

LOVE
Without Hypocrisy
 (in the book of Romans)

18 – Faithful in prayer (2)
> Praying faithfully <

Our theme verse: Romans 12:12

Be joyful in hope,
 patient in affliction,
faithful in prayer.
Romans 12:12 (NIV)

OUR FOCUS:
 Prayer... done **FAITHFULLY.**

"FAITHFUL" in prayer

- NOT about:** Having *lots of faith*.

[NO] → "Every time I pray, I am full of faith!"

- Refers to:** An *ongoing activity*.

[YES] → "I am faithfully praying every day."

Some other ways we can translate "FAITHFUL" (in prayer):

- ✓ Devoted (to it)
- ✓ Continuing steadfastly (in it)
- ✓ Persevering / persistent (in it)
- ✓ Regularly / constantly (doing it)
- ✓ Always / at all times (doing it)

Other verses with a similar emphasis

#1 → **[A COMMAND]**

Devote yourselves to prayer,
 being watchful and thankful.
Colossians 4:2 (NIV)

"Devote yourselves"

- ✓ The same N.T. Greek word as found in Romans 12:12 (though translated differently).

#2 → **[A COMMAND]**

Pray **without ceasing.**
1 Thessalonians 5:17 (KJV)

"Without ceasing"

- ✓ A different N.T. Greek word: "Not ceasing from a continuous activity."
- ✓ Used 4 times in the N.T., all in reference to prayer and giving thanks to God (3 times stating it as a *fact*).

#3 **[AN OBLIGATION]**

Then Jesus told them a parable to show them they **should always** pray and not lose heart.
Luke 18:1-2 (NET)

"Should always"

- ✓ 2 Greek words: ① "it is necessary" (i.e., a mandatory obligation) + ② "always, at all times, whenever the opportunity arises."

#4 **[A COMMAND]**

Pray at **all times** in the Spirit with every prayer and request, ...
Ephesians 6:18a (HCSB)

"All times"

- ✓ 2 Greek words: ① "all, each, every, the whole" + ② "times, occasions."

#1
#2
#3
#4

FROM THESE FOUR VERSES (and Romans 12:12c) ...

Do you get the idea that prayer is to be an ongoing activity?

- **You should! These verses describe COMMANDS AND OBLIGATIONS!**

... faithful in prayer.
Romans 12:12c (NIV)

 Sadly...

- **MANY CHURCH-GOERS HAVE NO INTENTION OF DOING THIS!**
- They would rather make up excuses about why they can't "always" pray.

... faithful in prayer.
Romans 12:12c (NIV)

 Sadly...

- **THEY MAKE EXCUSES!**

"Of course I can't do it! I've got to take time to do other things in life – such as sleeping and eating!"

"In don't care how many times God says it, **he can't really mean it.** It's got to be an exaggeration!"

... faithful in prayer.
Romans 12:12c (NIV)

 Sadly...

- **THESE SAME PEOPLE (who make excuses why they "cannot" always pray) WILL CHOOSE TO ALWAYS DO MANY OTHER THINGS IN LIFE!**

EXAMPLES!

START EXAMPLES HERE

- **ALWAYS** eating and/or sleeping (gluttony, lazy).
- **ALWAYS** involved in (or talking about) sports.
- **ALWAYS** thinking about girlfriend/boyfriend.
- **ALWAYS** surfing the internet and keeping up-to-date with the social media.
- **ALWAYS** working, or involved in various projects and hobbies.

MORE EXAMPLES HERE

- **ALWAYS** watching television or listening to the radio.
- **ALWAYS** sending text messages to their friends.
- **ALWAYS** playing computer (or non-computer) games, puzzles, etc.

- **ALWAYS** making excuses for not fulfilling their REAL obligations.

★ What people value most is what they tend to have on their minds. ★

✓ God	✓ Money
✓ Sports	✓ Career
✓ Romance	✓ Food
✓ You name it...	

IF YOU DON'T VALUE GOD AS MUCH AS OTHER THINGS...

- You won't have him on your mind as much.
- You won't "faithfully pray" to him.

WHEN PEOPLE

- **DON'T** "always" (faithfully) pray, —YET —
- **CHOOSE** to "always" (faithfully) do other things...

IT IS WILLFUL SIN AGAINST GOD

THE PROBLEM is not what God says about prayer.

★ The problem is that *sinners* enjoy sinning. ★

PEOPLE WHO LOVE JESUS
WANT TO OBEY GOD'S PRAYER INSTRUCTIONS.

- Though they don't succeed **100%** in this life:
 - ✓ **THEY KEEP ON TRYING.**
 - ✓ **They look forward to the day that Jesus will return and get them to the 100% mark!**

THE BIG DIFFERENCE:

Between "**TRYING**" and "**NOT TRYING**" to "pray faithfully."

<p>"NOT TRYING" Doesn't take effort; easily done without God's help.</p>	<p>"TRYING" Takes effort and reliance on God for help.</p>
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THERE IS ALSO
A BIG DIFFERENCE
IN ETERNAL DESTINY

FAITHFUL PRAYER

IT DOESN'T START WITH A TECHNIQUE, BUT WITH AN ATTITUDE CHANGE.

Otherwise, you'll either ❶ *not do it*, or else ❷ *do it for the wrong reason.*

This change takes effort.

- But the more your attitude changes, the more you will want to put forth the effort.

FAITHFUL PRAYER

IT STARTS WITH A WILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT THE BIBLE AND TO LIVE BY IT.

- This means **REPENTING** of *your* values and **ACCEPTING** *God's* values for how you are to live and think.

IF YOU TAKE SERIOUSLY WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS (ABOUT GOD AND YOU) ...

- You will want to maintain communication with him in prayer.

[IF YOU DON'T TAKE IT SERIOUSLY... You won't want to...]

When you have this ONGOING, "THROUGHOUT-THE-DAY" ATTITUDE about prayer:

- It gives you the *power* to follow Jesus.
- It gives you the *strength* to fulfill the first 2/3 of our theme verse (Romans 12:12)!

Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, **faithful** in prayer.

Romans 12:12 (NIV)

FAITHFUL PRAYER will show:

- **You are growing** in God-honoring values, attitude, and way-of-life.
- **You are aware** that you are 100% dependent on God for doing what is *truly* good.
- **You are willing** to believe Jesus' claim that "following" him is a "100%-of-life" activity. (Since *Jesus* describes it this way, NOT accepting it as true is proof that you are NOT following him.)

Your Mission...

PRAY FAITHFULLY!

MAINTAIN AN ONGOING COMMUNICATION WITH THE POWER SOURCE OF LIFE!

[CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING ILLUSTRATION]

To get God's power in your life, you will need *both* God's Word and prayer.

GOD = POWER SOURCE

YOU = THE LIGHT

WIRE #1 = GOD'S WORD

WIRE #2 = PRAYER



Credits

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Your Mission...

"Be ... faithful in prayer."

Romans 12:12c

FAITHFUL - to be persistent, to keep on doing it

PRAYER - talking to God

HOW WE PRAY REFLECTS OUR VALUES!

Being "faithful," or persistent

About the word "faithful."

- This word has the connotation of "loyalty" or "staying with" something.
- In regard to *tangible* things (people / objects), it may involve "staying with" someone or something (the reason being understood by the context). Examples: Acts 8:13 ("following" Philip); 10:7 ("attendants"); Mark 3:9 (a "ready" boat).
- In regard to *intangible* things (activities / concepts), it may involve "persistently continuing" in (or with) it, "holding on to" it (such as a teaching), or "having faithful devotion" to it. Examples: Romans 12:12; Acts 2:42.

This word "faithful" and prayer.

- It describes the ongoing attitude of prayer (and dependence on God) that is to characterize a disciple of Jesus.

(CONTINUED) →

- It does *not* focus on the "technical" details that people often ask about, because these are not the issue. [Examples: the number of times per day we should pray, or the position (such as, standing or kneeling). These are matters that tend to be important in false religions, but not with following Jesus.]
- It does *not* mean that we are to be involved in *no other activities!* Rather, prayer is the *context* in which other activities are to be done. It is an admission that we are completely dependent on God for anything that is truly good. (Any other attitude is one of rebellion and sin.)

MORE VERSES THAT DESCRIBE PRAYER AS AN OBLIGATION

- Do it! Colossians 4:2; Ephesians 6:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:17; Luke 11:9-10; 18:1; 1 Timothy 2:1-2; 2:8; James 5:16.
- Pray for God's workers; for the proclaiming of the good news - Matthew 9:38; Romans 15:30; Ephesians 6:19; Colossians 4:3; 1 Thessalonians 5:25; 2 Thessalonians 3:1; Hebrews 13:18.
- Selected instructions ("how" to do it) - Matthew 6:5-15; 18:19-20; Mark 11:25; Luke 11:9-13.

What do such verses teach us about prayer?

- Verses that contain *commands* show us that we have an obligation to have this type of prayer. There are other verses that contain statements of *fact*; and these show us that obeying the commands is possible. *Yes, we can do it!*
- Together, the facts and commands leave us without excuse, if we fail to have lives characterized by an attitude of prayer.
- Having such a prayer attitude will take effort, as does *any* godly characteristic. But if the Spirit is present, the desire and the ability will *both* be there. (Our willingness to persist will demonstrate the presence - or absence - of the Spirit.)