

# The **BATTLE PLAN** for **PRAYER** FROM BASIC TRAINING TO TARGETED STRATEGIES

## 7

### **What: Types of Prayer** [part 2]

**“I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men.” (1 Timothy 2:1 NKJV)**

Creative lists and methods have been developed over the years to help explain different types of prayers, but for our purposes, we will be using what we learned from others years ago: the acronym A.C.T.S.—Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, and Supplication.

Any prayer at any moment will likely be one of these four broad types. And over time, if you want your relationship with God to stay in full bloom, your praying should incorporate each of them.

There are no rigid rules here. God gives freedom in prayer to flow in and out of these areas as needed. You can approach Him with only one, or you can integrate them all. And yet together, these four types provide a useful and natural progression as you interact with the Lord.

**1. Adoration is prayer that praises and worships God.** And He is fully worthy of all our praise. In adoration, we’re not necessarily requesting anything from Him; we’re merely adoring and honoring Him in our hearts.

We were each created and called to praise God throughout our lives. (Eph. 1:5-6; Heb. 13:15) The psalmist wrote, *“Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Praise the Lord!”* (Ps. 150:6) Jesus praised His heavenly Father in prayer and presented praise as a first priority of our prayers. He began His model prayer with: *“Hallowed be Thy name”* (Matt. 6:9 KJV)—a front and center acknowledgment of God’s holiness. Totally pure and perfect.

Psalm 150 challenges us to praise God with whatever means possible, in all types of places, at all available times. The Hebrew word hallelujah is actually a command to hallel (praise) Yah (the Lord). It’s an invitation to enjoy God and express our wonder of the One who is most wonderful. Think of it as practice for eternity.

Every one of us is wired to worship. And we will give our hearts, attention, money, time, and service to whatever we value the most. By worshiping God wholeheartedly with our lips and lives, we get to do the greatest thing in the greatest way for the greatest One. When we are adoring Him silently in our hearts, proclaiming His goodness out loud, or singing a worshipful prayer, *“it is*

*pleasant, and praise is beautiful*". (Ps. 147:1 NKJV) When we pray in adoration, we stop focusing on ourselves and our storms, and start fixing our eyes on the only One who is fully able to handle any situation or request. (2 Cor. 3:18)

When you study praise in Scripture, you will observe people expressing one or more of the following things to God: A reminder of who God is:

- **You are our Creator;** *You are awesome; Lord of all.*
- **A recounting of what He's done:** *You rescued us; You saved us; You provided for me.*
- **A recognition of His holiness:** *There is none like You; You are greater than . . . better than . . . higher than . . . more powerful than . . . anything else.*
- **A rejoicing in His name:** *We lift up Your name; I praise Your name; we honor Your name.*
- **A relinquishing of control:** *I love You and give You my life; I surrender to You; all that I am and have is Yours.*

How often do you praise God while praying? How often do you stop asking and just start bragging on Him? How often do you pause to tell Him how incredible He is— that He is the greatest thing in your universe?

In praise we revel in the reality of His majesty. We remember He is perfect, powerful, and precise. We acknowledge He is beyond us, yet He chooses to draw near to us. So we bask in the warmth of His love and lift our voices to worship Him. We're able to view all of life more properly when we've first prioritized praise.

**2. Confession is prayer that gets honest about sin.** Getting right and staying clean before God is necessary to remain close to Him and be effective in prayer. We are all sinners and all stumble in many ways. (James 3:2) Yet we are not ready to properly serve God or ask Him for much of anything until we honestly confess and turn from any unaddressed sin in our lives. But when we do, *"How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered!"* (Ps. 32:1–2)

God's Word, His Spirit, and your conscience will reveal the ungodly things you have done or the good things you should have done. (James 4:17) But through the cross of Christ, God has provided a way for anyone to be forgiven. He does not expose sin in us to condemn us but so we can turn from it, turn to Him, and be cleansed. (John 3:16–17; Acts 3:19) We will always be tempted to rationalize sin, deny it, or just stubbornly cling to it. But there is no real freedom or joy there, only emptiness and unwanted consequences. *"If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us,"* but *"if we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"*. (1 John 1:8-9) That's why Jesus also included *"Forgive us our*

*trespasses as we forgive others*" (Matt. 6: 12 KJV) as part of our model, daily prayer.

King David prayed a passionate prayer of confession after being confronted with his adultery with Bathsheba and the murder of her husband. He said, *"Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. . . . Against You, You only, I have sinned"*. (Ps. 51:2, 4) He testified at another time, *"I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I did not hide; I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the Lord'; and You forgave the guilt of my sin"*. (Ps. 32:5) Prayer is a daily opportunity to walk in the light (1 John 1:5–7), be honest, deal with our own darkness, and admit to Him—as well as to ourselves—what He already knows to be true. If God says something is wrong, then we should agree with Him in our hearts.

The phrase used repeatedly in Scripture is to *"pour out"* our hearts before Him. (Ps. 62: 8) We should freely come to the One whose mercies are new every morning. He is faithful to cleanse. To heal. To restore our fellowship. Not only will your honest confession lead to a fresh experience of His forgiveness, but it will also help you let go of the chains and walk in greater freedom in the future.

**3. Thanksgiving is God-directed, humbly expressed gratitude.** While praise focuses more on who God is, thanksgiving highlights what He has done or is doing. Just as parents delight in grateful children, we should *"magnify Him with thanksgiving"*, knowing our heartfelt gratitude greatly pleases our heavenly Father. (Ps. 69:30) Thanksgiving is priceless, yet it costs us nothing except *"the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name"*. (Heb. 13: 15 NKJV)

Ungratefulness, however, is very costly and is actually a poisonous sin. (Rom. 1:21; 2 Tim. 3:1–5) Jealousy, greed, lust, complaining, theft, envy, and covetousness can all spring from ungratefulness in the heart. Unthankful people are consistently sour in almost all circumstances. They tend to complain about everything, never fully enjoying what they have, yet always wanting more.

That's why developing a grateful heart is a major part of God's agenda. His Word commands it (1 Thess. 5:18), His works demand it (Ps. 106:47), and His Spirit inspires it. (1 Cor. 2:11–12) God's grace helps enable any believer anywhere in the world to give thanks in any situation. (Ps. 118:21) *"For all things are for your sakes, so that the grace which is spreading to more and more people may cause the giving of thanks to abound to the glory of God"*. (2 Cor. 4:15)

Regardless of the pain and problems faced in life, we each have things to be thankful for. God's Word says, *"In everything give thanks"* (1 Thess. 5:18), while also *"giving thanks always for everything"* (Eph. 5:20 HCB5). Despite all

the rotten things, the Bible tells us we should be *“overflowing with gratitude”*. (Col. 2:7) But how?

It goes back to the unchangeable nature of God. The same qualities for which we praise Him create the context for gratefulness. Though the world grows darker, His Word promises goodness and His love never changes. We always have reason to express thanks because He is always working through all things (even the bad things) for the good of those who love Him. (Rom. 8:28–29) So when all logic says there’s no way to be thankful, His past faithfulness and constant care, as well as the sacrifice of His Son, remind us we’d be crazy not to trust Him. Gratefully. Even now. We look behind us at what we’ve seen Him do—miracles that have no other explanation, His ordering of events with impeccable timing—and we see, from the rising to the setting of the sun, great is His faithfulness.

Imagine if you were Joseph serving in the midst of slavery, Daniel standing in the lions’ den, David being taunted by Goliath, or Mary watching Jesus being crucified— and asking yourself, “How can I thank God for this?” Yet in each of these dark and painful moments, God was working amazingly for their good and would be greatly glorified through the details of those circumstances. So by faith we, too, can stay thankful in prayer. The darkness is only temporary. But salvation, His Holy Spirit, His Word, His love....all are eternal. If God did nothing else for us, what He has already done is cause enough for a thousand lifetimes of thanks.

**4. Supplication is asking for something from God.** It means to beseech, petition, or appeal for Him to do or provide something for yourself or others. (Eph. 6:18) The Bible says, *“You do not have because you do not ask”*. (James 4:2)

Jesus said to His followers, *“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened”*. (Matt 7:7–8) We’re invited—even commanded—to come and pray, to seek and find.

Yet among these four types of prayer, there’s biblical wisdom in listing supplication last. Our hearts are more pure and ready to pray in faith when we have first adored God, confessed our sins, and thanked Him for what He’s done.

One important type of supplication is intercession, which carries the idea of intervening with a request on behalf of someone else. Interceding is one of the most loving things you can do for others. When God was about to judge Israel, Moses interceded and asked for mercy. While Haman was planning to

destroy the Jews, Esther interceded in prayer and then politically interceded for the people and saved her nation. The Bible says Jesus is at the right hand of the Father ever interceding for us (Rom. 8:34), and the Holy Spirit is in the hearts of believers interceding for us according to the will of God. (Rom. 8:27) We, too, must learn to pray for others.

A.C.T.S.—Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication. You don't need to always include every type of prayer when you pray. Sometimes you need to just get to the point, like Peter when he cried, "Lord, save me" (Matt. 14:30), or when Jesus said, "Father, glorify Your name," and that was it. (John 12:28)

But as you think about your times with the Lord, how often do you weave all four types of prayer into them? Are you heavier in one aspect, yet almost nonexistent in others? Seek a balance and learn to go deeply into all of them. Together, they make prayer a richer, more complete experience.

**PRAYER:**

*Father in heaven, I praise Your name as holy and to be honored. I worship You as my God and ask that You glorify Yourself in my life. Search me and cleanse me of anything that displeases You. Forgive me as I forgive others. Thank You for Your provision, protection, and faithfulness in my life. Thank You for inviting me into Your presence daily. Teach me to pray, O Lord. Train me to joyfully bow in worship, to freely confess any and all sin. I thank You with a humble heart, praying this for myself and also for those closest to me. All to Your Glory, O God! In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.*

Kendrick, Stephen; Kendrick, Alex (2015-07-05). The Battle Plan for Prayer: From Basic Training to Targeted Strategies (Kindle Locations 581-595). B&H Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.

**HOMEWORK:**

1. The acronym '**A.C.T.S.**' represents what?

**LAST WEEK:**

- 2. \_\_\_\_\_ IS PRAYER THAT PRAISES AND WORSHIP GOD.
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_ IS PRAYER THAT GETS HONEST ABOUT SIN.

**TODAY:**


- 4. \_\_\_\_\_ IS GOD-DIRECTED, HUMBLY EXPRESSED GRATITUDE.
- 5. T F: '*Praise*' focuses more on what God is.

6. **T F:** *'Thanksgiving'* highlights what God has done or is doing.
7. 'Thanksgiving highlights what God has done or is doing' express what:  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. **Y N NS:** Do you have a 'heartfelt gratitude greatly please your heavenly Father?
9. *'Thanksgiving'* is **PRICE** or **PRICELESS**, yet it costs you nothing except 'the fruit of your \_\_\_\_\_, giving thanks to His Name'.
10. Name one that is very costly and is also poisonous sin?
11. Name 7 poisonous sins spring up from '**ungratefulness in the heart**'?
12. Name of group—people that are consistently sour in almost all circumstance, tend to complain about everything, never fully enjoying what they have, yet always wanting more?
13. **Y N NS:** Have you experienced this 'consistently sour in almost all circumstance, tend to complain about everything, never fully enjoying what you have, yet always wanting more'?
14. Name one that is a major part of God's agenda?

 His Word \_\_\_\_\_ it.

 His works \_\_\_\_\_ it.

 His Spirit \_\_\_\_\_ it.

 **Y N NS:** Do you believe in God's grace which helps enable you—believer who gives thanks to God in any situation?

The Living Bible translates: *"These sufferings of ours are for your benefit. And the more of you who are won to Christ, the more there are to thank Him for His great kindness, and the more the Lord is glorified."* (2 Corinthians 4:15)

15. You regardless of the pain and problem faced in life, you have things to be \_\_\_\_\_ for.

16. You \_\_\_\_\_ all the rotten things, the Bible tells you in the Living Bible quotes, "...let your lives overflow with joy and thanksgiving for all He has done." (Colossians 2:7) Interesting in Message Bible quotes, "My counsel for you is simple and straightforward: Just go ahead with what you've been given. You received Christ Jesus, the Master; now *live* Him. You're deeply *rooted* in Him. You're well *constructed* upon Him. You know your way around the faith. Now *do* what you've taught. School's out: quit studying the subject and *start living* it! And let your living spill over into thanksgiving." (v. 6-7)

17. Name God's unchangeable nature? \_\_\_\_\_

Romans 8:28-29 MSG quote: "God knows us far better than we know ourselves, know our pregnant condition, and keeps us present before God. That's why we can be so sure that every detail in our lives of love for God is worked into something good. God knew what He was doing from the very beginning. He decided from the outset to *shape* the lives of those who love Him along the same lines as the life of His Son. The Son stands first in the line of humanity He restored. We see the original and intended shape of our lives there in Him."

18. We always have reason to express thanks because He is always working through all things (even the \_\_\_\_\_ things) for the good of those who love Him.

👁️ Look at the stories of Joseph, David, David, and Mary, the mother of Jesus: Yet in each of these dark and painful moments, God was working \_\_\_\_\_ for their good and would be greatly glorified through the details of those circumstances.

✝️ So by faith, you, too, can stay \_\_\_\_\_ in your prayer.

🌟 **T F:** The darkness is only eternal.

🌟 **T F:** Salvation, Holy Spirit, God's Word, God's love...all are temporary.

19. \_\_\_\_\_ **IS ASKING FOR SOMETHING FROM GOD.**

👁️ It means:

❖ you \_\_\_\_\_

❖ you \_\_\_\_\_

❖ or you \_\_\_\_\_

✓ for God to \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ something for yourself or others.

James 4:2 VOC quotes, "You crave something that you do not possess, so you murder to get it. You desire the things you cannot earn, so you sue others and fight for what you want. You do not have because you have chosen not to ask."

Matthew 7:7-8 NLT says "Keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks, receives. Everyone who seeks, finds. And to everyone who knocks, the door will be opened."

Matthew 7:7-8 TPT says, "Ask, and the gift is yours. Seek, and you'll discover. Knock, and the door will be opened for you. For every *persistent* one will get what he asks for. Every *persistent* seeker will discover what he longs for. And everyone who knocks *persistently* will one day find an open door.'

20. What is one important type of supplication? \_\_\_\_\_
21. The Bible says Jesus, the High Priest, is at the right hand of the Father ever interceding \_\_\_\_\_ you and the Holy Spirit is \_\_\_\_\_ your heart interceding for you according to the will of God.
22. You, too, must learn to pray for others. Can you give us the example what you pray for others?
23. As you think about your time with the Lord, how often do you weave all four types [A.C.T.S.] of prayers into them? Are you heavier in one aspect, yet almost nonexistent in others? Seek the balance and learn to go deeply into all of them. Together, they make prayer a richer, more complete experience.
24. How can you help your church to be a model of A.C.T.S.?