

## WEDNESDAY EVENING (October 9<sup>th</sup>) • Prayer & Providence

### What Exactly is Prayer?

An ancient philosopher once said, “man is incurably religious.” He was right. We *all* worship someone or something. It's not uncommon in times of shock to hear people almost instinctively cry out to God. To the Christian, prayer is a sacred privilege that should never be taken for granted.

#### Foundational Aspects of Mankind's Relationship with God

- Human beings, frail creatures that we are and living for such a brief moment in so vast a universe, stand in need far beyond our own ability to provide. *What sort of need?*
- There is an all-powerful, all-knowing, all-present Being who is responsible for all of Creation and with whom human beings can communicate. *How can we know this?*
- This Being is perfectly compassionate, tender, loving, and holy toward those he created in his image. *What reason do we have to believe these things about his character?*
- If this God is infinite in all of his attributes and holy in all of his character, we—as weak and sinful people—should submit our wills to his divine wisdom and perfect will. *Why?*

#### What Exactly is Prayer?

- In praying, we acknowledge our dependence upon this Being who is higher than ourselves.
- Prayer is more than wishful thinking. *In what way?*
- In 1 Timothy 2:1-2, Paul employs several relevant terms. In your own words, what are:
  - Supplications -
  - Prayers -
  - Intercessions -
  - Thanksgivings -

#### Whose Prayer Does God Hear?

- Prayer is the privilege and right of God's children (Matt 6:9; John 3:3,5). *Why?*
- When the man born blind had his eyes opened by the Lord, he saw more than just the physical features of life about him (John 9:24-31; Prov 28:9). *Was he correct?*
- In 1 Timothy 2:8, Paul stated another quality of character that is essential to having prayers answered—holiness (see also Isa 1:15; James 4:8). *Why does holiness matter?*
- The apostles stressed the fact that prayer is the privilege of one who is righteous (James 5:16; 1 Pet 3:12; 1 John 3:22).

How, then, do passages like Ecclesiastes 7:20, James 3:2, and 1 John 1:8 relate to prayer?

Can one who has never been born again pray to God and be reconciled to God? Why or why not?

What about the person who has been born again, but who subsequently sins against God?

What should we make of the example of Cornelius in Acts 10 (note especially 10:1-4)?

**Some passages of Scripture to meditate upon:** Luke 18:1-8; Rev 8:1-5; Matt 7:7-11; Rom 12:12; Acts 2:42; 1 Thes 5:17; Matt 15:22-28.