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Prayer is an essential part of living the more abundant life. I Thessalonians 5:17 sets a wonderful goal for the born-again believer.

*I Thessalonians 5:17:
Pray without ceasing.*

To pray without ceasing is an exhortation for us to pray at every opportunity we get. Why does God want us to pray at every opportunity?

To help us answer that question, let's consider some purposes for prayer by focusing on these four aspects listed in I Timothy 2:1:

I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men.

In this verse we find (1) "supplications," which emphasize the specific requests made to God for needs; (2) "prayers," which are for personal devotion and worship of God; (3) "intercessions," which are prayers on behalf of others; and (4) "giving of thanks," which emphasizes an attitude of thankfulness.

The first purpose for prayer we will look at is to ask God for specific items of need. There are promises in God's Word regarding this aspect of prayer.

*Philippians 4:6:
Be careful [Be anxious] for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.*

John 14:13,14:

And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I [Jesus Christ] do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.

I John 5:14,15:

And this is the confidence that we have in him [God], that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:

And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.

We thank God for supplying what we know is available from His promises. This kind of prayer helps us get specific and honest with God. And prayer with believing brings results.

The next purpose we'll consider is to spend time in personal devotion to God and in worshipping Him. This helps us build and strengthen our relationship with Him. And God has enabled the born-again believer to worship Him perfectly by the manifestation of speaking in tongues. Speaking in tongues is one of the two ways to pray that are shown in I Corinthians.

I Corinthians 14:15:

What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.

Praying with the spirit is speaking in tongues, and for the born-again believer, speaking in tongues is the way to perfectly worship God. Jesus Christ foretold of this when he said "they that worship him [God] must worship *him* in [by] spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). Our time spent in personal devotion and worship helps us keep our focus on God throughout the day.

Another purpose for praying is to make intercession for others—those in God's household and all men. Making intercession is simply praying with care and concern for the needs of others.

Ephesians 6:18:

Praying always with all prayer and supplication in [by way of] the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints [born-again believers].

I Timothy 2:1:

I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men.

When we want to intercede for those we love and do not even know what to pray for, speaking in tongues is a tremendous comfort!

Romans 8:26,27:

Likewise the Spirit [God] also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit [the gift of holy spirit in manifestation] itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

And he [God] that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit [holy spirit in manifestation], because he [it] maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

And another wonderful purpose for praying is for giving of thanks—to simply thank God for all He has done for us. We build an attitude of thankfulness, always thanking Him for His blessings.

Ephesians 5:20:

Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Colossians 3:17:

And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

I Thessalonians 5:18:

In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

Our prayers provide us a way to ask for specific help, to build our relationship with God and worship Him, to intercede for others, and to thank Him for His ever-present blessings. These purposes help us understand why we pray without ceasing!

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