The Profound Practice of Prayer
Compiled by Henri Louis Goulet
Knowing & Loving God & Messiah

The central theme of Scripture is “I will be your God and you will be My people.” Our way of life is all about covenant love relationship with God. This explicit theme starts in Gen 17:17 and ends in Rev 21:3.

“This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Yeshua Messiah whom You have sent” (John 17:3).

How real God and Messiah are to us in everyday life is directly related to how much we engage God in prayer. This includes both the liturgy (prayers created for us) and our own personal speaking to God (prayers created by us).
4 Motivational Prayer Citations

Prayer: A Profound Discipline
In liturgical prayer, do not look upon the prayer as an obligatory task, but as a privilege granted by mercy and grace before God.

Paraphrased from Pirkei Avot 2:13
Prayer is a clarifying, refining process of discovering what one is, what one should be, and how to achieve the transformation.

Nosson Scherman, “Prayer: A Timeless Need”
The Artscroll Siddur
Motivational Citation #3

Scripture is, in one sense, the opposite of prayer (words from God rather than to God), but it makes this same connection.

James Kugel
Motivational Citation #4

One’s way of life will never rise above the practice of one’s prayer life.

Adapted from Richard Burr
Prayer: A Profound Discipline
Motivational Athletic Metaphor #1

Therefore I do not run like one who runs aimlessly (1 Cor 9:26a). Let us run with endurance the race God has set before us (Heb 12:1).
Motivational Athletic Metaphor #2

Therefore I do not box like one beating the air (1 Cor. 9:26b).

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CDIG32PFHtA
Motivational Athletic Metaphor #3

On Winning an Olympic Victory in Wrestling

Read & Discuss: Discourses of Epictetus 3.15.1-13
Let No One Outpray Us!

The title of this slide does not denote prayer as a ‘competition’, but rather prayer as unceasing, as prescribed in 1 Thess 5:17

Let us become like little children, start from where we are, and never stop growing into the most profound practice of prayer; into the most profound knowing of God and Messiah!
Learning from Daily Jewish Prayer

The Jewish heritage of the Messianic way of life, calls for daily prayer, three times a day.

Morning prayer (Shacharit) begins from one’s pillow, with a lion-like resolve to live for God this day.

Modeh Ani (I give thanks): “I give thanks before you, living and eternal King, for You have restored my breath within me with compassion; great is Your faithfulness.”
Acknowledging God as King is the Heart of the Good News

Mark 1:1 "The beginning of the good news of Yeshua Messiah, Son of God"

Mark 1:2a "as it is written in Isaiah the Prophet"

Mark 1:14-15 “Now after John was arrested, Yeshua came into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingship of God has come near; repent and believe in the good news.”
Isaiah is the Source of the Good News of the Kingship of God

Isa 52:7 is the key: “How lovely on the mountains are the feet of the one who brings good news, who announces peace and brings good news of happiness, who announces salvation, and says to Zion, “Your God reigns!”
Here, we do well to make the connection to the Lord’s Prayer.

Again, I appeal to the Jewish heritage of the Messianic way of life, by noting that the Didache, a writing dated by most scholars to the first century, which deals with handing down the Messianic way of life from Jewish to Gentile followers of Yeshua the Messiah, instructs Gentiles to pray the Lord’s prayer 3 times a day.
The Lord's Prayer (Tephillat HaAdon)
Cf. Kaddish & Amidah

Our Father, the one in the heavens  
Let your name be sanctified  
Let your kingship come  
Let your will be done  
On earth as it is in heaven  
Give us this day our daily bread  
And forgive us our debts as we have forgiven our debtors  
And do not cause us to come into the time of testing, but deliver us from the evil one  
For Yours is the kingship, the power, and the glory forever, Amen  

Cf. Isa 63:16; Psa 103:13, 19)  
Cf. Zech 14:9)  
Cf. 1 Chron 29:11-13)
Learning from Daily Jewish Prayer

After Modeh Ani, the prayer from our pillows, morning prayer continues with others in the congregation at the synagogue.

It is focused on acknowledging God as king of the universe and expressing commitment for his will to be done in the lives of God’s people that day; Psalms 30 and 67 are then prayed; morning prayer continues with Psalms 145-150, which is designed to awaken our relationship with God this day.
Learning from Jewish Prayer

Morning prayer continues with the declaration of the Shema, three passages of Scripture, the first of which is Deut 6:4–9, which reinforces that the YHWH is the only God, and that we will love Him with all of our heart, and with all of our being, and with all of our capacity.

It's a daily, morning, covenant renewal declaration.

Do we make a covenant renewal declaration every morning to God?
Learning from Jewish Prayer

Morning prayer continues with the Amidah, which is a comprehensive series of 18 blessings.

Morning prayer continues with the reading of Scripture, penitential prayers (Tachanun), and select songs of the day.

The other two times per day prayer sessions of the Jewish people are no less robust! Will we learn from and emulate this rich Jewish heritage of our way of life?
Today’s Challenge

Morning prayer in our profound Jewish heritage is no “One-Minute Devotional”!

How’s our prayer life?

Will we accept today’s challenge to become like little children, start from where we are, and never stop growing into the most profound practice of prayer; into the most profound knowing of God and Messiah?
Today’s Challenge

Marvin R. Wilson, in his latest book entitled *Exploring our Hebraic Heritage: A Christian Theology of Roots and Renewal*, emphasizes the fact that observant Jews in a given day praise or bless God 100 times.

How about us, who claim to be in the new covenant, have the gift of the Ruach HaKodesh (Holy Spirit), and be followers of Yeshua the Messiah?
Today’s Challenge

Let us NOT be professed followers of Yeshua the Messiah in the U.S., living the U.S. way of life with a dash of ‘Yeshua’ added!

Let us be authentic followers of Yeshua the Messiah who have a robust prayer life and make a difference in God’s 21st century history!
Remember Well

Prayer is the single most transformative discipline on earth, and yet is arguably the single most unpracticed discipline!

Can you commit with me and others to change this among professed followers of the Messiah? We must maximize this practice, this spiritual discipline, and instill, inculcate, and disciple it into others!
Remember Well

Our way of life will never rise above the practice of our prayer life.

Adapted from Richard Burr
Let us Pray!

Prayer: A Profound Discipline