

Pastor Jim Jackson, 10/16/16
IDENTITY, pt. 7—I am Heard
Matthew 6:5-15

“You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.” 1 Pet. 2:9

Prayer is PERSONAL

Throughout history people have tried to contact god/s by various means not knowing if, what, who, or where the god/s existed. *As humanity’s spiritual nature longs to connect with their Maker, the desire is correct but the disposition is not.* Once people repent and their sins are forgiven through Jesus, then those joined to the family of God now have access to God the Father who hears and responds to their prayers (2 Chron. 7:14; Ps. 145:18; Eph. 2:19). Prayer should not be for outward recognition like a hypocrite (Gr. *hūpokritace*, ‘stage actor’) but rather meaningful and often private, as it should be done unceasingly (1 Thess. 5:16-18). *Prayer is a deliberate, purposeful soul-conversation with the God who loves His children* (Matt. 7:11). Being personal, prayers can be hindered (Ps. 66:18; Prov. 28:9; Mark 11:25; 1 Pet. 3:7). A believer’s knowledge of God’s will starts at scripture, goes through godly counsel and ends with personal feelings. This way, prayer can be focused and answers understood with clarity. *God is personal but not personal feelings!*

Prayer is PRIORITIES

Jesus told his disciples not to ‘heap up empty phrases’ (Gr. *battologeo*, ‘stutter/repeat tediously’) like pagans hoping to impress their god. Prayer is not a mechanical repetition of words but a living conversation that takes the priorities of the *Person prayed to* into account. *God is not Santa and prayer is not a wish list.* As Jesus denounced the habitual recitation of words, the Lord’s Prayer was not given as *the* prayer to pray, but rather *the way* to pray (1 John 5:14). *Authority.* Believers are to recognize and respect the role and authority of God as Father, who knows all, sees all, and controls all and that His will would be done through them as it is in heaven. *Bread.* Believers bring their needs and desires for consideration. *Confession.* Believers confess personal sin and ask for help forgiving others. *Deliverance.* Believers ask for protection from evil and help to not sin against their Father. God’s answer will be ‘yes’, ‘no’, or ‘wait’. *Prayer helps us to align with God, not God with us!*