



7 Difficult things we have to pray

Do you sometimes find yourself avoiding certain matters in need of prayer, because they just seem too hard or difficult to pray about? This may include praying for someone you don't like, forgiving someone who has hurt you, confessing a secret sin, etc. As sons and daughters of our heavenly Father, it is our joy to be obedient in praying for every matter near to His heart, however hard it may seem at the time.

Mentioned here, are seven difficult things we have to pray. As you consider each one, ask the Holy Spirit to reveal your own heart to you, and to strengthen you with might in the inner man (Ephesians 1:17-18), so that you will pray these with a willing and even a joyful heart. (Psalm 35:9).

1. Blessing those who curse you

But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. (Matthew 5:44-45).

Jesus teaches us that we are to live in a different spirit from the world. This means that when we are cursed or ridiculed or scorned, we are to speak a blessing over that person. For example, think about the person in traffic recently who shouted at you or showed you an obscene sign. Most people, even Christians, will feel that the offender does not deserve the blessing. However, if we want to show ourselves to be sons of our Father in heaven, we must bless the just and the unjust as He does.

Father, as Your child, I bless every person who has cursed, ridiculed or scorned me (if you can, name specific people).

2. Forgiving

Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do." (Luke 23:34). Then he [Stephen] knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not charge them with this sin." And when he had said this, he fell asleep. (Acts 7:60). "And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses." (Mark 11:25).

If we have been wronged in any way, it is easy to hold on to unforgiveness. It may even seem impossible to forgive. But our Lord Jesus and the apostle Stephen both showed us the way of the Kingdom before they died, by forgiving those who were responsible for their death. If you do not

forgive, your heavenly Father will not forgive you. And if you do not forgive others, a root of bitterness may develop that will hold you in bondage.

Merciful Father, I forgive (name the person/people) who has wronged me, as You have forgiven me my sins.

3. Confessing sins

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9).

The Word is clear that we must confess our sins to God so that He will forgive us and cleanse us. Sometimes there are sins that are hard to admit because it will require a certain response from us we may not like, e.g. to let it go. Be watchful. Sin is deceitful. Once our hearts become dull of hearing and hardened to the convicting voice of the Holy Spirit, it can lead to us drifting away from the Lord.

Father, forgive me for sinning (be specific). I know it is wrong and I turn from that wicked way right now.

4. Praying for all people

Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. (2 Timothy 2:1-4).

As believers it comes naturally for us to pray for our family and friends, or those we can relate to or agree with. However, it takes a kingdom perspective and obedience to pray for those we don't like or disagree with. An unpopular politician or a disliked principal at a school is more likely to draw criticism rather than prayer. God, our Saviour, desires for all to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. So, we must pray for all people.

Lord, I pray for (name individuals) to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

5. Worshipping and praising God in difficult times

Though the fig tree may not blossom, Nor fruit be on the vines; Though the labor of the olive may fail, And the fields yield no food; Though the flock may be cut off from the fold, And there be no herd in the stalls— Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation. (Habakkuk 3:17-18). Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name. (Hebrews 13:15).

God is worthy of our praise, not only because He has saved us, but also for who He is. God is the eternal and all-sufficient One who saved us and promised to be sufficient for us (2 Corinthians 12:9). If we trust God's character, we can worship, praise and thank Him in all circumstances. This will not only bless Him, but also other people around us.

My God and Saviour, I will praise You with all my heart in every season – trusting that You are working all things for my good.

6. Submitting to God's will in your life

Again, a second time, He [Jesus] went away and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done." (Matthew 26:42).

Asking for God's will in your life and submitting to Him may sound like a very spiritual thing to do. However, the moment we realise the costliness of what His will may require of us, it takes great humility and a willingness to surrender to Him. As we learn to walk as Jesus walked, we pray with trembling, but complete trust, that our Father's will be done in our lives.

Heavenly Father, not my will, but Your will be done in and through my life.

7. Asking for God's purification

Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties; And see if there is any wicked way in me, And lead me in the way everlasting. (Psalm 139:23-24). In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, (1 Peter 1:6-7).

When David asked God to search his heart and lead him in the way everlasting, he was asking the Lord to purify him (Psalm 139:23-24). It is God's desire that we will be transformed into the image of His Son, which is the process of sanctification. This means trials will come your way and the testing of your faith will be by fire.

Lord, I submit to your testing and discipline. By Your grace, give me the strength to endure and to be sanctified by it.

Be prepared

Be willing to pray the difficult prayers that the Holy Spirit puts on your heart. Fill yourself with the truth of God's Word and submit to the working of the Holy Spirit in your life, and eventually these difficult prayers will become easier to pray. You will reap the peaceful fruit of righteousness (Hebrews 12:11) that flows from it.