

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

- Don worked as a missionary with the Australian Assemblies of God at Maprik in the East Sepik province of Papua New Guinea from January 1963 to December 1986. For most of that time, he was the principal of a Bible School there, teaching hundreds of men and women from various parts of the country. He was also the Director of Theological Education for the Assemblies of God in Papua New Guinea, responsible for the establishing and overseeing of three other Bible Schools throughout the country.

In 1966 he married a fellow missionary, Pearl Goodall. God blessed them with five children, Mark, Noel, Raymond, Esther and Ruth.

From 1987 until his retirement at the end of 1997, Don was principal of Rhema Bible College, a division of Calvary Assembly of God in Townsville, Queensland. During his retirement, he continued to teach for another nine years as a part-time lecturer at Strikeforce Ministry Training Institute in Brisbane. In 2007 and 2008 Don and Pearl accepted a request to return to Port Moresby as lecturer to the theological students at Jubilee University.

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In Don's early years he was a Chartered Accountant.
Don holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Bible from the I.C.I. University and a Master of Arts Degree in Biblical Studies from Luther Rice Seminary.

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*"Study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman that needs not be ashamed,
rightly dividing the word of truth"*

2 Tim. 2:15

WHY DOES GOD WANT US TO PRAY?

God wants us to be dependant on him. He wants us to trust him to help us. That's why he wants us to pray to him.

1. The Lord is our Shepherd. Ps 23:1-3

We are God's "sheep." Sheep cannot live without a shepherd. They cannot run away fast from enemies. They don't have big teeth. They don't have claws like lions and tigers. They don't have tusks like wild pigs. They can't look after themselves. So they need to stay near their shepherd. If they wander away from him, they will die. In the same way, we need to be near God always. We need to depend on him. That's why we need to pray to him.

2. We are God's children. We must ask our Father in heaven to give us the things we need.

(a) Even evil, heathen fathers give good gifts to their children, when they ask for something. Our father in heaven is much kinder and more loving than earthly fathers. How much more will he give good gifts to those who ask him! Matt 7:9-11

(b) Therefore we should ask God for the things we need. Sometimes we don't receive these gifts from him quickly. But we must keep seeking and knocking. He will eventually answer our prayer. Matt 7:7-8

3. Christians are like little children who know they need their father's help day by day. The Holy Spirit teaches us that we are God's little children.

"You received the Holy Spirit, who makes you God's child. By the Spirit's power, we call God "Abba". "Abba" means "Father." Rom 8:15 Nlrv

(a) The whole of Paul's letter to the Romans was written in the Greek language. But in Romans 8:15, Paul included an Aramaic word, "Abba." Aramaic was the language of the Jews in Palestine in Jesus' day. So Jesus would have spoken Aramaic in his family home, as a boy. He would have spoken in Aramaic also to his Jewish disciples. The Aramaic word "Abba" means "Daddy." It was the word that young Jewish children used, when addressing their father. When Jewish children got older, they did not use the word "Abba" any longer. Instead they used another word when addressing their fathers.

(b) Paul wrote this letter to the Roman church in the Greek language. But, in the middle of that letter, he included this one Aramaic word, "Abba." The reason was this: Paul wanted them to know that God was their Father. They were like little children before him.

(c) Even when Jesus was an adult, he called God "Abba." In Gethsemane, he prayed, "Abba, everything is possible for you. Take this cup of suffering away from me." Mk 14:36 Nlrv. He was an adult. He was about 30 years old. But he knew that he was still like a little child who needed his Father in heaven.

(d) We are not like **ADULT** children who trust in our own strength through life. We are like **LITTLE** children. We know we can't face life in our own strength. Little children know that they need help from their fathers. They know they must depend on them. So, as little children, we need to pray to our Father in heaven for all our needs.

GOD ANSWERS PRAYER

1. James tells us, "You do not have, because you do not ask." James 4:2. God wants to help us. But often we do not pray for this help. So then God doesn't help us.

2. Jesus also said the same thing. Lu 11:9-10. God gives us something, only when we ask. We find what we need, only when we search. The door of heaven is open to us, only when we keep knocking in prayer.

3. Prayer changes the way God acts.

(a) When Moses went up Mount Sinai, the people waited for him to return. While they waited, they made a golden calf and worshipped it. Exod 32:1-6

(b) This made God angry. He wanted to destroy them. Israel were descendants of Abraham. But, in their place, God wanted to begin a new nation with Moses and his descendants. Exod 32:7-10

(c) But Moses prayed. He asked God not to destroy Israel. Exod 32:11-13

(d) "Then the Lord took pity on his people. He didn't destroy them, as he had said he would." Exod 32:14. God answered Moses' prayer.

4. God promises to hear our prayers of repentance.

(a) God had told Israel that they must obey his laws. If they obeyed, he would bless them in many ways. Deut 28:1-14. However, if they disobeyed, he would curse them in many ways. Deut 28:15-68

(b) Many years later God spoke to Solomon. He reminded him of these promised curses. But if they later repented and prayed, he would forgive them and bless them again.

"Suppose I close up the sky and there isn't any rain. Suppose I command locusts to eat up the crops. And I send a plague among my people. But they make themselves low in my sight. They pray and look to me. And they turn from their evil ways. Then I will listen to them from heaven. I will forgive them their sin. And I will heal their land. After all, they are my people." 2 Chron 7:13-14

5. The believers in Jerusalem prayed for God's help.

- (a) The Sanhedrin was the name of the Jewish court of law. They were angry that Peter had preached about Jesus to many people in the temple. So they arrested him and John. Acts 4:1-17. The Sanhedrin told them not to preach about Jesus again. Acts 4:18-22.
- (b) Peter and John reported this to the believers in Jerusalem. Then they all prayed. Acts 4:23-24.
- (c) In their prayer, they called God "Sovereign Lord" - Acts 4:24 NIV. "Lord and King" NIV. They remembered that God was king, not the Sanhedrin. They prayed, "You made the heavens and the earth and the sea. You made everything in them." God was all-powerful. They knew he could answer their prayer.
- (d) Then in their prayer, they quoted Psalm 2:1-2. This Psalm is a prophecy. It prophesied that God's anointed Son, Jesus, would one day rule the earth. He would defeat his enemies. Ps 2:9-13. This happened when Jesus died and rose again.
- (e) But Psalm 2 says that God's enemies will refuse to accept Jesus as their king. Instead they will make plans to fight against God and his anointed Son. Ps 2:1-3
- (f) But God will laugh at them. He will make fun of them. Ps 2:4. He knows that their plans are useless. Ps 2:1. His Son will break them to pieces like clay pots. Ps 2:9. He will do this during the Millennium.
- (g) Herod and Pontius Pilate made plans to destroy Jesus, when he was on earth. The believers in the prayer meeting remembered this. Acts 4:27. Herod and Pilate crucified him. They thought they were destroying him forever. Instead they did what God's power and purpose had already decided should happen. Acts 4:28. It was God's plan for Jesus to be crucified. Jesus' enemies didn't know this. But when they crucified him, they were doing what God wanted done. So their plans to destroy Jesus forever turned out to be useless. So they didn't have the victory. God did!
- (h) The Sanhedrin had commanded the apostles not to preach about Jesus. But the Sanhedrin was fighting against God and his Son. So their plans also would be useless.
- So the believers prayed for two things:
- * To be very bold when they preached. Acts 4:29
 - * To do miracles. Acts 4:30.
- (i) God answered their prayer.
- * The believers were filled with the Spirit. This made them bold to preach. Acts 4:31
 - * Later they did many miracles. Acts 5:12
- (j) When we pray, we must remember that God is king over everything. He will defeat his enemies. When we think about this, we will pray boldly. We will pray with great faith.

EACH PERSON OF THE TRINITY HELPS US IN OUR PRAYING

"Through Christ we both come to the Father by the power of one Holy Spirit." Eph 2:18

1. Through prayer, we have access **TO THE FATHER**. Ephesians 2:18 NIV says, "... we ... come to the Father ..."
Jesus said, "This is how you should pray, 'Our Father in heaven ...'" Matt 6:9
2. We pray **THROUGH JESUS CHRIST**. Ephesians 2:18 NIV says, "Through Christ we come ... to the Father ..."
On the cross, Jesus died for our sins. Through Jesus, our sins are forgiven. This has given us access to the holy Father. We will learn more about this later.
3. We pray **BY THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**. Ephesians 2:18 NIV says, "... we ... come to the Father by the power of ... Holy Spirit."
Without the Spirit's help we are weak. We need the help of the Spirit in every part of our Christian lives. We need him to help us pray properly. We will learn more about this also later.
So each Person in the Trinity helps us in our praying.

13. Have you ever prayed for a miracle? Have you ever experienced a miracle? Tell about this.
14. The early church (The church at the time of the New Testament) often experienced miracles. Should the church today be experiencing miracles? Why do you think this? Why do we often not see miracles?
15. Would you like to see more miraculous power of the Holy Spirit in your church? How might more miracles help Gods kingdom? What can we do to see more miracles?
16. How does it help and encourage you when you pray together with other Christians? Does your church have regular prayer meetings? If not, should you try to organise your friends to gather regularly for prayer?
17. When you pray, do you remember also to thank God for answered prayer? Do you thank God just in words, or do you do it from the heart? Why do we so often forget to thank him? What can we do to correct this?
18. If God wished, he could give us all that we need, even though we don't pray. So why do you think God wants us to pray?
19. God is the Father of us Christians. How does knowing this help us to pray?
20. Do you think we miss out on much help from God when we do not pray? Is this Gods fault or ours?
21. Do you think our slackness in prayer makes God sad? Why do you think this?
22. In the time of the Old Testament, the ordinary people had to stay outside the temple. Only the priests could go before God. Now, under the new covenant all believers can come direct into God's presence. We can do this because Jesus took the punishment for our sin on the cross. Do you thank God regularly for this privilege?
23. Have you ever prayed for something and then realised that God has not answered your prayer because of your disobedience? What was your experience? Has this been the experience of someone you hurt?
24. When you pray, do you always try to pray earnestly? How can you bring more earnestness into your prayer lists?

25. God always hears our prayer, but he doesn't always answer them. How do you feel about this?
26. Have you ever prayed for a long period about a certain matter before God answered your prayer? During this period of time, did you feel like giving up? Share you experiences.
27. What is something you learnt in this teaching that has helped you?

SAMPLE