

## To Whom and how we pray

God in Heaven exists eternally in harmony and unity. The three persons of God revealed to us in Scripture, Whom we call the Godhead or Trinity, are an eternal mystery. However, three distinct expressions of God are revealed in His Word, and each of His roles are special and purposeful in prayer.

### *God the Father; the Source and Provisionary*

A turning point in our ability to effectively pray, and even successfully live as a child of God, hinges on our view of God our Father. As Father, He is to be at the root of all of our needs met, our Provider on all fronts. This can be difficult to grasp or even accept, especially if we try to compare Him with our earthly fathers. Like all men born into sin, earthly fathers are sinners and prone to failure and limitations. But God our Father is superior in **ability, love, and motive**. In all three things, He is pure and without limits, and He always deals with us in our best interests. Realizing that we never have anything to fear as He deals with us is truly liberating. We can always trust Him. Knowing this frees us from our fears of His response, because we can trust that He is superior, and that the outcome will always be right if we follow Him.

As the Source of all things, our Father possesses all resources. Consider for a moment that He is without bounds, and that He is over everything. That means all things, without exception. As our Father, His desire is to see His children learn to rely upon Him and to grow into the potential He has given us as heirs of His resources. His pleasure is in seeing us flourish in our surrender to His provision. He wants us to rely upon Him and learn how to be responsible in using His resources. We pray to our Father for our need, and in our thanks for all of His provision over us.

### *God the Christ; our Priest, Intercessor, and Perfector*

God the Father has provided Jesus so we can do our part in His desire. As our Provisionary, our Father has included everything we need to serve Him in an acceptable way. Jesus is pivotal in our relationship to our Father, because we still are sinners, and we need forgiveness to thrive under Him. This is important because to grow in usefulness requires us to interact with our Father, and to interact with our Father requires us to have submissive and forgiven hearts. Jesus completely meets the gap between God's requirements and our failure.

Jesus was sent to eventually become the perfect representative, or priest, between God and mankind. Beginning with His sinless birth, He lived among sin without sinning Himself, and finally embodied our sin and its punishment as the flawless sacrifice, so that He could always stand in our defense before the Father's judgment. In line with the Father's demands under the Law, Jesus fulfilled the roles of both Priest and Sacrifice, and then went on to sit beside the Father to represent mankind. Today, He continues to be the only High Priest the Father recognizes, and no one communicates with God without going through Jesus.

He did not sit down next to the Father to quietly wait for the end of the world. Instead, Jesus' continual intercession at the Throne maintains His gift of Salvation and our effectiveness as servants to God the Father. Our 'flesh' has not yet been reborn, and we continue to sin – therefore we continue to need a priest to have forgiveness. This is not a threat to our Salvation, but it is our continually being restored in our relationship with the Father. Our Salvation is now secured in Jesus' current intercession, and in the future at the Great Judgment. We are free from the Father's anger because of Jesus' always saying, "I've paid for this sin, too, Father." We can always rely on Jesus representing us.

Jesus is responsible for our growing in useful service now, and for our presentation to the Father at the Gathering. The 'good works' we were Saved for serve the purpose of showing God to the world now, and in shaping us for God later. Starting at the point of our Adoption, we continue to grow to become more like Jesus, Who now owns us. This process is our Sanctification, where we leave more of our old selves behind, and in obedience, become more like what God sees in our potential as His children. All of the means the Father has provided – a perfect High Priest, forgiveness, His Spirit in us, limitless opportunity to grow and serve Him – are tools through which Jesus **oversees** our preparation and forgives our failures. He is getting us ready to meet and live with God Himself. We pray to Jesus and rely upon Him for all of these things, confessing our sin, sharing our struggles, leaning on His Divine humanity. He's been there, and He knows our troubles. Jesus our High Priest is our best friend!

### ***God the Spirit; the Truth and Essence God shares with us***

We are able to interact with God in Heaven through His Spirit, Who is here in us as His adopted children. Christ's ascension to Heaven made way for His Spirit's distribution to us here in Creation, and is a central result of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. The Holy Spirit in man, at this time now after the Cross, is unique to authentic believers. God's Spirit will not be found in anyone who is not forgiven and adopted.

The Holy Spirit is responsible for teaching us how to grow into our potential. He only conveys the truth that comes from the Father, Who is truth in His very essence. The Spirit is placed in us to teach us how to know and obey God. He exists as part of us. This is an amazing sacrifice on God's part, because while we still are sinners, He remains patiently in us. Despite our frequent offense to Him, He faithfully continues to impress the truth to us. He tolerantly serves us because of Jesus' constant intercession. He speaks truth to us in revealing and applying the Word, and by edifying us in joy and worship, or in convicting us in our sin. In all cases, it is because of He is bringing God's truth to us so that we will learn to properly react to God's truth.

The Holy Spirit is our assurance, a proof of our Salvation. He is a most priceless gift, the Spirit of God Whom those before the Cross could only look forward to. He is the treasure we are stewards of, Whom we are to exercise to the fullest potential. He is our taste of God, a preview of the sweet fellowship we will experience in full once we go Home. He is our connection in faith to God, the very Spirit of Jesus our Savior. He relays our prayers before the Throne in the way useful and pleasing to the Father.

***To the Father, through His Christ, by His Holy Spirit***

Only people whose High Priest is Jesus, who are indwelled with the Holy Spirit, are recognized by the Father as His children. The Father has chosen to use priests as representatives between God and mankind. Jesus plainly stated that no one would see the Father, except through Him. Jesus is the only One acceptable as the High Priest and perfect Sacrifice.

Only the children have the right to be heard and answered by the Father. Effective prayer is only because of Jesus, His Salvation, and His constant forgiveness of our sins. Prayer before the Throne of Grace is only through His Spirit in us, Who speaks only in truth.

Who do we pray to? This is best answered by considering Who of the persons of God we worship and appeal to in prayer. All three are God, and all three are worthy. How do we pray? Knowing Who God is and how He provides for us, we can pray effectively to all three. This is good service to God, what He desires, and what He has told His children to do in His Provision, His Priest, and His Spirit.