

1 Thessalonians 5:17

BIG IDEA: Christians should pray without ceasing.

- I. Begin the day with \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. We pray because \_\_\_\_\_ compels us.
  - b. We pray because \_\_\_\_\_ requires it.
    - i. To remind us of His \_\_\_\_\_...
    - ii. ...and His \_\_\_\_\_.
  - c. Unceasing \_\_\_\_\_ is an unceasing \_\_\_\_\_ that we have unceasing \_\_\_\_\_ with the Father through Christ by His Spirit.
  - d. The target of our prayers is always \_\_\_\_\_.
- II. Spend the day with \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. Waiting upon the Lord means two things:
    - i. \_\_\_\_\_
    - ii. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Every day we should search for abundant reasons to \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
- III. Close the day with \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. Our days should end in \_\_\_\_\_ if we have the Lord as our God.
  - b. Our days should end with \_\_\_\_\_ to God.
  - c. Our days should end with \_\_\_\_\_ to God.
  - d. Our days should end with reflections upon our \_\_\_\_\_ and Christian \_\_\_\_\_.
- IV. CONCLUSION: We begin every day with God, spend every day with God, and we should close every day with God; or as Paul put it, we should “pray without ceasing.”
  - a. Prayer is an essential element of our \_\_\_\_\_ with God.

*A Method of Prayer and Communion with God - Matthew Henry*

1. "What's heaven but an everlasting access to God, and present access is a pledge of it...This life of communion with God, and constant attendance upon him, is a heaven upon earth."
2. Psalm 5:3, "O Lord, in the morning you hear my voice; in the morning I direct my prayer to you..."
3. "It is our wisdom and duty to begin every day with God."
4. "...wherever God finds a praying heart, he will be found a prayer-hearing God."
5. According to Henry, the access that Christians have to God in Christ gives them:
  - a. "...a companion ready in all their solitudes, so that they are never less alone than when alone. Do we need better society than fellowship with the Father?"
  - b. "...a counselor ready in all their doubts...a guide (Ps. 73:24), who has promised to direct with his eye, to lead us in the way wherein we should go."
  - c. "...a comforter ready in all their sorrows...[to] support sinking spirits, and be the strength of fainting hearts."
  - d. "...a supply ready in all their wants. They that have access to God have access to a full fountain, an inexhaustible treasure, a rich mine."
  - e. "...a support ready under all their burdens. They have access to him as Adonai [my LORD], my stay and the strength of my heart (Ps. 73:26)."
  - f. "...a shelter ready in all their dangers, a city of refuge near at hand. The name of the Lord is a strong tower (Prov. 18:10)."
  - g. "...strength ready for all their performances in doing work, fighting work. He is their arm every morning (Isa. 33:2)."
  - h. "...salvation insured by a sweet and undeceiving earnest...If he thus guides us by his counsel he will receive us to glory."
6. "God requires us to pray to remind us of His authority over us and His love and compassion toward us."
7. We always have something to talk to God about. He is a dear friend, so it is a pleasure to know Him personally and to walk with Him intimately. He is also the Lord of us and everything that touches our lives. Shall a servant not talk to his master? Shall a dependent not talk to his provider? Shall one in danger not converse with his defender? (Mark Jones and Joel Beeke in *A Puritan Theology*)
8. Let not self, carnal self, be the spring and center of your prayers, but God; let the eye of the soul be fixed upon him as your highest end in all your applications to him...and let this be your design in all your desires, that God may be glorified, and by this let them all be directed, determined, sanctified, and, when need is, overruled.
9. "God gives us fresh mercies every morning, so we should give Him fresh thanksgivings and fresh meditations on His beauties." (Mark Jones and Joel Beeke)
10. "...for you I wait all the day long." (Ps. 25:5)
11. "To wait on God, is to live a life of desire towards him, delight in him, dependence on him, and devotedness to him."
12. "We should spend our days desiring God, like a beggar constantly looking to his benefactor, hungering not only for His gifts but for He who is the Bread of Life." (Mark Jones and Joel Beeke)

13. We must wait on God every day, both in public worship on the Lord's Day and in the work of our callings on weekdays and on days off. We must wait on Him in the days of prosperity when the world smiles on us and in the days of adversity when the world frowns on us. We must lean on Him in the days of youth and in the days of old age.
  - a. Are you burdened with cares? Cast them on the Lord. Do you have responsibilities to fulfill? Does your business know that God assigned you this calling and employment and requires that you work according to the precepts of His Word? God alone can bless your efforts, and the glory of God should be the ultimate goal of all you work. Are you tempted to follow another way? Shelter yourself under His grace. Are you suffering? Submit to His will, and trust the love behind His fatherly corrections. Is your mind caught up in hopes or fears about the future? Wait on God who rules over life and death, good and evil.
14. "Wherever you go or whatever you do each day, search for abundant reasons for prayer and praise."  
(Mark Jones and Joel Beeke)
15. "In peace I will both lie down and sleep; for you alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety." (Ps. 4:8)
16. "Let this still every storm, command and create a calm in thy soul. Having God to be our God in covenant, we have enough; we have all. And though the gracious soul still desires more of God, it never desires more than God; in him it reposes itself with a perfect complacency; in him it is at home, it is at rest."
17. "Every bit we eat, and every drop we drink, is mercy; every step we take, and every breath we draw, mercy..."
18. "Henry taught us to continue to plead for repentance with godly sorrow, making fresh application of the blood of Christ to our souls for forgiveness, and drawing near to the throne of grace for peace and pardon each night." (Mark Jones and Joel Beeke)
19. Henry encouraged us to think that just as we retire from work for a time when we go to bed, so we shall retire for a time in death until the day of resurrection. Just as we take off our clothes at night, so we will put off this body until we receive a new one the morning of Christ's return. Just as we lie down in our beds to rest, so we will lie down in death to rest in Christ's presence where no nightmares can trouble us. Henry's focus on death was not unhealthy morbidity, but a realistic consideration in a fallen world where many people die each day with or without the Christian hope that extends beyond this life to eternal glory. (Mark Jones and Joel Beeke)
20. To thy glory, O God, I now go to sleep. Whether we eat or drink, yea, or sleep, for this is included in whatever we do, - we must do it to the glory of God...To thy grace, O God, and to the word of thy grace I now commend myself. It is good to fall asleep, with a fresh surrender of our whole selves, body, soul, and spirit, to God; now, "return to God as thy rest, O my soul; for he has dealt bountifully with thee"...O that when I awake I may be still with God; that the parenthesis of sleep, though long, may not break off the thread of my communion with God, but that as soon as I awake I may resume it!
21. "...through [Christ Jesus] we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father." (Eph. 2:18)
22. "What's heaven but an everlasting access to God, and present access is a pledge of it...This life of communion with God, and constant attendance upon him, is a heaven upon earth."