

Pt.3 - Making Prayer Fun

Sermon Title: **Pt. 3 - Making Prayer Fun**

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C. Elijah Bronner: When you have a grateful heart, it changes ordinary opportunities into blessings!

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(Music Playing)

And now for 7771, "Making Prayer Fun" Part 3.

C. Elijah Bronner: Thank you for joining Brothers of the Word because brother, you need the word.

We welcome all of you joining us by television and those of you joining us online at brothersoftheword.com and Facebook live. Thank you for streaming us and tuning in to today's service.

I would like to share just a little humor. A young family, they were celebrating their first Thanksgiving together as a young married couple and they had a little son. And so the wife was kind of nervous because she was a really inexperienced cook and so she was going to try out her first Thanksgiving dinner. And she simply told her husband and her son, she said "Look!" she said, "Now, I'm going to do my very best and make Thanksgiving dinner for us." But she said, "If it's not good, we're not going to say one word. We're going to simply get up and go out to dinner, go out and eat." And so, she went in the kitchen and she prepared, and when she came out, she brought the turkey out of the kitchen into the dining room, and her husband and her son were sitting there with their hats and coats on.

Well, we have been sharing a series entitled, "Making Prayer Fun," "Making Prayer Fun" and I wanted to talk about thanksgiving in prayer. Thanksgiving in prayer, one of the components of prayer. This is a verse that we all know. I love this little set of scriptures because they're very short. And I believe they're short for the purpose of being easy to remember. And so, God gave us short instruction, but even though they are short, they are far reaching as far as impact in our lives and directing our hearts. And so, it simply say, "Rejoice evermore! Rejoice evermore! Pray without ceasing and then in everything,

give thanks for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.” Say that with me, rejoice evermore --

All: Rejoice evermore --

C. Elijah Bronner: Pray without ceasing --

All: Pray without ceasing --

C. Elijah Bronner: And in everything, give thanks.

All: And in everything, give thanks.

C. Elijah Bronner: This is one of the great series of Biblical attitudes we gain from scriptures. This is one of the great sets of Biblical attitudes and I love it because it's so short, but if you can do it, if you can remind yourself of it daily, it could carry you a long way in life. And so, it's short, but it's far reaching. It has a far reaching influence and impact and (00:03:31) our hearts and our lives if we follow the instructions.

I believe that the Holy Spirit made them short so it would be easy to remember and he didn't want to burden us with a whole lot of laws and a whole lot of instructions. He made it really short, just so short, and he said, "Rejoice evermore! Pray without ceasing and in everything, give thanks." And so that's a great Biblical attitude. Say, be joyful.

All: Be joyful.

C. Elijah Bronner: Be prayerful.

All: Be prayerful.

C. Elijah Bronner: And be thankful.

All: Be thankful.

C. Elijah Bronner: And that's it. That's all you have to remember, that's all you have to remember as you walk around every day. Ask yourself the question, Am I joyful? Am I prayerful? Am I thankful? You just ask yourself that during the day. It's like giving yourself a little test during the day. Am I joyful? Am I

prayerful? Am I thankful? Am I joyful? Am I prayerful? Am I thankful?

So, I love that little set of Biblical attitudes that we gained there in 1 Thessalonians Chapter 5 Verses 16, 17 and 18. Rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing and in everything give thanks. Be joyful, prayerful, and be thankful. Joyful, prayerful and thankful. Be joyful, prayerful and thankful. It's so easy to remember.

Just notice I just want to touch on each of these momentarily, but to be joyful, that actually is something that comes out of prayer because when you've been in prayer, when you're prayerful, you're automatically joyful because in His presence is the fullness of joy. And so, joy is kind of built into the system of prayer.

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Joy is built into the system of prayer and so when you're prayerful, you're automatically joyful. And so, prayer is right in the center of that. And then he says, "Pray without ceasing". And so, that's constant conversation. It's constantly talking to the Lord. You pray without ceasing. Jesus said it this way, Jesus said men are always to pray and not to faint. So, Jesus said, men are always to pray, not to faint. The Bible always says, Be instant in prayer! Be instant! Instant, instant means quick. Be quick to pray. Be quick to pray. And so, it's a constant conversation. It's something that we are able to carry on all the time, you know, and it can be little short prayers no matter where you are. You know, just to say, "Lord, I thank you. Lord, I love you. Thank you that you're with me. Thank you for your strength. Thank you for your mercy. Thank you for your grace. Thank you for your wisdom. Lead me, guide me, help me, Lord. Let me be a blessing to somebody. Show me who I need to touch, who I need to bless. Give me what to say.

You know, just little short prayers and that's constant conversation. Brother Lawrence, he said, "There is not in the world, a kind of life more sweet and delightful than that of a continual conversation with God." And so, pray without ceasing.

Somebody asked Smith Wigglesworth. He said, "Do you pray long? And Smith Wigglesworth said, "No, I never pray longer

than five minutes.” But he said, “I never go longer than five minutes without praying.” And so, that’s that constant conversation, that’s praying without ceasing. It’s when you’re always conversing with God throughout the day. That’s praying without ceasing. Then the final exaltation, be thankful. In everything, give thanks. In everything, give thanks. In everything, give thanks.

You know, I’ve always thought about that verse from the standpoint of no matter what type of situational circumstance you are in life, give thanks, whether in times of good or whether in times of bad. In everything, in everything, you know. In sickness or in health, give thanks, give thanks. But then I thought about it just recently, you know, as I was thinking about this subject. I thought about giving thanks literally in everything. In the house, give thanks. When you’re out in the street, give thanks. When you’re in the bathroom, he said give thanks in everything! And so I literally began to think about physical spaces. When you’re in the office, when you’re in the shower, when you are in the bathroom, when you are in the kitchen, when you’re in the great outdoors, when you’re in the car, in everything. When you’re in the closet, in everything give thanks.

When you’re in the cold. When you’re in the heat or the sunshine, in every place, in every place, in everything, in everything. So, I just took it literal. I’ll take it literally, in everything. In the good times, in the bad times, when you’re in the bed, in the bed, give thanks. In the bed, give thanks. Even in the hospital, give thanks. Give thanks when you’re in the hospital. That’s the time to rejoice and thank God that healing provision is available. Praise God!

That’s the time to thank God for him being your great physician. Jehovah Rapha. That’s the time to give him thanks for recuperating and recovering you and healing you and that what Jesus has provided for you, you give Him thanks, give Him thanks. In everything, you give thanks.

So like something that the great commentator, Matthew Henry, he said – great theologian, Biblical commentator. He was robbed one night and after he was robbed, he prayed this prayer. He said, “I thank thee God, first because I was never robbed before.” He said, “Second, I thank thee Father because although

they took my belongings, they did not take my life.” He said, “Father, thirdly, I thank you because even though they took everything I had, it wasn’t that much. Fourthly, I give you thanks Father because it was I who was robbed and not I who robbed.” See, he found something to give thanks for. You know, most of us would have prayed after that and we’re to say, “Father, strike him dead, Lord. Let the police catch him right away and let him be locked up forever.” But no, he took a different approach. He found something to be thankful for. He found something to be thankful for.

So, Ephesians Chapter 5, it says something similar to this, but it says giving thanks always. And so, always means that it’s a continuous action. Always means that – it’s a hard attitude. So, thanksgiving is not something you merely say. It’s not something you merely do. Thanksgiving has to spring forth out of the heart. It has to be a grateful heart. It has to be a grateful heart. It has to be a grateful life. It has to be a grateful life. And so, our lives are, you know, to have this constant attitude of thanksgiving. It’s a constant attitude of the heart, constant attitude of the heart.

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I like something that J.A. Shedd said. He said, “He who thanks, but with the lips, thanks but in part. The full and true thanksgiving comes from the heart.” And Johannes Gaertner said, he said, “To speak gratitude is courteous and pleasant. To enact gratitude is generous and noble, but to live gratitude is to touch heaven.” And so, that’s the way, we ought to be living gratitude. It emanates from the heart. It’s living a life that stems from having a grateful heart, having a grateful heart. When you’re grateful on the inside, you’re grateful on the inside, and then thanksgiving springs out of that fountain.

The Bible says, you know, out of the issues of your heart, you know, the springs of life flow out of the issues of your heart. And so, thanksgiving flows out of the fountain of the heart. So, we have to have a grateful heart. A grateful heart recognizes God’s grace and it realizes that many blessings that we have in life, both big and small, it always takes note all of the little things that we take for granted. Little things, you know, like being able to breathe and being able to see, being able to hear, being able to touch and feel, being able to just experience

sunrise or sunset. Just to be able to listen to the birds sing, just to be able to walk out into the grass barefoot.

You know, just the simple pleasures in life, we sometimes take those things for granted. But you know, you go lay up in the hospital for six months, hooked up to tubes and machine and you would give anything, you would give anything just to be able to walk out and walk around and go to the park and hear the kids playing and to go get a cup of coffee and just to watch a sunrise or a sunset.

And so, we take so many little things for grant at grateful heart, it recognizes all the little things, all the little things. Just so grateful that I'm not in pain and I'm not hurting. I'm grateful that I can walk, grateful that I can talk, grateful that I can sing even though my pitch is a little off, but I can sing. I'm grateful for that. I'm grateful for that. I'm grateful that I can love, grateful that I can work and serve, grateful that I can use my gifts and talents, grateful that I can study and learn, grateful that I can bless others, grateful that, you know, so you're just be grateful for all the little things in life.

A grateful heart is grateful for the spiritual things that we have. Spiritual things that God gifted us. He's blessed us with spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. So, I'm grateful for the name of Jesus. I'm grateful for the blood of Jesus. I'm grateful for the Holy Spirit. I'm grateful for love and joy and peace. I'm grateful to be an heir of God and joining Him with Jesus. I'm grateful for the anointing. I'm grateful for the ability to have wisdom and I'm grateful for God's grace. I'm grateful for his mercy. I'm grateful for gentleness and goodness and kindness and patience, peace.

I'm grateful for all these spiritual blessings. I'm grateful for my position in Christ. I'm grateful that I'm adopted in the family. I'm grateful that I'm presented holy and blameless in His sight because He chose me in Him before the foundation of the world. And so, that's a grateful heart, when you're grateful of not only all of your natural blessings, but you're grateful of your spiritual blessings. And so that's why you can always give thanks. No matter what's going on in life, you can always give thanks. If for no other reason, you can give thanks because God loves you like nobody's business. He loves you like nobody. He gave himself

for you and has called you by His name. That's why you can give thanks always.

I can always give thanks because He died, shed His blood for me and delivered me and He graced me with eternal life. And He lives on the inside of me and He's a constant companion and I'm never alone and I'm never forsaken. That's why I can always give thanks. And so that's the root, man, of having a grateful heart. That's a fountain that flows out of a grateful heart. But when you're grateful, you just have a wonderful spirit about makes. It you feel good. I mean, we have a grateful heart. A grateful heart can turn an average day into an extraordinary day. It can make a dull job enjoyable and full of life and vigor and vim and vitality and vibrancy. It can change something routine into something spectacular. When you have a grateful heart, it changes ordinary opportunities into blessings!

All because you have a grateful heart, it changes life. And so, it removes tension and fear. It relaxes you. It fills you with the presence of God. It gives you joy and peace and it makes your heart sing. It makes your heart sing.

00:15:05

In fact, Ephesians 5:19-20, it talks about how it makes your heart sing. It says, be not drunk with wine wherein is excess, but be filled, be filled with the spirit speaking to yourselves in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord. Giving thanks always for all the things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. And so, it makes your heart sing. In Colossians 3:15-16, it talks about the same thing. It talks about being thankful and having a heart full of grace that sings, that celebrates with singing. And so something about thanksgiving it makes your heart sing.

Let me give you some quick things about thanksgiving I haven't even talked about. I was supposed to talk about thanksgiving in prayer, but I'm so excited about thanksgiving and hardly made it to the thanksgiving in prayer. But listen, let me just tell you some quick things about thanksgiving. Thanksgiving, it increases your humility because you realize that everything belongs to God and the only way that you have anything is because God had to give it to you. He had allowed you to have

it. And so, thanksgiving, it increases your humility. Thanksgiving breeds contentment, you know, contentment is not having everything you want, but it is wanting everything that you have. And so, that's true contentment. So, Thanksgiving breeds contentment in our lives. Thanksgiving gives you a positive attitude because it forces you to think about what is right instead of what is wrong in your life. And so you're positive. There's a positive spirit. In fact, psychology says that the highest and happiest emotion comes from thanksgiving because it just makes you feel so good and makes you feel so happy and so positive. Well, that's because you're focusing on the positive, you're focusing on all the things that are right in your life. Thanksgiving, it builds trust in God. You know, thanksgiving, it recognizes the work of God in our lives and His grace and we remember His faithfulness and we can trust him to provide for our future and so thanksgiving, it increases our trust in the Lord and also, helps our relationships. We have a grateful heart. Thanksgiving, it makes you more understanding with others. It makes you more empathetic and more compassionate toward others. It makes you more appreciative. You begin to appreciate other people. It makes it easier for you to forgive people. When your heart is grateful, when your heart is full of gratitude, people don't get on your nerve as much because your heart is so full of gratitude.

You begin to appreciate. Even if you're married and your wife is fussing at you. If she's fussing at you, with a grateful heart, is no longer fussy. You're saying, "Wow! I'm so grateful because to hear my wife fussing, that means she's alive and well. You're thankful. It makes you thankful and so, you're so grateful that you don't react out of the flesh and so, you appreciate people, you're grateful for people, you're forgiving, you're understanding. It makes you more generous. When you're grateful, it makes you want to give to others, bless others. And so, thanksgiving is directly tied and connected to generosity and so, those are just some of the benefits of thanksgiving.

Now, I really came to talk about of thanksgiving in prayer, but man, I've used up all my time talking about thanksgiving, but anyway, the Bible talks quite a bit about thanksgiving in prayer. Colossians Chapter 4 Verse 2 talks about continuing in prayer and watching the same with thanksgiving. Also, Philippians 4:6 says, you know, be careful for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and supplication, let your request be made known to God

with thanksgiving! So, thanksgiving is an important part of prayer, always included in prayer. I found that in prayer, you know, primarily thanksgiving is you're not only thanking God for what He's done and you're thanking God for what you have, you're thanking God for who He is. But there's a thanksgiving in prayer that also begins to thank God in advance for the answer. Whatever you're praying for, there's a thanksgiving that it receives it in advance and you begin to praise God in advance.

And so, thanksgiving is a trigger. Thanksgiving is literally a trigger for your faith. It's a trigger. It causes something to happen, it causes a reaction. In fact, the Holy Spirit said this to me, I wrote it down. He said, "Gratitude in the heart causes miracles to happen." Gratitude in the heart causes miracles to happen. Thanksgiving is a trigger. It triggers your faith, it triggers something in prayer. Causes it to work, it causes it to go into action. You'll find Jesus praying in several instances and Jesus always gave thanks.

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When He got ready to feed the multitude, first thing He did, they give him a fish and the loaves. The bible says, He took them and He gave thanks. He gave thanks! He gave thanks! He had a grateful heart! "Father, thank you, thank you!" Now, it wasn't enough to feed the people, but he gave thanks for the little that He had. And because He gave thanks for the little that He had, God began working in a miraculous way that it provided for everybody. Thanksgiving triggers miracles to happen in your life. Jesus triggered miracles by using thanksgiving. When Jesus got ready to raise Lazarus from the dead, first thing He did, He give thanks to God. He said, "Father," now I want you to notice this, He gave thanks to God while Lazarus was still dead. Lazarus was still in the tomb and Jesus stood up there and He said, "Father, I just want to thank you. Thank you that you've already heard me. Thank you that you've already answered my prayer. Thank you, Lord God!" And He said, "Lazarus, come forth!" Thanksgiving is a trigger. Thanksgiving causes miracles to happen. Gratitude in the heart causes miracles to happen. So, gratitude mixed in with prayer is a powerful force and so that's why throughout the scriptures, you will always see gratitude and prayer hooked up together.

Jonah, when he was in the belly of the whale, for three nights, he was in this great fish that God has prepared to receive him. So Jonah, you know, he's in this whale and he decides to pray. You ever thought about what it must feel like to be in the belly of a whale for three days? You ever thought about that? He's just looking around, just wet everywhere. Can you imagine he's looking around in the walls of this thing, man? You know, anybody got a light? Can you imagine looking around in this thing? He's in there for three days, so you know he had time to walk around and explore a little bit. And you know, he's swimming in all this gastric acid. But after three days, you know, it came. You know, he said, "I might as well pray while I'm here". And then Jonah began to pray and you know, what he decided to do in the middle of his? He decided to offer the sacrifice of thanksgiving. You'll find this in the Book of Jonah Chapter 2 Verse 9. He decided to pray and he prayed and he offered the the sacrifice of thanksgiving. And the moment he started giving thanks in his prayer, man, that whale vomited him out on dry land.

Folks, I'm here to tell you. Thanksgiving and gratitude in the heart causes miracles to happen. Thanksgiving is a trigger. It releases your faith. It does something in prayer, so that's why you will always find that little connection there in prayer and thanksgiving. Thanksgiving is always included in prayer. It is powerful. It is powerful. Praise God! Praise God.

I'm going to stop right there. At least I got to share a little bit with you about thanksgiving in prayer. I pray that you got something from there, but thanksgiving is the powerful force in our lives. It's a powerful force in our prayer lives, to have a grateful, grateful heart. Praise God! Those of you watching by television, I want you to go to brothersoftheword.com. You can listen to this message in its entirety. This little series on "Making Prayer Fun" and we thank you so much for tuning in and you can listen to this free of charge. You can also email it to friend free of charge, but thank you so much for joining us today at Brothers of the Word because brother, you need the word.

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