

Who Is This God We Pray To?

By Ginny Larsen

“And this is eternal life, that they know You the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.” (John 17:3)

*“Hear, O LORD, when I cry aloud; be gracious to me and answer me! You have said, ‘Seek My face.’ My heart says to You, ‘Your face, LORD, do I seek.’”
(Psalm 27:7-8)*

There is something inside every human being that draws us to God and makes us want to reach out to Him to know Him. The ultimate thing in life is to truly know God. God gave us the gift of prayer in order that we may inquire of Him and learn to know Him and to reach out and find Him.

Some, instead of reaching out to find Him, create their own religions or their own gods. That inward need for a god is there, for an object of worship, yet if they don't seek to find and know the One true God, they will end up creating their own. This in itself is evidence of God. There is one prayer that the unbeliever can pray that will be heard of God, and that is the prayer to know Him, to be forgiven, and to become a child of God. All other prayer is the privilege of God's born-again children alone—those who have been washed in the blood of the Lamb.

Prayer opens up our hearts to know God. Even as we come before Him with our needs, we must humble ourselves and acknowledge Who He is. Prayer opens the door of our hearts to Him. The ultimate purpose of our prayer is to know God, be united with Him, and to submit our hearts to Him, that He may be glorified. As His children, we have a privilege that no other has—to come before His throne of grace and mercy, boldly, through the blood of Jesus Christ and His merit alone. We have unbroken access to Him. What a great privilege! How little we make use of it! What promises He gives us if we just come to Him in prayer! He promises to hear. He promises to answer. He promises His presence.

Prayer is not just asking, prayer is listening. Even as we sit at His feet through the reading of His Word, meditating on it, letting Him speak to us through it, we are in communion with Him and there is a fellowship. It's so important to have this part of prayer in our lives in order to come to Him with our supplications and intercessions and requests. When we lay our hearts before Him and let the Holy Spirit speak to us through His Word, we find our hearts brought nearer to His, our minds cleansed of our own or worldly thoughts and ways, and we are able to pray according to His will, and to understand His will and purpose more accurately. Many times when it seems our prayers are not answered it drives us to seek His understanding through His Word and in the process of prayer the answer comes by His changing our hearts.

“And this is the confidence that we have toward Him, that if we ask anything according to His will he hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of Him” (1 John 5:14-15). “For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart” (Hebrews 4:12).

Without prayer, we will not have the blessed fellowship with God that He desires for us. Without prayer, we cannot truly grow in our knowledge of Him the way He wants us to. Without prayer, we miss out on receiving all that He has for us as our gifts and privileges in

Christ. Without prayer, He is not glorified in us the way He desires to be. Without prayer, we become self-focused instead of God-focused. Without prayer, we are only depending on ourselves, our own ability, wisdom, understanding, and strength, rather than leaning on Him. We are saying, in essence, we don't need God. A church without prayer will be a lifeless, ineffective church. How important then is it that we know the God we pray to, and what He is about? How can we pray effectively if we don't?

Who is this God we pray to? He is the One true God. He is truly beyond our comprehension, but He has revealed certain things about Himself in His Word and through Jesus Himself coming to us. He wants us to know those things that He revealed about Himself, to seek Him and to find Him. He wants us to know Him rightly. Anytime we have a wrong concept of Him or of His salvation, it lessens our ability to be effective in prayer or in our walk with Him, or in our testimony to others. To learn of His attributes gives us more help in our prayer life and more faith and purpose as we pray.

We can only learn of His attributes through His Word and our giving ourselves over to it, to keep it, to meditate on it, and to obey it. It is only God Himself Who can reveal Himself to us. We cannot form our own concepts of God based on what kind of god we desire, as so many do today in the apostate church. They don't like the God of the Bible, so they form their own god, lessening His true attributes and bringing Him down to their own level, rather than letting Him bring them up to His. They have no idea what they miss! The god of their making is always more like them. God wants to raise us up to where He is and make us like Him. There is no higher glory! How awful it is then, when we have a lesser view of Him and do not seek to know Him rightly and give Him the true honor of Who He is as revealed to us in His Word. Our prayers to any lesser god can never bring God's blessing. We must know Him rightly and come to Him humbly.

Who is this God we pray to? Who He is not is a genie we can use to get all we want in this world and manipulate according to our own use. That, again, is to bring Him down to our level or even below that, where we become the god and He our servant that we think to command. If we are to know Him rightly, we must also give Him the right place in our hearts. I am always in awe when I hear God calling Himself "I Am." He is so beyond our comprehension that there is no other way to describe Him other than simply "I Am." He simply is, and always was, and always will be. He is the great I Am. He is Who He is, perfect in all His ways, with no need to ever change. That leaves us with a sense of great awe. It is something we can't grasp fully, yet we know it is true. How can He explain Himself to us? Yet, He has expressed Himself to us through Jesus Christ Who was the exact representation of Himself in the flesh. God's attributes are simply what is true of Him, and He reveals that to us in His Word in many ways, even in the many names of God. Each name reveals to us a particular attribute of God. "Yahweh"—the self-existent One (the Lord), "Yahweh Shalom"—the Lord is peace, "Yahweh Shammah"—the Lord is there, "Yahweh Tsidkenu"—the Lord our righteousness, "Yahweh Nissi"—the Lord my banner, and many more names of God are given to us in His Word, always revealing to us an attribute of God. This is the God we pray to. This God has so much about Him that we can never completely know all there is to know about Him. Yet He reveals so much of Himself to us in His Word and in our relationship with Him through the Spirit when we become His child through being born again by faith in the finished work of Christ. What riches then to discover this awesome God!! He is a God of love, a God of wonder, a God of perfection in every way! How can we not be grateful for and want to pursue this God and pray to Him? He gives us the privilege, as His children to do so. Are we using this privilege? Do we really grasp what He has

given to us?

When we pray to God, many times we want God to be a certain way. But we must learn to love not what we want God to be but what and Who He truly is. In learning His attributes, we learn to love Him more and wonder at His glory more and more and desire that glory. We learn to pray, as the song goes:

**Be Thou my Vision, O Lord of my heart;
Naught be all else to me, save that Thou art;
Thou my best Thought, by day or by night,
Waking or sleeping, Thy presence my light.**

**Be Thou my Wisdom, and Thou my true Word;
I ever with Thee and Thou with me, Lord;
Thou my great Father, I Thy true son;
Thou in me dwelling, and I with Thee one.**

The more God is our true vision and the more clearly we see Him, the more effective our prayer life will be. And the more effective our prayer life is, the more clearly we will see Him, the more clearly we will know Him, and the more He will be glorified in our lives. Our motives for prayer will be less and less of what we want and more and more what He wants. Our Christian lives will become more fruitful. If we abide in Him, truly, we must abide in Who He really is, not what we want or imagine Him to be.

If God reveals His attributes to us in His Word, He wants us to discover them, and He wants us to respond to them. We must form our ideas of Him and our responses and our actions based on these true attributes of God. And as we choose to look to Him and walk with Him, we learn to “put on Christ” and those characteristics of Christ will hopefully be seen more and more in our own walk and interaction with others as well, bringing forth fruit, so that others are drawn to seek Him.

Do we demonstrate to the world around us what God is like? Or are we praying to a god of our own making and showing the world a god of our own making as well? The right answer will affect not only our lives and walk with God but the lives and destiny of others around us that we touch as well.

The more we seek to know the One true God, the more love for Him we will have and that love will flow from us to others. What is the greatest attribute of God? God is love: *“Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent His only Son into the world, so that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and His love is perfected in us”* (1 John 4:8-12).

Our prayers then should flow from love to a God of love – God’s love for a lost and dying world, which He shed His precious blood for. What a wonderful God we have! What a blessing to know that He loves us and wants us to know Him and invites us to do so! May we pursue Him harder and pray more earnestly while He gives us breath!