

"Prayer" vs "Choice and Avoidance"

Post by "Don" of February 22, 2026 at 7:11 AM

Interesting topic. Thanks for starting this [Kalosyni](#) !

I fully agree that the popular notion of the word *prayer* is "Oh God, I know you're busy but I need a favor." I'm intentionally being flippant, but this idea isn't new. Lucian gave us [Icaromenippus, an Aerial Expedition](#) where we read:

Quote

we reached the spot where he was to sit and listen to the prayers. There was a row of openings with lids like well-covers, and a chair of gold by each. Zeus took his seat at the first, lifted off the lid and inclined his ear. From every quarter of Earth were coming the most various and contradictory petitions; for I too bent down my head and listened. Here are specimens. 'O Zeus, that I might be king!' 'O Zeus, that my onions and garlic might thrive!' 'Ye Gods, a speedy death for my father!' Or again, 'Would that I might succeed to my wife's property!' 'Grant that my plot against my brother be not detected.' 'Let me win my suit.' 'Give me an Olympic garland.' Of those at sea, one prayed for a north, another for a south wind; the farmer asked for rain, the fuller for sun. Zeus listened, and gave each prayer careful consideration, but without promising to grant them all;

But there are different forms of prayer, even in Christianity, though some are not as familiar to the general populace. I know that I was probably in my 30s (LOL decades ago now) when I discovered this. Even in the psedo-Pauline epistle [1 Timothy 2:1](#), the author gives four types of what can be called generally "prayer": supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings (δεήσεις προσευχάς έντεύξεις εύχαριστίας). A Catholic site provides the [Four Basic Types of Prayer](#):

1. Prayer of Blessing and Adoration (praising God)
2. Prayer of Petition (asking for what we need, including forgiveness)
3. Prayer of Intercession (asking for what others need)
4. Prayer of Thanksgiving (for what God has given and done)

I can see 1 (as @Eikadisteshas done with Pleasure and Lucretius has done for Epicurus) and 4 being open to Epicurean applications, not so much 2 and 3. 4 especially seems fruitful given Epicurus' emphasis on gratitude for the good things we have and/or had in our lives. They also include Meditative Prayer in that list further down, and that too seems a potential area of exploration: really noticing our experience of our senses and feelings to get a handle on what our bodies and minds are trying to tell us rather than simply busying ourselves scrolling etc as

a distraction from ourselves.

That's all for now. More thoughts later.