

Foundations of Christ - Part 11

Familial Prayer

One of Jesus' disciples asked Him "how to pray" in Luke 11. Jesus answered by telling Him *who* to pray to. He said, When ye pray, say "Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed by thy name (Luke 11:2). What Jesus was doing was creating in the minds of His disciples the relational condition they were to have with His Heavenly Father, that theirs was the same as His. It was Jesus' ministry to reveal the Father to His followers (Matt. 11:27). In Jesus' teaching on how and who to pray to, He was informing them and us that our access to the Father was granted and His ears were open to our prayers. In fact, Jesus said in Matt. 6:8 that their Father already knows what they have need of before they ask Him.

Religion has a way of turning an intimate relationship into a work or a formula to follow. We think first that we must have our hearts checked, our history of sin remembered and repented of, and then our current state of faithfulness assessed in order for our Father to pay attention to us. I am not suggesting that any of these are unimportant. We should be living righteously all the time. But if we must examine all our sins and get introspective about our lives, then we tend to ignore our relationship with our Father and replace it with religious stuff. We out-think ourselves and begin thinking that God our Father will not answer us. Yes, it is important to forgive should we have any offense in our hearts, but beyond that, where would we draw the line? How much repentance do we do in order to have our Father listen to us?

Remember, we go to the Father through the Son (John 14:6), and because of Jesus we now have a relationship with the God of creation. Our faith is based on our relationship with our Father in Heaven. If we don't have that what do we have? We become distant, religious, work oriented. God becomes a vending machine who dispenses answers based on correct use of scripture and religious performance. The most important aspect of our praying is the relationship. To look at this a different way, would we rather have all of our answers to our prayers performed by an indifferent and distant God, or do we long for the relationship by which we cry Abba Father, and are left with profound and deep love and appreciation when our requests are answered?

Our Father longs for an intimate connection with us. He made us for Himself. When Adam spoiled this relationship, our Father set in motion His redemptive plan to restore the relationship to its original state. Remember, when you pray to Him, He loves you, more than you can even comprehend.