

**“Get Your ACTS Together”**  
Part 1: “Starting to Get Our ACTS Together”  
A—Adoration

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When it comes to remembering the various parts of prayer, the following acrostic has been recommended by many:

A—Adoration  
C—Confession  
T—Thanksgiving  
S—Supplication

This acrostic can be helpful in several ways: For one, it can help us prioritize our praying, reminding us that adoration should be the first and foremost part of our prayers. And two, it can help give proper proportion to our praying, reminding us that there are other parts to prayer besides supplication.

May an examination of each of these four parts of prayer help us to more consciously incorporate them into our praying, thereby helping us to “get our ACTS together.”

**Adoration**

“Getting our ACTS together” starts with Adoration. The chorus of the Christmas carol, “O Come, All Ye Faithful” says: “O come, let us adore Him.” One of the ways we can adore the Lord is by praising His Person in prayer.

The mandate to do so. In the Model Prayer of Matthew 6:9-13//Luke 11:2-4, Jesus teaches us (Luke 11:1) to make God’s praise not just part of our praying, but preeminent in our praying (Matthew 6:9//Luke 11:2)<sup>1</sup>: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name.” In Scripture, “name” stands for the nature of a person. So, what is being prescribed is prayer for God to be “put on a pedestal.” The clear implication is that we should not only pray for this to happen, but also make it happen by, among other things, praising God’s Person in prayer.

The motive for doing so. God’s Person should be praised in prayer because He is praiseworthy (1 Chronicles 16:25, Psalm 48:1, 96:4, and 145:3). He is to be blessed because of His Being; He is to be glorified because He is God. His Person is perceived by His perfections, or attributes. God is to be praised because He is:

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<sup>1</sup>The Model Prayer makes God preeminent by focusing first on Him, as we are to pray for God to be number one (“hallowed be *Your name*”); for His kingdom to come (“*Your kingdom come*”); and for His will to be done (“*Your will be done*”). It is only after focusing on God’s glory that the prayer focuses on our good (“... *our daily bread ... our debts ...*,” etc.).

- Eternal: without beginning or end, existing in one indivisible present (see Nebuchadnezzar's prayer in Daniel 4:34; see verse 26 of Paul's doxology in Romans 16:25-27; see Paul's doxology in 1 Timothy 1:17)
- Free: absolutely independent, able to do what He wants, when He wants, where He wants, how He wants, to whom He wants, for whom He wants, and for whatever reason(s) He wants (see verse 2 of Job's prayer in Job 42:1-6; see verse 35 of Paul's doxology in Romans 11:33-36)
- Gracious: sometimes giving us the good we don't deserve (see verses 17 and 31 of the Levites' prayer in Nehemiah 9:4-38; see verse 15 of David's prayer in Psalm 86; see verse 10 of Peter's doxology in 1 Peter 5:10-11)
- Holy: unique, one-of-a-kind in His being and perfectly pure in His behavior (see verse 2 of Hannah's prayer in 1 Samuel 2:1-10; see verse 16 of David's prayer in 1 Chronicles 29:10-19; see verse 11 of Jesus' prayer in John 17)
- Immortal: incapable of having His existence extinguished (see Paul's doxology in 1 Timothy 1:17; see verse 16 of Paul's doxology in 1 Timothy 6:15-16)
- Immutable: always the same, unchanging and unchangeable, always being what He has always been
- Incomprehensible: incapable of being fully figured out (see verses 33-34 of Paul's doxology in Romans 11:33-36)
- Infinite: beyond measure, without limit and unlimitable, in regards to time (eternal), power (omnipotent), space (omnipresent; see verse 27 of Solomon's prayer in 1 Kings 8:22-53), knowledge (omniscient), authority (sovereign), etc.
- Just: a righteous judge, always doing what is right and fair (see verse 25 of Abraham's prayer in Genesis 18:23-33; see verses 3 and 10 of Hannah's prayer in 1 Samuel 2:1-10; see verse 15 of Ezra's prayer in Ezra 9:5-15; see verses 8 and 33 of the Levites' prayer in Nehemiah 9:4-38; see verses 18, 19, and 23 of Jeremiah's prayer in Jeremiah 32:16-25; see verses 7, 14, and 16 of Daniel's prayer in Daniel 9:1-19; see verse 25 of Jesus' prayer in John 17)
- Loving: doing what's best for His own (see verse 10 of Jacob's prayer in Genesis 32:9-12; see verse 6 of Solomon's prayer in 1 Kings 3:5-14; see verse 23 of Solomon's prayer in 1 Kings 8:22-53; see verse 5 of Nehemiah's prayer in Nehemiah 1:4-11; see verses 17 and 32 of the Levites' prayer in Nehemiah 9:4-38; see verse 1 of David's prayer in Psalm 51; see verses 5, 13, and 15 of David's prayer in Psalm 86; see verse 18 of Jeremiah's prayer in Jeremiah 32:16-25; see verse 4 of Daniel's prayer in Daniel 9:1-19). In the preceding examples, reference is continually made to God's *hesed*, His loyal love, or covenant care, concern, and compassion.

- Merciful: not always giving us the bad we deserve (see verse 13 of Ezra’s prayer in Ezra 9:5-15; see verses 19, 27, 28, and 31 of the Levites’ prayer in Nehemiah 9:4-38; see verse 1 of David’s prayer in Psalm 51; see verse 15 of David’s prayer in Psalm 86; see verses 9 and 18 of Daniel’s prayer in Daniel 9:1-19)
- Omnipotent: all-powerful, able to do anything consistent with His character and will (see verse 42 of Solomon’s prayer in 1 Kings 8:22-53; see verses 11 and 12 of David’s prayer in 1 Chronicles 29:10-19; see verse 10 of Nehemiah’s prayer in Nehemiah 1:4-11; see verse 32 of the Levites’ prayer in Nehemiah 9:4-38; see verse 2 of Job’s prayer in Job 42:1-6; see verses 17, 18, 19, and 21 of Jeremiah’s prayer in Jeremiah 32:16-25; see verses 20-21a and 23 of Daniel’s prayer in Daniel 2:19b-23; see verse 15 of Daniel’s prayer in Daniel 9:1-19)
- Omnipresent: all-present, everywhere, ubiquitous, with the entirety of His being filling the entirety of the universe at every moment (see verses 7-12 of David’s prayer in Psalm 139)
- Omniscient: all-knowing, knowing all things past, present, and future, potential and actual, in one eternal, indivisible act of intuition (see verse 39 of Solomon’s prayer in 1 Kings 8:22-53; see verses 1-6 of David’s prayer in Psalm 139; see verses 21b, 22, and 23 of Daniel’s prayer in Daniel 2:19b-23; see verse 24 of the prayer of the early church in Acts 1:24-25; see verse 33 of Paul’s doxology in Romans 11:33-36)
- Self-existent (His “aseity”): existing in and of Himself
- Self-sufficient: not in need of anyone or anything else for anything
- Sovereign: ruling over all, the King of everything (see verse 15 of Hezekiah’s prayer in 2 Kings 19:14-20; see verses 11 and 12 of David’s prayer in 1 Chronicles 29:10-19; see Nebuchadnezzar’s prayer in Daniel 4:34; see Paul’s doxology in 1 Timothy 1:17; see verse 15 of Paul’s doxology in 1 Timothy 6:15-16; see verse 11 of Peter’s doxology in 1 Peter 5:10-11; see verse 25 of Jude’s doxology in Jude 24-25)
- Wise (His “omnisapience”): making no mistakes, devising the perfect ends and the perfect means to accomplish them (see verses 20, 21b, and 23 of Daniel’s prayer in Daniel 2:19b-23; see verse 33 of Paul’s doxology in Romans 11:33-36; see verse 27 of Paul’s doxology in Romans 16:25-27)

Models: those who did so. As the previous section has shown, many of God’s people in the past praised His Person in prayer by praising Him for His perfections. These people include:

- Abraham, who praised God for His justice (Genesis 18:25)
- Jacob, who praised God for His love (Genesis 32:10)

- Hannah, who praised God for His holiness (1 Samuel 2:2) and justice (1 Samuel 2:3 and 10)
- Solomon, who praised God for His love (1 Kings 3:6 and 8:23), infinitude (1 Kings 8:27), omniscience (1 Kings 8:39), and omnipotence (1 Kings 8:42)
- Hezekiah, who praised God for His sovereignty (2 Kings 19:15)
- David, who praised God for His omnipotence (1 Chronicles 29:11-12), sovereignty (1 Chronicles 29:11-12), holiness (1 Chronicles 29:16), love (Psalm 51:1, 86:5, 13, and 15), mercifulness (Psalm 51:1 and 86:15), graciousness (Psalm 86:15), omniscience (Psalm 139:1-6), and omnipresence (Psalm 139:7-12)
- Ezra, who praised God for His mercy (Ezra 9:13) and justice (Ezra 9:15)
- Nehemiah, who praised God for His love (Nehemiah 1:5) and omnipotence (Nehemiah 1:10)
- The Levites, who praised God for His justice (Nehemiah 9:8 and 33), graciousness (Nehemiah 9:17 and 31), love (Nehemiah 9:17 and 32), mercifulness (Nehemiah 9:19, 27, 28, and 31), and omnipotence (Nehemiah 9:32)
- Job, who praised God for His freedom (Job 42:2) and omnipotence (Job 42:2)
- Jeremiah, who praised God for His omnipotence (Jeremiah 32:17, 18, 19, and 21), love (Jeremiah 32:18), and justice (Jeremiah 32:18, 19, and 23)
- Daniel, who praised God for His omnipotence (Daniel 2:20-21, 23, and 9:15), wisdom (Daniel 2:20, 21b, and 23), omniscience (Daniel 2:21b, 22, and 23), love (Daniel 9:4), justice (Daniel 9:7, 14, and 16), and mercifulness (Daniel 9:9 and 18)
- Nebuchadnezzar, who praised God for His eternity (Daniel 4:34) and sovereignty (Daniel 4:34)
- God the Son, who praised God the Father for His holiness (John 17:11) and justice (John 17:25)
- The early church, who praised God for His omniscience (Acts 1:24)
- Paul, who praised God for His omniscience (Romans 11:33), wisdom (Romans 11:33 and 16:27), incomprehensibility (Romans 11:33-34), freedom (Romans 11:35), eternity (Romans 16:26 and 1 Timothy 1:17), sovereignty (1 Timothy 1:17 and 6:15), and immortality (1 Timothy 1:17 and 6:16)
- Peter, who praised God for His graciousness (1 Peter 5:10) and sovereignty (1 Peter 5:11)
- Jude, who praised God for His sovereignty (Jude 25)

**“Get Your ACTS Together”**  
Part 2: “Continuing to Get Our ACTS Together”  
C—Confession

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We have already seen that “getting our ACTS together” means consciously incorporating the following four parts of prayer into our praying:

A—Adoration  
C—Confession  
T—Thanksgiving  
S—Supplication

We have also already seen that “starting to get our ACTS together” means praising God’s Person in prayer, or Adoration, primarily by praising Him for His perfections, or adoring Him for His attributes. So many of the prayers of Scripture do just this.

**Confession**

“Continuing to get our ACTS together” includes Confession.

The meaning of confession. The New Testament Greek verb translated confess, *homologeō* literally means “to say the same” (the Greek preposition, *homo*, “same” + the Greek verb, *logeō*, “to say or speak”). Confession is saying the same thing about our sin that God does. What does God say about our sin?

- Our being is bad (Genesis 6:5, 8:21, Job 15:14, 25:4, Psalm 14:1//53:1, Ecclesiastes 9:3, Isaiah 1:5b-6a, Jeremiah 17:9, Romans 3:10). We must confess that our character is corrupt (as did David in Psalm 51:5; as did Peter in Luke 5:8; as did the publican in Luke 18:13). In this regard, sin has been defined as the failure to morally be like God (see Matthew 5:48 and 1 Peter 1:15-16).
- Our behavior is bad (1 Kings 8:46, Psalm 14:1//53:1, 14:3//53:3, Ecclesiastes 7:20, Romans 3:12b, and 23). We must confess that our conduct is corrupt (as did David in 2 Samuel 12:13, Psalm 32:5, 51:1-4, 9, and 14; as did Isaiah in Isaiah 6:5; as did the prodigal son in Luke 15:21). In this regard, sin has been defined as the failure to morally think, act, or feel like God (again, see Matthew 5:48 and 1 Peter 1:15-16).

Some of the sins identified in Scripture include:

- sinful anger (Psalm 37:8, Ecclesiastes 7:9, Ephesians 4:26, and 31)
- bitterness (Ephesians 4:31)
- all corrupt communication (Ephesians 4:29 and 31), such as bragging (Proverbs 27:2), complaining (1 Corinthians 10:10 and Philippians 2:14), gossiping (Leviticus 19:16), lying (Exodus 20:16//Deuteronomy 5:20,

- Proverbs 6:17, 19, 12:22a, Ephesians 4:25//Colossians 3:9, and 1 Timothy 1:10), obscene or crude talk (Ephesians 5:4), slandering (Colossians 3:8), and swearing (Exodus 20:7//Deuteronomy 5:11)
- covetousness (Exodus 20:17//Deuteronomy 5:21, Romans 1:29, Ephesians 5:3, and Hebrews 13:5)
  - discontentment (Luke 3:14, 1 Timothy 6:8, and Hebrews 13:5)
  - disobeying or dishonoring God-given authorities, whether a husband (Ephesians 5:22-24, 33b//Colossians 3:18 and 1 Peter 3:1), a parent (Exodus 20:12//Deuteronomy 5:16, Ephesians 6:1-2//Colossians 3:20, and Romans 1:30), an employer (Ephesians 6:5-8//Colossians 3:22-25 and 1 Peter 2:18), a pastor (Hebrews 13:17), or government (Romans 13:1-2 and 1 Peter 2:13-14)
  - drunkenness (Ephesians 5:18)
  - envy (Romans 1:29 and Galatians 5:26)
  - favoritism (James 2:1-9)
  - idolatry (Exodus 20:3-5a//Deuteronomy 5:7-9a, Romans 1:23, and 25)
  - a judgmental spirit (Matthew 7:1-5, Romans 14:3, 14, 1 Corinthians 4:3-5, and James 4:11-12)
  - murder (Exodus 20:13//Deuteronomy 5:17, Proverbs 6:17, Romans 1:29, and 1 Timothy 1:9), including mental murder/homicide of the heart (Matthew 5:21-22)
  - kidnapping (1 Timothy 1:10)
  - any (Ephesians 5:3) physical intimacy outside of the one man-one woman marriage covenant (Genesis 2:24, Matthew 19:4-6, and Hebrews 13:4a), such as adultery (Genesis 39:9 and Exodus 20:14//Deuteronomy 5:18), fornication (Ephesians 5:3, Romans 1:29, 1 Corinthians 6:18, and Hebrews 13:4b), or homosexuality (Leviticus 18:22, 20:13, and 1 Timothy 1:9-10; cf. Romans 1:26-27, 1 Corinthians 6:9, and Jude 7), including in thought (Matthew 5:27-28; cf. Job 31:1)
  - pride (Proverbs 6:17, 8:13, 16:5, Romans 1:30, Philippians 2:3-8, and 1 Peter 5:5-6)
  - revenge (Leviticus 19:18, Proverbs 20:22, 24:29, Romans 12:17, 19, 1 Thessalonians 5:15, and 1 Peter 3:9)
  - stealing (Exodus 20:15//Deuteronomy 5:19, and Ephesians 4:28)
  - an unforgiving spirit (Mark 11:25, Ephesians 4:32, and Colossians 3:13)
  - worldliness (Romans 12:2, 1 Corinthians 7:31, Colossians 3:2, and 1 John 2:15-16)
  - worry (Matthew 6:25, 31, 34, and Philippians 4:6)

These are sins of commission, doing what God has proscribed. There are also sins of omission (James 4:17), not doing what God has proscribed, such as:

- not loving God wholeheartedly (Deuteronomy 6:5//Matthew 22:37//Mark 12:30)
- not loving others (Leviticus 19:18//Matthew 22:39//Mark 12:31, John 13:34, Romans 12:10, 13:8-9, and Hebrews 13:1)

- ingratitude toward God (1 Chronicles 16:34//Psalm 106:1//107:1//118:1//29//136:1-3, Psalm 50:14, 95:2, 100:4, 147:7, Romans 1:21, Ephesians 5:20//Colossians 3:17, Philippians 4:6, Colossians 3:15, 1 Thessalonians 5:18, and 2 Timothy 3:2)
  - a husband not loving his wife (Ephesians 5:25-33a//Colossians 3:19)
  - a parent not properly caring for a child (Ephesians 6:4//Colossians 3:21)
  - an employer not properly caring for an employee (Ephesians 6:9//Colossians 4:1)
  - prayerlessness (1 Samuel 12:23, Romans 12:12, and 1 Thessalonians 5:17)
- Our sin is against Him. This is what David confessed in Psalm 51:4 (cf. Genesis 20:6, 39:9, Numbers 32:23, 1 Samuel 12:23, 2 Samuel 12:13, Nehemiah 1:6-7, Daniel 9:8, 11, Luke 15:18, 21, and Acts 5:4). This is what makes sin so serious, especially for those whose sins have not been atoned/paid for by the infinitely-valuable death of Christ. Sin is an infinite debt and, when not atoned, is paid for by the infinite duress and duration of Hell, because it is against the One who is infinitely great, good, and glorious.
  - Our corruption has a consequence (Romans 5:12, 6:23a, and James 1:15). Because our sin is against Him, the consequence of our corruption is eternal condemnation. Theologically, Hell must be eternal because sin is against God, who is infinite.<sup>2</sup> However, though our corruption has a consequence, praise God, it also has a cure! Christ, who took our condemnation for us (Romans 5:8, 2 Corinthians 5:21, and Galatians 3:13). If we confess our corruption and Christ as our cure, we will be converted (Romans 10:9), cleansed from our corruption (1 John 1:7b).

The mandate to do so. In the Model Prayer of Matthew 6:9-13//Luke 11:2-4, Jesus teaches us (Luke 11:1) to make confession part of our praying (Matthew 6:12//Luke 11:4): “And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.” In this passage, “debts” stand for sins. See also James 5:16.

Models: those who did so. There are many prayers of confession in Scripture. They include:

- David’s prayer in 2 Samuel 24:10
- Ezra’s prayer in Ezra 9:5-15
- Nehemiah’s prayer in Nehemiah 1:4-11
- The end of the Levites’ prayer in Nehemiah 9:4-38
- Job’s prayer in Job 42:1-6, a reminder that adoration naturally leads to confession
- David’s prayer in Psalm 51

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<sup>2</sup>“... [T]he infinite horrors of hell are intended by God to be a vivid demonstration of the infinite value of his glory which sinners have belittled ... hell is the clearest testimony to the infiniteness of the sin of failing to glorify God” (John Piper, *Let the Nations be Glad!*, p. 127).

- Isaiah's prayer in Isaiah 6:5, another reminder that adoration naturally leads to confession
- Daniel's prayer in Daniel 9:1-19
- The publican's prayer in Luke 18:13. After his confession (v. 13) came cleansing (v. 14; cf. 2 Samuel 12:13, Psalm 32:5, 51:7, Proverbs 28:13, Isaiah 6:5-7, and 1 John 1:9).
- Peter's prayer in Luke 5:8, another reminder that adoration naturally leads to confession

The mark of doing so. According to 1 John 1:8-10, confession is characteristic of the Christian, one of the many "birthmarks of the believer" found in 1 John. One's Christianity may be confirmed by a continuous confessing of one's corruption.



**“Get Your ACTS Together”**  
Part 3: “Continuing to Get Our ACTS Together”  
T—Thanksgiving

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We have already seen that “getting our ACTS together” means consciously incorporating the following four parts of prayer into our praying:

A—Adoration  
C—Confession  
T—Thanksgiving  
S—Supplication

We have also already seen that “starting to get our ACTS together” means praising God’s Person in prayer, or Adoration, primarily by praising Him for His perfections, or adoring Him for His attributes. So many of the prayers of Scripture do just this.

“Continuing to get our ACTS together” includes agreeing with God about our sin, or Confession, agreeing that our character is corrupt, that our conduct is corrupt, that our corruption is critical (being against God), and that the consequence of our corruption is condemnation. Many of the prayers of Scripture are prayers of confession, or include confession as one of their elements.

**Thanksgiving**

“Continuing to get our ACTS together” also includes giving glory to God by expressing our gratitude to Him for what He gives, or Thanksgiving.

The mandate to give thanks. Several places in Scripture prescribe the giving of thanks, including Psalm 106:1//107:1//118:1//29//136:1-3, Psalm 50:14, 95:2, 100:4, 147:7, Ephesians 5:20//Colossians 3:17, Philippians 4:6, Colossians 3:15, 4:2, and 1 Thessalonians 5:18. Several of them do so specifically in a context of prescribing prayer (Philippians 4:6 and Colossians 4:2).

The means of minding the mandate to give thanks. According to Ephesians 5:20, giving thanks is one of the results of being filled with (or controlled by) the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18). According to the twin text of Colossians 3, giving thanks (verse 17) is the result of being filled with (or controlled by) the Scriptures (verse 16). So, it is through the Spirit of God using the Word of God (and the child of God’s submission to It) that the child of God can give glory to God by expressing gratitude to God.

Some methods of giving thanks. There are many ways by which we can give thanks to God. Besides by supplication (Philippians 4:6 and Colossians 4:2), we can also do so by

song (Psalm 95:2 and 147:7; see David's song of thanksgiving in 1 Chronicles 16:7-36) and by service (1 Samuel 12:24 and Romans 12:1).

### Some motives for giving thanks

- Godliness. We see God the Son giving thanks to God the Father (Matthew 11:25, 26:27//Mark 14:23//Luke 22:19//1 Corinthians 11:24, and John 11:41). Thus, to truly be godly, or Christ-like, we need to be giving thanks to God.
- God's goodness. See 1 Chronicles 16:34, Psalm 100:4-5, 106:1, 107:1, 118:1, 29, and 136:1-3.
- God's glory. See Psalm 86:12, Luke 17:15-18. 2 Corinthians 4:15, and Romans 1:21 in its context.

### Models: those who gave thanks to God in prayer

- David in verse 13 of his prayer in 1 Chronicles 29:10-19
- David in verses 12-13 of his prayer in Psalm 86
- Daniel in verse 23 of his prayer in Daniel 2:19b-23
- Paul in verse 8 of his prayer in Romans 1:8-13
- Paul in verse 16 of his prayer in Ephesians 1:15-23
- Paul in verse 9 of his prayer in 1 Thessalonians 3:9-13
- Paul in verse 4 of his prayer in Philemon 4-7

### Matters for which we should give thanks to God in prayer

- For a Savior (2 Corinthians 9:15)
- For salvation (Colossians 1:12-14; cf. Psalm 86:12-13 and 2 Thessalonians 2:13)
  - Past (Colossians 1:14)
  - Present (Colossians 1:13)
  - Future (Colossians 1:12)
- For saints (Romans 1:8, 1 Corinthians 1:4, Ephesians 1:16, Philippians 1:3, Colossians 1:3, 1 Thessalonians 1:2, 2 Thessalonians 1:3, 2 Timothy 1:3, and Philemon 4).
  - For their faith in God (Romans 1:8, Ephesians 1:15, Colossians 1:4, 2 Thessalonians 1:3, 2 Timothy 1:5, and Philemon 5)
  - For their fondness for God's people (Colossians 1:4, 2 Thessalonians 1:3, and Philemon 5)
- For skill (Daniel 2:23)
- For service (1 Timothy 1:12)
- For steak (1 Timothy 4:4)
- For suffering (see Philippians 4:6 and 1 Thessalonians 5:18 in their historical contexts by comparing Philippians 4:6 with Philippians 1:28-30 and 1 Thessalonians 5:18 with 1 Thessalonians 1:6, 2:14, and 3:3-4)
- For every circumstance (1 Thessalonians 5:18; cf. Ephesians 5:20)

**“Get Your ACTS Together”**  
Part 4: “Finishing Getting Our ACTS Together”  
S—Supplication

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We have also already seen that “continuing to get our ACTS together” means agreeing with God about our sin, or Confession, agreeing that our character is corrupt, that our conduct is corrupt, that our corruption is critical (being against God), and that the consequence of our corruption is condemnation. Many of the prayers of Scripture are prayers of confession, or include confession as one of their elements.

We have also already seen that “continuing to get our ACTS together” also means giving glory to God by expressing our gratitude to Him for what He gives, or Thanksgiving. Prayer is one of several ways we can do so. Many of the prayers of Scripture include thanksgiving as one of their elements.

**Supplication**

“Finishing getting our ACTS together” means Supplication<sup>3</sup>, which includes intercessory prayer on behalf of others, as well as prayer for ourselves.

That supplication may be considered a category of prayer is seen by its use in such passages as Philippians 4:6 and 1 Timothy 2:1. That intercession can likewise be seen as a category of prayer (with this study viewing it as a subset of supplication) may be seen by its use in 1 Timothy 2:1.

*Asking for Others (intercession)*

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<sup>3</sup>D. Edmond Hiebert (*Working with God Through Intercessory Prayer*, p. 37) describes supplication as “prayer prompted by a conscious sense of need. It is prayer arising out of a sense of human inadequacy to meet the demand of life.” Other words used in Scripture that are essentially synonymous with supplication are entreaty, petition, and request.

- The mandate. Matthew 5:44//Luke 6:28 commands prayer for one's enemies. First Timothy 2:1 calls upon Christians to pray for political leaders (whether believing or unbelieving). James 5:16 calls upon Christians to pray for other Christians (cf. Ephesians 6:18).
- Models. Some of those in Scripture who interceded in prayer for others, or who asked others to intercede for them, include:
  - Abraham
    - Interceding for Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 18:23-33)
    - Interceding for the women of Abimelech's household, whose wombs God had closed (Genesis 20:17-18)
  - Moses
    - Interceding for Pharaoh and the Egyptians for various plagues to cease (Exodus 8:8f, 28-30, 9:28f, and 10:17-18)
    - Interceding for the Israeli army in the fight against the Amalekites (Exodus 17:8-16)<sup>4</sup>
    - Interceding for Aaron and the Israelites after the golden calf incident (Exodus 32:11-14, 30-32, and Deuteronomy 9:18-20)
    - Interceding for the Israelites after some were consumed by fire from heaven (Numbers 11:2)
    - Interceding for Miriam after she had become leprous (Numbers 12:13)
    - Interceding for the Israelites after they wanted to stone Moses, Aaron, Joshua, and Caleb (Numbers 14:19-20)
    - Interceding for the Israelites after they had been bitten by poisonous snakes (Numbers 21:7)
  - Solomon—interceding for his fellow Israelites (1 Kings 8:30f//2 Chronicles 6:21f)
  - David—interceding for his fellow Israelites and for his son, Solomon (1 Chronicles 29:18-19)

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<sup>4</sup>See D. Edmond Hiebert's exposition of this passage in chapter 5 of his *Working with God Through Intercessory Prayer*.

- Nehemiah—interceding for his fellow Israelites (Nehemiah 1:6f)
- Jesus
  - Interceding for Peter (Luke 22:31-32)
  - Interceding for those who crucified Him (Luke 23:34)
  - Interceding for His disciples and for the church (John 17; cf. Romans 8:34 and Hebrews 7:25)
- Stephen—interceding for those who murdered him (Acts 7:60)
- The church of Jerusalem—interceding for Peter in prison (Acts 12:5)
- Paul
  - Interceding for the salvation of unbelievers (Romans 10:1)
  - Interceding for the sanctification of believers (Ephesians 3:14-19, Philippians 1:9-11, Colossians 1:9-10, 1 Thessalonians 3:12-13, 5:23, 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12, and 2:16-17)
  - Asking for believers to intercede for him (Romans 15:30-32, Ephesians 6:19-20, Colossians 4:2-4, 1 Thessalonians 5:25, and 2 Thessalonians 3:1-2)
- Epaphras—interceding for the sanctification of the Colossian Christians (Colossians 4:12)
- The author of Hebrews—interceding for the sanctification of his readers (Hebrews 13:20-21)
- Matters for which we should intercede in prayer for others
  - God to mercifully withhold judgment (Genesis 18:23-33, Moses’ prayers for Aaron and the Israelites after the golden calf incident, Numbers 14:19-20, Luke 23:34, and Acts 7:60) or to end judgment (Genesis 20:17-18, Moses’ prayers for the cessation of the plagues in Exodus, Numbers 11:2, 12:13, and 21:7). See the prayer of Habakkuk in Habakkuk 3:2: “In wrath remember mercy.”
  - Believers’ perseverance in the faith (Luke 22:31-32)/sanctification (John 17:17, Ephesians 3:14-19, Philippians 1:9-11, Colossians 1:9-10, 4:12, 1 Thessalonians 3:12-13, 5:23, 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12, 2:16-17, Hebrews

13:20-21, and 1 Peter 5:10; cf. 1 Thessalonians 4:3)/being kept from the evil one (John 17:11 and 15)

- The salvation of sinners (Romans 10:1; cf. Ezekiel 18:23, 32, 33:11, 1 Timothy 2:4, and 2 Peter 3:9)
- Believers' personal safety (Romans 15:31, 2 Corinthians 1:10-11, and 2 Thessalonians 3:2)/deliverance from difficulty (Acts 12:5)
- The believer's ministry of the Word (Ephesians 6:19-20, Colossians 4:3-4, and 2 Thessalonians 3:1)
- The freedom for believers to practice and proclaim their faith (1 Timothy 2:1f)
- Physical healing (James 5:16). In context, this command appears to particularly apply to a situation in which a sickness is the direct result of sin.

### *Asking for Ourselves*

It is important to remember that when we pray for ourselves, we are to pray for our needs, not our greeds (James 4:3).

- The mandate. In the Model Prayer of Matthew 6:9-13//Luke 11:2-4, Jesus teaches us (Luke 11:1) to make supplication part of our praying, particularly in Matthew 6:11//Luke 11:3): "Give us this day our daily bread" (cf. Matthew 7:7-11//Luke 11:9-13). Philippians 4:6 encourages us to let our requests be made known to God.<sup>5</sup>
- Models. Some of those in Scripture who asked God for things in behalf of themselves include:
  - Jacob, who asked God to spare his family from Esau (Genesis 32:11)
  - Hannah, who asked God to give her a son (1 Samuel 1:10-11, 20, and 27)
  - Solomon, who asked God for wisdom (1 Kings 3:9f//2 Chronicles 1:10f)

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<sup>5</sup>John Newton (cited in James Montgomery Boice, *Romans*, 2:517) once wrote: "Come, my soul, they suit [entreaty] prepare: Jesus loves to answer prayer. He himself has bid thee pray, Therefore will not say thee nay. Thou art coming to a King, Large petitions with thee bring. For his grace and power are such, None can ever ask too much."

- Hezekiah, who asked to be delivered from Sennacherib (2 Kings 19:19//Isaiah 37:20); and who asked to be healed (2 Kings 20:1f//Isaiah 38:1f)
- Jabez, who asked for prosperity and protection from pain (1 Chronicles 4:10)
- David, who prayed for protection from his enemies (Psalm 86)
- Jonah, who asked to be spared from drowning to death (Jonah 2)
- Jesus, who asked to be spared from the suffering of the Cross (Matthew 26:39//Mark 14:36//Luke 22:42)
- The early church, who asked for courage to communicate the gospel (Acts 4:29)
- Paul, who asked to have his “thorn in the flesh” removed (2 Corinthians 12:7-8)
- Matters for which we should ask in behalf of ourselves
  - Children (Genesis 25:21 and 1 Samuel 1:10-11, 20, 27, and Luke 1:13)
  - Personal safety (Genesis 32:11, 2 Kings 19:19//Isaiah 37:20, and Psalm 86)/prevention of pain (1 Chronicles 4:10, Matthew 26:39//Mark 14:35-36//Luke 22:42) or the cessation of pain (2 Kings 20:1f//Isaiah 38:1f and 2 Corinthians 12:7-8)/deliverance from death (Jonah 2)
  - Wisdom (1 Kings 3:9f//2 Chronicles 1:10f, Daniel 2:23, and James 1:5)
  - Forgiveness (2 Chronicles 33:13, Psalm 51:1, 2, 7, 9, 10, 14, and Matthew 6:12//Luke 11:4a). In this respect, confession can be considered a subset of supplication.
  - Necessities, such as food (Matthew 6:11//Luke 11:3; cf. Matthew 7:7-11//Luke 11:9-13)
  - Freedom from sin (Matthew 6:13//Luke 11:4b, Matthew 26:41//Mark 14:38//Luke 22:40, and Luke 22:46)
  - Courage in communicating the gospel (Acts 4:29)