

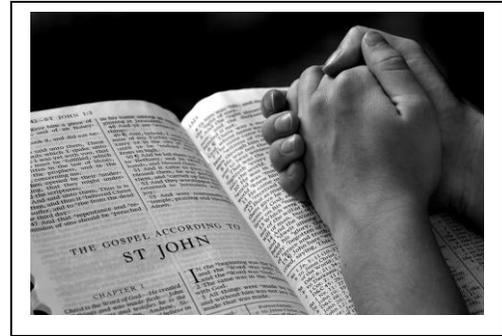
Dangerous Ground: Prayer without the Word

By Barbara L. Klika, MSW

Undershepherd

www.set-apart-ministries.org

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It is not coincidental that many pictures of prayer include the Scriptures. As important as it is to be in prayer and communication with our Elohim, it is equally important to keep grounded in His written Word. This book, the Bible, is identified as **THE Source** of our understanding of the nature and character of our God, as well as being **THE Source** of direction for how we are to honor Him in our lives. It is not simply a resource that may come and go. Messiah is called the Living Word and He is in essence, one with the Written Word.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

He was in the beginning with God

*And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory,
the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.*

John 1:1-2, 14

As I continue providing Life Coaching services, I often find that I am mentoring or discipling people who are newer in the faith. Those from traditional or liturgical church backgrounds may have a different focus compared to the experience of those more focused on current television/internet ministries. In my Lutheran upbringing, I learned something of the Word but never had any training on the experience of listening for Him in prayer. As I have worked with clients from Pentacostal or Charismatic backgrounds, I have seen that many had focused on experiencing God in prayer but had little familiarity with the Word. I don't think either extreme is desirable but of the two, I have seen the lack of familiarity with the Word to present a serious problem. From what I have understood, many of the currently popular internet or television ministries do not often provide a foundational training but rather a topical stream of information. The focus is on accepting Jesus and then keeping close to Him in prayer in a daily walk of faith. While this is certainly desirable, there are some guidelines that seem to be missing in what is presented, especially to those coming to faith as adults.

The ministries based more in the experiential focus on God often speak of a "word of knowledge" or a prophetic message. God has not stopped speaking to His people, as some from a dispensational viewpoint believe, but there must be some checks and balances to keep on track. Subjective, objective and extraneous variables need to be considered. Differences in personal maturity and intensity of need can easily influence how one interprets what is "heard." A new believer may be unduly influenced by their own need and thus hear from their own subconscious or flesh what they want to hear or even not recognize the tacit influence of the evil one or the world. Without an intimate knowledge of the Word, they may not recognize the source of "words" heard that tell them to do things that are not consistent with our Father. New believers, in the first blush of love for Messiah, have not yet learned the cautions that are necessary to check what they believe they hear as compared to the true nature and character of our Elohim. Sometimes, in immaturity and lack of balance, they may even hear/interpret what they

fear to hear, as a command or condemnation. The failing is NOT in His ability to speak to us, but in our fallible mind, will and emotions; far too easily swayed and deceived with what we want to hear.

*Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God,
For many false prophets have gone out into the world.*

1 John 4:1

*Knowing this first of all,
That no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation.*

2 Peter 1:4

The experiential focus on what is heard in prayer, without the foundation of knowledge of the Word, leads to people making some very unusual choices and sometimes, in un-tempered zeal, some unwise ones as well. This often goes hand in glove with the belief that the "Old Testament" is no longer valid for today. How is it that the God who has declared that He doesn't change, would change?

"For I am the LORD, I do not change;

Malachi 3:6a

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.

2 Timothy 3:16-17

Though this reference from Timothy is often quoted, it is seldom realized that the "All Scripture" referred to at the time was what we know as the Old Testament: the Torah, the Prophets and the writings. These writings are the foundation of all that our Messiah taught and did when He was in the flesh, showing us Himself as The Way. If we cut free from this foundation, we are at risk, picking and choosing what to believe. Here are two witnesses of many references to this.

*Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man,
then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do **nothing of myself;**
but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things.*

John 8:28

*Jesus gave them this answer: "I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only
what he sees his Father doing, because **whatever the Father does the Son also does.***

John 5:19

This is such an important point, because of the prophet's warning that anyone who teaches differently from what the Father taught is a false prophet and NOT to be followed. If Messiah DID change anything, he wouldn't be our Messiah! Here are a few verses addressing this, though the entire chapter is appropriate.

*Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams:
for the LORD your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God
with all your heart and with all your soul. Ye shall walk after the LORD your God, and
fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him,
and cleave unto him.*

Deuteronomy 13: 3-4

Our personal prayer lives are between each one and our God, but there ARE things that are appropriate and things that are not. The revealed Written Word must always be our mainstay and objective standard to compare and test what we understand subjectively.

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved,

a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.

2 Timothy 2:15 ESV

Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.

Acts 17:11

*But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and **bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.***

John 14:26

The Word is our bread and we are to eat of it, so that it can be brought to our remembrance! Any “revelation” or “word of knowledge” that does not continue in the same character and direction of the Written Word is not to be considered of Him. How Wise an Elohim do we have! He knows that we are but dust, and too easily deceived so that He has already provided these cautions as we seek Him.

For those who would like to see more on similar subjects, please check out our website at www.Set-Apart-Ministries.org