

## A BIBLICAL STUDY ON PRAISE

### LESSON FOURTEEN: PRAISE IN PRAYER

by Sandy Harber

**"After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name." Matthew 6:9**

Praise is an essential part of prayer. Psalm 100 tells us that we get through His gates with thanksgiving and enter His courts with praise. These twin acts of worship - giving thanks and praise - usher us into God's presence where we can unburden our hearts and lay before Him all of our worries, desires, doubts, and challenges. Jesus gave His disciples a model prayer - a pattern to follow. This prayer begins with the focus on God (Mt. 6:9-10) and ends with the focus on Man in the form of our requests and confessions (Mt. 6:11-13).

Prayer begins when we reach out to heaven and establish a connection with our Father. The normal Greek word for father ("pater") is used in the model prayer in Matthew 6. But many commentators have pointed out that Jesus Himself used the Aramaic "Abba" when He prayed (Mk. 14:36). "Abba" indicates a more intimate relationship than "pater" and is often translated into English as "daddy." However, there is more to Abba than this. The word is about intimacy and authority. Both elements must be present in its usage. "Abba" indicates a willingness to obey. In addressing his father as Abba the son declares his submission. Thus, Abba translates into "Daddy, I will obey you." In the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus indicated His submission to His Father's will by addressing Him as both "Abba" and "pater" (Mk. 14:36). We have the privilege of calling Almighty God "Father" because we have been adopted into His family through the sacrifice of Jesus. But it is through our obedience that we earn the right to call Him "daddy" (Rom. 8:15; Eph. 1:5).

The model prayer that Jesus gave His disciples began with praise and reverence for God: "Hallowed be thy name" (Mt. 6:9). "Hallowed" means "holy." There are many names of God found in Scripture. Each one reveals some aspect of His nature. All of them are holy, that is, special, unique, set apart from all other names. We can use these names and/or the characteristics they describe in our praise. For example, He is Jehovah-Jireh, the Lord, our Provider in Genesis 22:13-14. Surely all of us can cite examples of the Lord's provision. You can praise Him for specific items that He provided or specific circumstances in which He met your need. You can even tie your praise for His provision in the past to a new request you are making in the present. And, be sure to thank Him for answering your request in His way and His time, showing that you trust Him whatever the outcome (Phil. 4:6).

The prayer pattern continues with an expressed desire for theocratic rule on earth: "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven" (Mt. 6:10). The longing for the day when Jesus will set up His kingdom on earth and righteousness will prevail demonstrates that the one praying has his priorities straight. He is looking past his present wants and needs to a glorious future promised in Scripture. His desire is in alignment with God's plans and purposes for man. He is a true son praying humbly to his Abba.

When the focus shifts from God to himself, the praying man makes his requests for physical needs (Mt. 6:11) as well as spiritual needs (Mt. 6:12-13). Now is a good time for confession of sins, repentance, and wiping the slate clean. Intercession for the needs of others fits in here. Thanksgiving can be sprinkled in anywhere. While not part of this model prayer, it goes without saying that we end "in Jesus' name" since it is through Him that we have access to the Father (Jn. 14:6).

Praise sets the tone for the prayer. It starts us off on the right foot by expressing reverence for, and acknowledgment of, the majesty of our Father. It places the focus where it belongs: on God. And it reminds us that He is more than able to handle any need, problem, or request that we might bring to Him. Approach your Father with the right attitude. Be humble. Be thankful. Be in awe.

*"Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." Philippians 4:6*