

I Say Unto You, Though He Will Not Rise and Give Him

by John Calvin

John Calvin emphasizes the importance of sincerity and fervor in prayer, warning against hypocrisy and formalism.

Scripture: Psalm 145:18

Topics: "Effective Prayer", "Sincere Worship"

Description

John Calvin emphasizes the importance of genuine and fervent prayer, highlighting the need for believers to approach God with a real sense of need and a deep desire to obtain what they ask for. He condemns the hypocrisy of those who pray without acknowledging their sins or true necessities, likening it to open mockery of God. Calvin urges believers to pray with fervent affection and ardent desire, even in requests made for the Divine glory, emphasizing the need for sincerity and passion in all supplications.

Transcript

I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth. --Luke 11:8

In our supplications, let us have a real and permanent sense of our need, and seriously considering our necessity of all that we ask, let us join with the petitions themselves a serious and ardent desire of obtaining them. For multitudes carelessly recite a form of prayer, as though they were discharging a task imposed on them by God; and though they confess that this is a remedy necessary for their calamities, since it would be certain destruction to be destitute of the Divine aid which they implore, yet that they perform this duty merely in compliance with custom, is evident from the coldness of their hearts, and their inattention to the nature of their petitions. They are led to this by some general and confused sense of their necessity, which nevertheless does not excite them to implore a relief for their great need as a case of present urgency.

Now what can we imagine more odious to God than this hypocrisy, when any man prays for the pardon of sins, who at the same time thinks he is not a sinner, or at least does not think that he is a sinner? What open mockery of God himself!

But such depravity pervades the whole human race, that as a matter of form they frequently implore God for many things which they either expect to receive from some other source independent of his goodness, or imagine themselves already to possess. The crime of some others appears to be smaller, but yet too great to be tolerated; who, having only imbibed this principle, that God must be appeased by devotions, mutter over their prayers without meditation.

But believers ought to be exceedingly cautious never to enter into the presence of God to present any petition without being inflamed with a fervent affection of soul, and feeling an ardent desire to obtain it from him.

Moreover, although in those things which we request only for the Divine glory, we do not at the first glance appear to regard our own necessity, yet it is our duty to pray for them with equal fervor and vehemence of desire. As when we pray that his name may be hallowed, or sanctified, we ought (so to speak) ardently to hunger and thirst for that sanctification. --Institutes, III, xx, vi

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