

Assurance of Salvation  
Part 86

Prayer:

Prayer and assurance of salvation



**Scripture contains many commands and examples related to prayer.**

**God's people will pray.**

- They are willing and wanting to obey God.
- God's instructions will influence not only their actions, but also their attitudes.

**THE ISSUE:**

- NOT: "Will they pray?"
- BUT: "How will they pray?"

**Last week, we saw...**

**When it comes to prayer and evidence of salvation...**

- The "activity of prayer" is not what proves you are saved. (Fakes can do the activity.)
  - Even so, prayer will characterize the life of a saved person.
- It's the right "spirit of prayer" that matters.
  - This will not characterize the prayers of an unsaved person.

**Last week, we saw...**

**The right spirit of prayer includes these three characteristics: \***

1. It is humble.
2. It is trusting.
3. It is submissive.

God will not accept prayer that lacks these characteristics; for such prayer is fake.

\*(These characteristics will affect the whole person, not just the "praying event.")

**But what is the relationship between:**

- 1. The "external"** – the visible  
(= what people can see)
- 2. The "internal"** – the heart attitude  
(= what people cannot see)

In other words...

**If we see you praying, what does that tell us about your heart attitude?**  
(Or: If you don't pray, what does that tell us?)

- IF the **"internal"** (right heart attitude) exists,   
 ↪ - THEN the **"external"** (the action of prayer) will exist.

**But since FAKES can do the "external," this "logic" doesn't work the other way!**

- IF the **"external"** (action of prayer) exists,   
 ↪ - THEN ~~the **"internal"** (right heart attitude) will exist.~~

**(Sometimes the difference may be obvious.)**

FAKE

The proud [religious leader] stood by himself and **prayed** this prayer: 'I thank you, God, that I am not a sinner like everyone else, especially like that tax collector over there! For I never cheat, I don't sin, I don't commit adultery, I fast twice a week, and I give you a tenth of my income.'

Luke 18:11-12 (NLT)

↪ [These are good things, but NOT when done for the wrong reason!]

EXTERNAL WITHOUT INTERNAL

GENUINE

But the tax collector stood at a distance and dared not even lift his eyes to heaven as he **prayed**. Instead, he beat his chest in sorrow, saying, 'O God, be merciful to me, for I am a sinner.'

Luke 18:13 (NLT)

EXTERNAL + INTERNAL

**Since FAKES can do the "external"...**

- They can pray with pride, hypocrisy, false motives, etc.   
 WITHOUT the spirit of humility, trust and submission to God.

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★ **What we can rightly conclude is this:**

- The **presence** of visible prayer: By itself, it does not prove one's salvation. (= No proof either way.)
- The **absence** of visible prayer: This provides good reason to question your supposed "salvation."

**More about the FAKES...**

↓

WHO? ME??



**FAKES can put on a big show in PUBLIC!**

- Even when they are doing *evil* things -

**AN EXAMPLE FROM JESUS' DAY**

They devour widows' houses and for a show make lengthy prayers.

Such men will be punished most severely." Mark 12:40 (NIV)

→ THEY DID EVIL THINGS

→ THEY PUT ON A BIG SHOW OF PRAYING; THE PEOPLE WERE IMPRESSED

→ THE FINAL OUTCOME OF THEIR PRAYERS = ETERNAL PUNISHMENT (NOT SALVATION)

**Fakes tend to be less interested in praying in PRIVATE...**

- **"Secret prayer"** is a type of prayer that fakes tend to neglect.

But when you pray, go away by yourself, shut the door behind you, and pray to your Father secretly. Matthew 6:6a (NLT)

**(UNLESS)** 

**... UNLESS they think they will get something in return.**

- When they see no "benefit" in secret prayer, they tend to not pray.

**IF ...**  
it's just a matter of expressing love and delight in knowing God

**THEN ...**  
fakes quickly lose interest in praying.

**OUT OF ORDER? I WASTED MY PRAYERS!**

**OUT OF ORDER**

Will he find delight in the Almighty?  
Will he call upon God at all times?  
Job 27:10 (NIV)

**IMPLIED ANSWER = "NO!"**

**So ask yourself...**

- 1) Do you pray?**
  - Those who are genuine will.
- 2) Do you pray in secret?**
  - The fakes tend to neglect this type of prayer.
- 3) Do you pray with the right spirit**
  - Even secret prayer isn't worth anything, if done with the wrong attitude or for the wrong reasons!

**A word of CAUTION!**

**CAUTION**

- "Praying in public"** does not mean it has to be in front of a huge crowd!

"Where two or three have come together in my name, I am there among them."  
Matthew 18:20 (GW)

Mrs. Smith, come up and pray...

... or we will question your salvation!

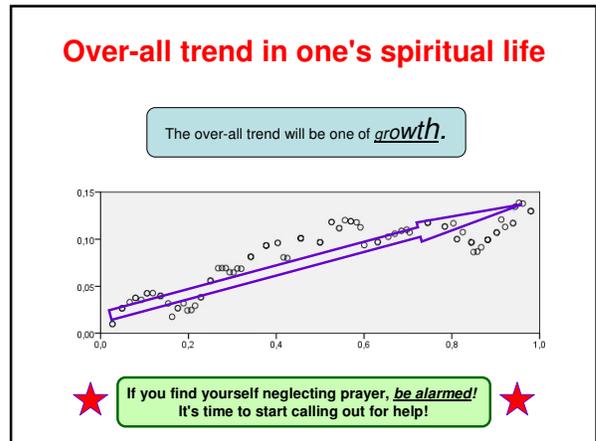
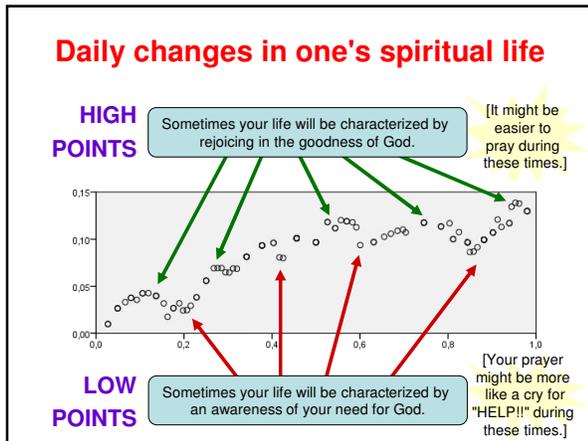
**Mrs. Smith does not need to panic! God doesn't require this from her!**

[total panic and terror]

**A word of CAUTION!**

**CAUTION**

- Though prayer (especially secret prayer) will characterize the life of a saved person...
- The fervency of one's prayer will vary.**
  - Sometimes we are closer to God than at other times.
  - Over-all, our growth in Christ will bring us closer to God... but there will be "down" times that remind us of our need to draw close to God.



[SUMMARY]

## Prayer: Like Breathing (Part 1)

For a genuine Christian, prayer is like *breathing*.

- Just as *physical* life cannot exist without breathing ...

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- So also *spiritual* life cannot exist without praying.

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I don't really do much breathing ... BUT I'M STILL *PHYSICALLY ALIVE!*

**IT WOULD BE SILLY TO THINK THIS COULD REALLY HAPPEN.**

I don't really do much praying ... BUT I'M STILL *SPIRITUALLY ALIVE!*

**THIS IS JUST AS SILLY.**  
(But the consequences are a lot more serious.)

[SUMMARY]

## Prayer: Like Breathing (Part 2)

For a genuine Christian, prayer is like breathing *the right way*.

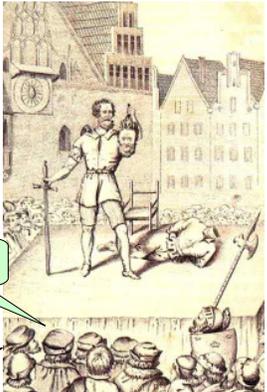
- Just as the mere *act* of lung movement doesn't prove the existence of *physical* life ...

↓

- So also the *external act* of praying doesn't prove the existence of *spiritual* life.

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**THIS WOULD BE STUPID.**



His lungs are moving!

That proves he's ALIVE AND WELL!

**THIS WOULD BE NO BETTER...**  
(though *externally* it might look good)



GOD, I THANK YOU FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO PRAY...

I'D RATHER BE PLAYING BINGO...

He's praying! That proves he's saved!

**YOUR MISSION:**

Do you want a God-honoring prayer life?  
**Learn to BREATHE!**

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Remember the words  
**"Quantity" and "Quality."**

**"Quantity"**

- If you're like most people, you need to start praying *more often*.
  - Communication with God needs to become as ongoing as breathing.

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**> BUT THIS ISN'T ENOUGH! <**

↓

**"Quality"**

- You need to pray in the *right spirit*.
  - Otherwise, your praying is a waste of time.

**FALSE RELIGIONS often have the "QUANTITY"!**

- Their daily rituals can be *filled* with prayer.

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**But they *don't* have the "QUALITY."**

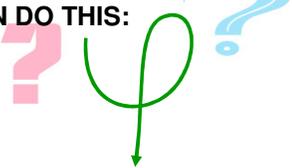
- The Spirit of God does not influence their prayers.



**HOW DO I GET THIS "RIGHT SPIRIT"?**

- Do you want to *guarantee* that your praying is genuine and from a right spirit?

**THEN DO THIS:**



## Keep close to the source of salvation!

- If you do, the source of salvation will keep close to you!

Come near to God and he will come near to you.

Humble yourselves before the Lord,  
and he will lift you up.

James 4:8a, 10 (NIV)

(The rest of the passage tells us about repentance and turning away from sin. Without these, you won't be able to get near to God.)

- God will do an *ongoing* work of grace in you.
- It will affect your attitude, and enable you to have the right spirit of prayer.

I will make an everlasting covenant with them:  
I will never stop doing good to them, and I  
will inspire them to fear me, so that they  
will never turn away from me.

Jeremiah 32:40 (NIV)

{ This everlasting covenant is the *New* Covenant that God made with all who have become followers of Jesus! (See Jeremiah 31:31-34 and Hebrews 8:8-12.) }

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