may be blessed.

In the seventh chapter of Genesis, the prophet Enoch was given to witness that Satan had covered the whole face of the earth with darkness. Sadly, as we look around us today, we see that the world is filled

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<sup>15</sup> DC 17:6d-e

with temptations. It is very important for us to follow Christ's example, and pray always that we might not enter into temptations. Moreover, from the passage above, we read that we should also pray for our families and loved ones that they may be blessed as well.

The apostles also did this, and they are recorded frequently in the New Testament as praying for the members of the Church. Paul wrote in the second epistle to the Thessalonians, "Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power; That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>16</sup>" However, we are not only commanded to pray for those whom we love, but also for those individuals who are our enemies. Please read from Matthew 5:46-50:

**5:46** But I say unto you, love your enemies; bless them that curse you; do good to them that hate you; and **pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you;** **5:47** That ye may be the children of your Father who is in heaven; for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. **5:48** For if ye love only them which love you, what reward have you? Do not even the publicans the same? **5:49** And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? Do not even the publicans the same? **5:50** Ye are therefore commanded to be perfect, **even as your Father** who is in heaven is perfect.

Deliverance from temptations and love for our enemies are not the only spiritual gifts we should pray for, but also for knowledge and spiritual discernment. Paul taught in first Corinthians, chapter two, that no man can know the things of God unless he has the Holy Spirit, which teaches us of spiritual things. "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.<sup>17</sup>" If we wish to receive knowledge and wisdom of spiritual things and learn of God, then we must pray for them. Read the following from 2 Nephi 14:4-8:

**14:4** Wherefore, I said unto you, Feast upon the words of Christ; for behold the words of Christ will tell you all things what ye should do. **14:5** Wherefore, now after I have spoken these words, if ye can not understand them, **it will be because ye ask not, neither do ye knock;** wherefore, ye are not brought into the light, but must perish in the dark. **14:6** For behold, again I say unto you, that if ye will enter in by the way and receive the Holy Ghost, it will shew unto you all things what ye should do. **14:7** Behold, this is the doctrine of Christ; and there will be no more doctrine given, until after he shall manifest himself unto you in the flesh. **14:8** And when he shall manifest himself unto you in the flesh, the things which he shall say unto you, shall ye observe to do.

As Jesus Christ demonstrated in the Lord's Prayer, it is not only important to pray for spiritual things, but we are called to pray over the temporal things as well, even something as simple as finding our car keys should be prayed about. Read the following from Alma 16:218-222:

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<sup>16</sup> 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12

<sup>17</sup> 1 Corinthians 2:14

**16:218** Therefore may God grant unto you, my brethren, that ye may begin to exercise your faith unto repentance, that ye begin to call upon his holy name, that he would have mercy upon you; yea, cry unto him for mercy; for he is mighty to save; **16:219** Yea, humble yourselves, and continue in prayer unto him; cry unto him when ye are in your fields; yea, **over all your flocks**; cry unto him in your houses, yea, **over all your household**, both morning, mid- day, and evening; yea, cry unto him against the power of your enemies; yea, cry unto him against the devil, who is an enemy to all righteousness. **16:220** Cry unto him **over the crops of your fields**, that ye may prosper in them: cry over the flocks of your fields, that they may increase. **16:221** But this is not all: ye must pour out your souls in your closets, and your secret places, and in your wilderness; **16:222** Yea, and when you do not cry unto the Lord, **let your hearts be full, drawn out in prayer unto him continually** for your welfare, and also for the welfare of those who are around you.

In short, it is imperative that we pour out our hearts to God over spiritual and temporal blessings, that we might be delivered from temptations, that our knowledge might increase, and that we might experience those temporal blessings that increase our faith. We hope that through prayer, we might receive the knowledge and strength to follow all of God's commandments without complaint. In so doing, we will receive Jesus Christ into our hearts and have the fruits of the spirit, which are love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance.

### What to Pray For

Reference	Scripture
<b>To Praise the Lord</b>	
<b>Psalms 113:1-6</b>	Praise ye the Lord. Praise, O ye servants of the Lord, praise the name of the Lord. Blessed be the name of the Lord from this time forth and forevermore. From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same the Lord's name is to be praised. The Lord is high above all nations, and his glory above the heavens. Who is like unto the Lord our God, who dwelleth on high, Who humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven, and in the earth!
<b>For Thanks Over a Meal</b>	
Acts 27:35-36 [1 Tim 4:4-5]	And when he had thus spoken, he took bread, and gave thanks to God in the presence of them all; and when he had broken it, he began to eat. Then were they all of good cheer, and they also took some meat.
<b>For Knowledge</b>	
James 1:5-7	If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering; for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord.
<b>For Those that Know Not God</b>	
Alma 4:6	Nevertheless the children of God were commanded that they should gather themselves together oft, and join in fasting and mighty prayer, in behalf of the welfare of the souls of those who knew not God.
<b>To Keep Ourselves in the Love of God</b>	
Jude 1:20-21	But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

### For the Peace of God

Philippians 4:6-7 Be afflicted for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

### To Escape Temptation

1 Corinthians 10:12-13 Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

### For a Testimony of Jesus Christ

Alma 12:4-5 For they were men of a sound understanding, and they had searched the scriptures diligently, that they might know the word of God. But this is not all: they had given themselves to much **prayer, and fasting**, therefore they had the ***spirit of prophecy***, and the spirit of revelation, and when they taught, they taught with power and authority, even as with the power and authority of God.

### For a Testimony of the Book of Mormon

Moroni 10:3-7 Behold, I would exhort you that when ye shall read these things, if it be wisdom in God that ye should read them, that ye would remember how merciful the Lord hath been unto the children of men, from the creation of Adam, even down until the time that ye shall receive these things, and ponder it in your hearts. And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; And if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, ***he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost***; and by the power of the Holy Ghost, ye may know the truth of all things. And whatsoever thing is good, is just and true; wherefore, nothing that is good denieth the Christ, but acknowledgeth that he is. And ye may know that he is, by the power of the Holy Ghost; wherefore I would exhort you, that ye deny not the power of God; for he worketh by power, according to the faith of the children of men, the same to-day and to-morrow, and for ever.

## When to Pray

In Luke, chapter twenty-one, Jesus commanded the disciples to watch and pray, but is there a particular time in which we should pray? The simple answer is yes, as Paul wrote to the Thessalonians, “Pray without ceasing.”<sup>18</sup> In other words, as we read in Alma, chapter sixteen, we should pray in the morning, mid-day, and evening, “But this is not all: ye must pour out your souls in your closets, and your secret places, and in your wilderness; Yea, and when you do not cry unto the Lord, let your hearts be full, drawn out in prayer unto him continually for your welfare, and also for the welfare of those who are around you.” In fact, there is never a time that we should not pray. Please read the testimony of the prophet Zenos, who prayed to God in all places and at all times, found in Alma 16:177-184:

**16:177** Do ye remember to have read what Zenos, the prophet of old, has said concerning prayer or worship? **16:178** For he said, Thou art merciful O God, for thou hast heard my prayer,

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<sup>18</sup> 1 Thessalonians 5:17

**even when I was in the wilderness:** yea, thou wast merciful when I prayed concerning those who were mine enemies, and thou didst turn them to me: **16:179** Yea, O God, and thou wast merciful unto me when I did cry unto thee **in my field**; when I did cry unto thee in my prayer, and thou didst hear me. **16:180** And again, O God, when I did turn to **my house** thou didst hear me in my prayer.

**16:181** And when I did turn unto **my closet**, O Lord, and prayed unto thee, thou didst hear me; yea, thou art merciful unto thy children when they cry unto thee to be heard of thee, and not of men, and thou wilt hear them; **16:182** Yea, O God, thou hast been merciful unto me and heard my cries in the **midst of thy congregations**; yea, and thou hast also heard me when I have been cast out, and have been despised by mine enemies; **16:183** Yea, thou didst hear my cries, and wast angry with mine enemies, and thou didst visit them in thine anger, with speedy destruction; and thou didst hear me because of mine afflictions and my sincerity; **16:184** And it is because of thy Son that thou hast been thus merciful unto me; therefore I will cry unto thee in **all mine afflictions**; **for in thee is my joy**; for thou hast turned thy judgments away from me, because of thy Son.

God has commanded us to pray without ceasing because He knows that prayer is of great worth for our souls, for by prayer are weak things made strong, by prayer the mysteries of God are unfolded, and by prayer we can cast all our cares upon God “for he careth for you.”<sup>19</sup> In addition, it is through the avenue of prayer that we allow God to demonstrate His love and His desire to work in our lives, while also providing us the avenue to escape the trials and tribulations of life. It is often stated that God will never give us more than we can bear. However, this promise is based on the condition of prayer. Please read the following Scripture from Alma 10:28-29:

**10:28** But that ye would humble yourselves before the Lord, and call on his holy name, and watch and pray continually **that ye may not** be tempted above that which ye can bear, and thus be led by the Holy Spirit, becoming humble, meek, submissive, patient, full of love and all long suffering; having faith on the Lord; **10:29** Having a hope that ye shall receive eternal life; having the love of God always in your hearts, that ye may be lifted up at the last day, and enter into his rest.

At this moment the reader might be asking, “If I am feeling unworthy because I know that I have sinned, or I just feel like I am not in a good spot, should I pray at all? Would it not be better to wait and pray later?” This question is one that has caused many people to stumble, especially during times when we are feeling low, depressed, and miserable. In our minds and hearts, we feel so very far away from God and that we are so unworthy that it is impossible to pray to our Heavenly Father. However, the truth is that none of us are worthy because we are all indebted to Jesus Christ. Instead, it is by Jesus Christ that we are made worthy. It is important to remember that Jesus did not come to condemn the world but to save it. “And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him, and with his disciples. And when the Pharisees saw them, they said unto

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<sup>19</sup> 1 Peter 5:7

his disciples, Why eateth your master with publicans, and sinners? But when Jesus heard them, he said unto them. They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. Go ye and learn what this meaneth; I will have mercy and not sacrifice, for I am not come to call the righteous, but the sinners to repentance.” Please read the following Scripture passage from 2 Nephi 14:9-12:

**14:9...** I am left to mourn because of the unbelief, and the wickedness, and the ignorance, and the stiffneckedness of men: for they will not search knowledge, nor understand great knowledge, when it is given unto them in plainness, even as plain as word can be. **14:10** And now, my beloved brethren, I perceive that ye ponder still in your hearts; and it grieveth me that I must speak concerning this thing. **14:11** For if ye would hearken unto the spirit which teacheth a man to pray, ye would know that **ye must pray**: for the **evil spirit teacheth not a man to pray**, but teacheth him that he must not pray. **14:12** But behold I say unto you, that ye must pray always, and not faint: that ye must not perform anything unto the Lord, save in the first place ye shall pray unto the Father in the name of Christ, that he will consecrate thy performance unto thee, that thy performance may be for the welfare of thy soul.

What God cares for the most is the wellbeing of our soul. It is not a sin to be tempted, we are all tempted, but remember always that God is love and it is His desire for all of us to receive eternal life. We hope that the reader will never feel like they should not pray, but if they do, we ask the reader to remember that God is desirous for the welfare of your soul. In situations when we feel like we cannot pray are when we need to pray the most. The following is from the Doctrine and Covenants Section 16:

**16:3c** Remember the **worth of souls is great in the sight of God**; for, behold, the Lord your Redeemer suffered death in the flesh; wherefore he suffered the pain of all men, that all men might repent and come unto him. **16:3d** And he hath risen again from the dead, that he might bring all men unto him on conditions of repentance. **16:3e** And **how great is his joy in the soul that repenteth**. Wherefore you are called to cry repentance unto this people.

As we have read throughout this chapter and in various Scripture passages, we are commanded to watch and pray continually. We have been called to pray in the morning, mid-day, and evening. We have been called to pray in our fields, our houses, our closets, and our secret places, and for our hearts to always be drawn out in continual prayer unto the Lord.

## Conclusion

We hope that this chapter on prayer has been helpful for the reader. We have studied and learned that the commandment of prayer was instituted from the beginning of the world to be a powerful instrument and tool for all mankind, and that Jesus Christ set for us the example to follow. Nonetheless, it is critical to remember that God desires for us to choose Him, not because we are commanded to, but because we love Him. [Read more in **Chapter Twenty-one**]

Further, we have learned that we must always pray in the name of Jesus Christ with humility and a sincere heart in order for us to praise and glorify God, the Father. Moreover, we have discussed many

subjects that we should pray for. First, we should pray for the spiritual blessings, such as the deliverance from temptations and spiritual knowledge. Next, we should pray for the temporal blessings, and let us not forget to also pray for the welfare of our loved ones, fellow church members, and even our enemies.

Finally, the reader has learned that everyone is unworthy of the gift of Jesus Christ and thus, there is never a time when we should not pray, no matter how undeserving we feel. God desires for each us to choose Him and to repent so that we might have eternal life. For this purpose, we have been given the instrument of prayer. The only one who wishes for us not to pray is Satan, because it gives him more power and opportunity to lead us astray from the glory of God. Remember, if we ever feel like not praying, that is when we need to pray the hardest.

In conclusion, we would like to finish this chapter with three final passages of Scripture from Mark 9:45, James 1:5-7, and James 4:3:

**9:45** Seek unto my Father, and it shall be done in that very moment what ye shall ask, if ye ask in faith, believing that ye shall receive.

**1:5** If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. **1:6** But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering; for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. **1:7** For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord.

**4:3** Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.

Thank you, and God bless.