

RULE #21

Some prayers require fasting.

"And Jesus rebuked him, and the demon came out of him, and the boy was cured at once. Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, 'Why could we not drive it out?' And He said to them, 'Because of the littleness of your faith....But this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.'" Matthew 17:18-21 (NAS)

Identify the problem and the prescription in this passage.

Questions for thought:

1. Are believers instructed to "fast"?
2. What is the primary objective in "fasting and prayer?"
3. How does fasting and prayer draw us closer to God?
 - A.
 - B.
 - C.

Bottom line: Unpretentious prayer-and-fasting draws us nearer to God and more effective in accomplishing His will.

RULE #22

Forgive others; there should be no anger in our prayers.

"Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift." Matthew 5:23-24

Which word in this passage means "To make things right?"

Questions for thought:

1. Define forgiveness and reconciliation and explain how the two relate to each other.
2. Why would God desire for you a human reconciliation before He receives your worship offering?
3. Is it possible that we live substandard Christian lives and do not see some prayers answered because of broken relationships.

Bottom line: Prioritize forgiveness and reconciliation in order that there will be no anger in your prayers.

RULE #23

Repent; sin can annul the authority of our prayers.

"If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened." Psalm 66:18

Underline the cause of unanswered prayer in this verse.

Questions for thought:

1. Should I ask for forgiveness before I ask for anything else? Isaiah 59:2, John 9:31
2. Will it do any good to sweep my sin under the rug where God can't see it or compartmentalize it so it doesn't affect my spiritual life? Proverbs 28:13, Psalm 32:5
3. Why do we so often hide our sin and fail when we could confess them to Him and find mercy?

Bottom line: Our prayers are not as effective if we do not repent.

RULE #24
Pray for those in authority.

"I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone-for kings and all those in authority." 1 Timothy 2:1-2

Why specify "kings and those in authority"?

Questions for thought:

1. Does this passage urge us to endorse the activities of "those in authority"?
2. How, then, do we pray for them?
 - A.
 - B.
 - C.
3. Is it incumbent upon us to be informed concerning state, local and world events and conditions in order to know how to pray?

Bottom line: We are to pray for "all those in authority."