

## **The Work of Prayer: What the Bible Really Says** **Colossians 4:12**

### **Introduction: Redefining Prayer**

Most Christians know that prayer is powerful. But what they don't realize is this: **Prayer is a good work that we choose to do.**

Not in a carnal or burdensome way—but in the holy, obedient, God-ordained sense of spiritual labor. The Bible never hides that.

Prayer is effort. Prayer is sacrifice. Prayer is ministry. Prayer is **a good work.**

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### **I. What Is A Good Work?**

#### **""Titus 3:8**

This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.""

Good works are actions that:

- God commands
- Reflect righteousness
- Are done in obedience and faith

So does prayer qualify? Let's build the case to show prayer is a good work using the Scriptures.

So now that we've established that prayer isn't just a spiritual activity—it's **hard work**, the kind that demands time, energy, and endurance—let's open the Bible and let it speak for itself.

We're going to walk through **seven solid proofs** that show prayer is not just commanded... it's **a good work** in the eyes of God.

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### **II. Proof #1 – Prayer Is An Act Of Obedience**

We begin with something simple:

God commands us to pray. When we obey that command, we're doing a **righteous act of obedience**. And by biblical definition, that's a **good work**.

""**1 Thessalonians 5:17**

Pray without ceasing.""

""**Colossians 4:2**

Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving;""

""**Luke 18:1**

And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint;""

These are not suggestions—they are **commands**.

And when you **obey** a command from God, you are **doing righteousness**.

""**Psalm 119:172**

My tongue shall speak of thy word: for all thy commandments are righteousness.""

So prayer is **obedience to righteousness**—and that's what a good work is. You're doing something God told you to do.

### **BUT WAIT—ISN'T FAITH ALSO OBEDIENCE?**

Yes. The Bible says believing the Gospel is **obedience to the truth**.

""**2 Thessalonians 1:8**

In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:""

So here's where people get confused:

If obeying God is a good work... and faith is obedience... Then isn't believing the Gospel a good work?

**The Answer: No.**

Why? Because **faith is not something you do for God—it's trusting what God already did for you**.

- Prayer requires **words** and **action**.
- Belief is internal—it happens **in the heart**, not the hands or lips. It's believing from within.

""**Romans 10:10**

For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.""

Even though believing is described as obedience, it is the **only kind of obedience** that is **not a work**. You are obeying the Gospel by believing **IN** the Lord Jesus Christ. And that's not a work.

""**Romans 4:5**

But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.""

Paul separates belief from work—**completely**. That Scripture proves believing is not a good work. Prayer is an act of obedience that takes work. And you might be thinking. No, it doesn't take work. Well, let's see what the Bible says.

**Summary of the Distinction:**

Action	Obedience?	A Work?
Prayer	Yes	Yes
Baptism	Yes	Yes
Giving	Yes	Yes
Believing	Yes	No

Believing is a **response of faith**, not a righteous deed. Prayer is a **righteous deed of obedience**, and that makes it a **good work**.

So yes—when you **pray**, you are doing a good work. When you **believe**, you are resting in the finished work.

<b>Believing</b>	<b>Righteous Deed</b>
Internal trust in what God has done	External action or performance
Receives	Offers
Passive (in the sense of surrender)	Active (in the sense of doing)
Happens in the heart	Happens with the body, voice, or behavior
Can't be seen by others	Can usually be observed
Justifies the ungodly	Never justifies anyone

Believing is not doing something **for** God.

It's trusting what God **has done** for you.

That's why believing is **not a righteous deed**, but a **response of faith**—and the ONLY THING God accepts for salvation.

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### III. Proof #2 – Prayer Is Labor

But prayer isn't just commanded—it's described as intense spiritual **labor within the Bible**. Let's go deeper into how the Bible speaks about the effort prayer requires. Prayer is never portrayed in Scripture as something casual or automatic.

It's not a passive thought—it's **an intense act of spiritual labor**. Paul didn't say Epaphras "thought nice things" about the church. He said he was **laboring fervently** in prayer for them. That's sweat. That's energy. That's **work**.

""**Colossians 4:12**

Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.""

""**Romans 15:30**

Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me;""

The words "labouring" and "strive" mean to **struggle, contend, exert**. That's physical, emotional, and spiritual **work**.

But the Bible goes even further. Not only is prayer labor—it's compared to **sacrifice**. And sacrifice in the Bible always involved cost, offering, and effort.

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### IV. Proof #3 – Prayer Is Sacrifice

Throughout Scripture, prayer is likened to **incense, offering, and sacrifice**. And in the Old Testament, sacrifice was never symbolic—it was messy, physical, and exacting. The priest **worked**.

Likewise, today's saints **offer spiritual sacrifices**—and prayer is front and center.

""**Psalm 141:2**

Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.""

""**Hebrews 13:15**

By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.""

""**1 Peter 2:5**

Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.""

Sacrifices are never passive. They are **work** performed in worship. Prayer is our modern sacrifice—and it's an act of labor.

But sacrifice wasn't just for individual worshipers—it was a daily duty of ministry. That leads us to the next point: prayer is not only worship—it's **ministry work**.

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## V. Proof #4 – Prayer Is Ministry

In Acts 6, the apostles had a choice: handle food distribution or devote themselves to **spiritual ministry**. What did they say?

""**Acts 6:4**

But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.""

Prayer wasn't filler—it was frontline ministry. And ministry is **work**. It's very hard work. If you don't believe that to be true, give it a try. Many people quit because it's not easy. There are days when I want to quit. I don't lie to you. And any ministry worker in existence has wanted to quit.

Why? It's very hard work. Prayer is a part of that. There are days when I think about all of you. And I want to make sure I'm not forgetting any of you.

The apostles didn't delegate prayer—they **dedicated themselves to it**. It was **ministry**, just like preaching.

Now if prayer is ministry, what kind of ministry is it?

The Bible tells us—it's not just service... it's **warfare**. Prayer is part of the **spiritual battle** every believer is called to fight. Any battle is work.

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## VI. Proof #5 – Prayer Is Spiritual Warfare

The Bible doesn't just tell us to pray—it places prayer right in the middle of the **armor of God**.

Prayer is grouped with the sword, shield, helmet, and breastplate—not as an afterthought, but as a **spiritual weapon**.

And what do soldiers do with weapons? They **train, discipline, and fight**—that’s labor.

""**Ephesians 6:18**

Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;""

Prayer isn’t a nap—it’s a **battle**. It requires:

- Focus
- Endurance
- Perseverance

That’s labor. That’s work.

""**2 Corinthians 10:4**

(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)"

Prayer is one of those weapons.

But this isn’t just theory—Jesus Himself showed us the full weight of prayer when He labored in Gethsemane. Let’s look at the example of **Christ’s own prayer life**.

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## **VII. Proof #6 – Jesus Himself Worked In Prayer**

If you think prayer isn’t work, look at Jesus.

The Son of God—sinless and perfect—**sweated great drops of blood** under the pressure of prayer. He wasn’t pacing or daydreaming—He was agonizing.

If Christ **labored** in prayer, how dare we treat it as something effortless?

""**Luke 22:44**

And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.""

Jesus didn't coast through Gethsemane. He **agonized** in prayer. If prayer was labor for Christ—it's certainly labor for us.

And not only did Jesus labor in prayer, but so did David and the psalmists. Let's look at one more proof—prayer as **daily responsibility**, not random ritual.

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## VIII. Proof #7 – Prayer Is Daily Duty

For David, prayer wasn't a backup plan—it was part of his **daily routine**.

### ""Psalm 5:3

My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up.""

He said, "In the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee..."

Prayer was a task. A duty. A sacred **daily work**. You can forget to pray if you don't consciously remember to do it as a task.

The word "direct" means to **order, arrange, prepare**—like a craftsman setting up his tools. David treated prayer as **daily responsibility**, not random habit.

So let's bring it all together. We've now seen—clearly and repeatedly—that prayer is a commanded action, a labor, a sacrifice, a ministry, a weapon, a pattern, and a duty.

That means one thing: **prayer is a good work**. Let's conclude this message by making the distinction that keeps us rooted in the truth of the Gospel.

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## IX. Prayer Is A Result Of Salvation—Not The Root

We've now seen that prayer is commanded, sacrificial, laborious, and ministerial. But now we must clarify **where it fits** in the Christian life.

Prayer is not the **root** of salvation—it's the **fruit**.

In other words, **you don't pray to get saved**—you pray because you've already believed.

Just like water baptism, obedience, and good works, prayer is part of the **life that follows salvation**, not the act that causes it.

Scripture confirms this again and again—commands to pray are directed to those who are already **saved believers**, not lost sinners trying to be born again.

""**Philippians 4:6**

Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.""

This command is given to **believers**, not the lost. Prayer is something the saved are told to **continue** in—not something that causes salvation.

Paul is speaking to **Christians**—those who have already believed on Christ.

Prayer is how they continue in faith, not how they enter it. Faith is faith. Believing is believing. Trusting is trusting. Prayer is not equal to believing, faith, or trusting. It's not. Wake up out there. You're being deceived just as all the other. Prayer doesn't save your soul from hell.

But even with all this clarity, some still confuse faith with prayer, as if they're interchangeable. So let's bring it all together by showing the **final distinction** between the two—why **faith saves**, and **prayer, though powerful, never gives you everlasting life**.

That brings us to the final and most essential truth in this study.

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## **X. Final Argument: Faith Is Not A Work—Prayer Is**

We've built a clear biblical case that prayer is a **good work**—it's commanded, it's labor, it's sacrifice, and it flows out of a saved life. But here's where many people stumble: they say,

"If prayer is a work, isn't **faith** also a work? After all, God commands us to believe!"

This is where Scripture draws a **line in the sand**.

Yes—God commands faith. But faith is not an act of **performance**—it is an act of **trust**. Faith is not something you do **for God**. Faith is trusting what **God has already done** for you.

""**Romans 4:5**

But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.""

Paul separates **faith** from **works** completely. If you're believing, you're not working. If you're working, you're not believing. It's that simple.



Prayer is something **you do**. Faith is something you **receive** with. Faith is not the thing you're GIVING to God such as prayer. Faith is the open hand that receives what God is offering to you. Saved by grace through FAITH.

""**John 1:12**

But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:""

Prayer requires action. Faith requires **resting** in Christ. Believing is how you receive Jesus—not how you perform for Him.

**Faith is not a work**. Prayer is something you **do**. Faith is trust in what's already done. Understand that and don't corrupt the Gospel by adding a prayer TO BE SAVED. Adding a prayer after being saved is a great thing. But don't start mixing prayer, asking, and a Sinner's Prayer with faith to be saved.

So now we've proven it: **prayer is a good work**, and **faith is not**. One is **the fruit of salvation**—the other is **the way to it**.

Let's bring it all home and make the distinction that keeps the Gospel pure and the Christian life in its proper place.

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### Summary: Prayer Is...

- A command to obey
- A labor to engage
- A sacrifice to offer
- A ministry to perform
- A weapon to wield
- A pattern to follow
- A duty to fulfill

All of which means: **Prayer is a good work**.

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## **Conclusion: Give Prayer Its Proper Place**

Prayer is holy. Prayer is needed. Prayer is spiritual labor. But prayer is not **saving faith**. They are not equal.

We honor God by praying faithfully—but we're saved by believing in His Son.

""**John 6:47**

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.""

I ask you today to please don't twist the Scriptures. And don't support the twisting of the Scriptures. Prayer does not save your soul from hell.

Prayer flows from faith. It's never a replacement for it. Let's never confuse the **tools of service** with the **truth of salvation**. Let me say that again: Never confuse the tools of service with the truth of salvation. Small deceptions. A little compromise here. A little compromise there.

Faith is not your contribution to salvation.

You're not giving God a deed—you're **trusting His promise**.

You bring absolutely **nothing to be saved. No prayer. No asking with your mouth.**

Just believe that Christ already did **everything for you to be saved**.

This isn't something small. Add anything to believing, and you aren't believing. If you've always thought the prayer you said is saving you in any way, shape, or form, you aren't believing in Jesus Christ for salvation. It's Jesus and Jesus alone.

And if you're out there preaching that asking, praying, and saying the Sinner's Prayer is required for salvation, you're corrupting the Gospel. It's time to repent of that great sin and get things right.

Let's pray.