

Celebrating God at Work and School, Part 4 | Pray and Praise

I. We must rejoice always.

- I Thessalonians 5:16-18; Philippians 4:4
- “Rejoicing” is not a term we often use in today’s culture. In fact, nearly all of the time Christians use it they only use it in a spiritual sense. But to rejoice is actually a very normal idea. In fact, we do it all the time.
- But God is commanding us to rejoice *always*. The only way we will ever be able to sustain a constant state of rejoicing in all things is if that rejoicing is first and foremost founded on God.
- Paul is not telling us to merely *enjoy* everything we do. In fact, it’s humanly impossible to enjoy *everything* we do because we humans are incapable of enjoying things that we believe are bad. And there’s no sinful human being who has ever lived who was able to sustain perpetual joy in all events and difficulties of life.
- The only way we will ever be able to sustain a constant state of rejoicing in all things is if that rejoicing is first and foremost founded on God.

II. We must pray without ceasing.

- Should we not glorify God just as much while brushing our teeth as we should while evangelizing? Do we not need God’s grace and power to please Him in the shower as we do when parenting? Of course we still need Him!
- But we’ll never think that way if A. We don’t learn the truth that we learned last time — that our motivation for our “good works” is more important than the actual work itself, and if B. We think we have the ability to shower and brush my teeth just fine without God.
- Praying without ceasing starts first with the humble realization that there is not a single thing you are going to do today that you do not need God in order to do in a way that pleases Him. We must not allow ourselves to arrogantly think that we can — in our own power and for our own glory — please God in even the smallest task.
- Therefore, if you are not in the habit of perpetual prayer, start praying for the humility needed to understand how important prayer is. And then start learning to pray in the following situations:
 - Praying before meals.
 - Praying before you go to bed.
 - Praying before you get out of bed.
 - Praying before religious experiences like personal devotions, church services, and biblical counseling/discipleship.
 - Praying during times of intense pressure.
 - Praying before you share the Gospel.
 - Praying before traveling.
 - Praying before entering work or school.
 - Praying before a big event in which you’re participating.
 - And instead of just praying *before* any of the things we’ve mentioned, trying to pray *during* each of them as well.
 - Praying during your commutes, workouts, and other less mentally distracting activities.
 - Praying during projects and homework.
 - Praying during individual classes and meetings.
 - Praying while you do your chores.
 - Praying while playing with your kid.

- Praying during daily hygiene routines.
- Praying while participating in entertainment like movies, concerts, and games.
- Praying while you bathe your kids, explain the mundane things of life, answer the 80th question, and even discipline them. It's sad that this category of life is so often neglected in our prayer.
- Praying while scrolling through social media.
- Praying while choosing your outfit or planning your meal.
- But what should we pray?
 - **Celebrate God for Who He is and what He's done.**
 - **Thank God for the situation you're in or will soon be in.**
 - **Advocate for the people around you.**
 - **Ask for what you need.**
 - **Tell God that you trust Him.**

III. We must pray without ceasing.

- We can always be thankful for the fact that God desires to use every comfortable and uncomfortable situation and experience in our lives to mature us and bring Him the glory He deserves.
- We can always be thankful for Who God is and the specifics of what He he's done and is doing.
- We can always be thankful for the people in our lives.
- We can always be thankful for His daily provision. Whatever we're involved in whether it be work, school, parenting, entertainment, vacations, or discipline is something that God has provided specifically for you — yes, to mature you — but also, more basically, to provide for your needs.
- We can always thank Him for His will for our lives.
- But can Christ-honoring prayer and praise actually distract us from what we're supposed to be doing while we're at work and school?" No.
 - **Truly God-centered prayer and praise will never distract from what God wants us to do.**
 - The purpose of these prayers is to consciously focus our minds on the motivation for our activity, but it should never distract from the actual performance of the activity.
 - Our intentional purpose to glorify God while living life needn't distract from actually living life.
 - **Truly God-centered prayer and praise will overlap God's will for our lives.**
 - **Truly God-centered prayer and praise doesn't have to always utilize words.**
 - Romans 8:26
 - The Holy Spirit sometimes prays for us with groanings inexpressible.
 - A "spirit of prayer" is sustained by intentional purpose that threads its way through an experience in desires and affections that may or may not always have linguistic expression.
 - Sometimes the incoherent weeping of a young woman is all the prayer that can be mustered. Sometimes the intentional focus of a desire for God's presence, protection, and provision is all we can express.
 - And that is often quite alright because not only is the Holy Spirit going to help us, and not only is He going to pray for us, some of His prayers for us are also too deep for words.
 - It's hard to quantify this, and so it can become subjective very quickly. We need to be very careful that we don't develop an unbiblical doctrine of "feeling our prayers." But we shouldn't neglect the place of unspoken longing for God and His glory.