

PRAYER

week 9



NOTES

As we seek to become fully committed followers of Christ, it is nice to know that we have access to God because of the Jesus Christ. We take advantage of this access through maintaining an active prayer life. The Word of God is God's way to speak to us and prayer is our way to speak to God.

The spiritual discipline of prayer is one of the greatest assets to the life of the disciple. Talking to God is critical if we desire to know Him better and become more dedicated to His way. Let's take a look at what prayer is and how we can pray. The goal of this lesson is to build a desire in your heart to regularly talk to God through prayer.

PRAYER IS AN INVITATION.

God has invited you to talk to Him. Could there be any greater appointment? The Bible teaches us that when we pray, we are entering into the throne room of God.

Hebrews 4:15-16

PRAYER IS TALKING TO GOD.

Sometimes, we worry about what to say to an all-powerful God. Prayer is simply a conversation between God the father and one of His children.

Jeremiah 33:3

PRAYER IS SHARING OUR NEEDS WITH GOD.

No other religion or belief system has a God who hears, answers, and cares about the needs of people as our God. As a child of God, we have the opportunity to take our needs to our Heavenly Father.

Matthew 6:26

God hears us.

1 John 5:14

And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us.

God cares about us.

1 Peter 5:7

Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.

God desires to give us what's best for us.

Jeremiah 29:11

For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.

See also: *Matthew 7:7-11*

Whatever our needs may be at any given time, God desires that they be brought to Him in prayer. As we bring our needs to God, He promises to hear, care, and give us what is best for our lives.

Conversation Starter: Share an answer to prayer you have recently seen in your life.

PRAYER IS A COMMAND.

When you were a child, did you ever have rules that were in place because they were good for you? You may not have totally understood them, but those who watched over you knew that those rules were good for you. Several passages in God's Word command that we pray. God knows that sharing our needs and requesting His help are good for us so He commands us to do it.

Colossians 4:2

Jesus gives the assumption of prayer when He is talking to the disciples. Notice that He says, "When you pray," not, "If you pray."

Luke 11:2

And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth.

If God commands us to pray for our own benefit and Jesus gives the assumptions that we should pray, we must ask ourselves, "How should I pray?"

Let's take a look at what God says about how we should communicate with Him. The following principles are from God's word about prayer and how we should pray:

PRAY REGULARLY.

A good relationship requires good communication. The best way to develop a meaningful prayer life is to communicate with God on a regular, daily basis.

Psalms 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.

As we have already learned, God invites us to bring our needs to Him, but He also wants us to talk to Him daily. Through prayer, we can bring our daily requests, thoughts, fears, and more to God on a regular basis.

PRAY CONTINUALLY.

Having a daily prayer time is beneficial to the life of the Christian, but what if something occurs after our daily prayer time? The good news is that we can talk to God at any time in the day. In fact, the Bible commands it.



1 Thessalonians 5:17

Pray without ceasing.

Ephesians 6:18

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

So, whenever something comes in the course of your day, bring it to God because you have access to Him at any time and any place.

PRAY WITH FAITH.

We place our faith in God for salvation from Hell, why would we not place our faith in Him for the trials and troubles of this life? The Bible teaches that we can come to God knowing that He hears our prayers and will do what is best for us.

Hebrews 11:6

But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

PRAY WITH RIGHT MOTIVES.

Sometimes, we can fall into the trap that God and prayer is like a good luck charm that can pull us out of trouble. Asking for God's assistance with our needs should be done with the motive of honoring and glorifying God not for our selfish gain or attention.

James 4:2-3

Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.

The wonderful thing about meditating upon Scripture is that the Bible promises to bless and reward those who do it.

PRAY ACCORDING TO GOD'S WILL.

God knows exactly what is going on in your life. He has a wonderful and perfect will for your life. Therefore, we may not always receive the answer to our prayers that we think we should get. God will always hear and answer our prayers, but it may not always be with a "yes" because our Heavenly father knows what is best for us.

Jesus Christ Himself experienced this when He prayed to God that the Crucifixion not occur.

Luke 22:42

Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.

We may not always understand God's will in our lives, but we can trust Him and we can come to Him for strength to get through whatever has come into our lives.

1 John 5:14

And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us.

PRAY IN JESUS' NAME.

When we pray in Jesus' name, we are praying by His will and authority because of the sacrifice that He made on Calvary.

John 14:13

And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

PRAY WITH OTHER CHRISTIANS.

The early church in the book of Acts regularly sought the Lord together. When we pray with other Christians, it has a way of strengthening our faith and our boldness.

Acts 1:14

These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.

PRAY PRIVATELY.

While prayer with other Christians can be encouraging, our primary time of prayer should be done between us and God.

Matthew 6:5-6

And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

PRAY EARNESTLY.

Prayer was never intended to be a "religious exercise." When we take prayer lightly, we miss the opportunity and privilege that has been afforded to us.

Matthew 6:7-8

But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.

James 5:16

...The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

PRAY WITH A PLAN.

It is easy to get distracted when we talk to God. When the disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray, He gave them a model prayer that has become known as the Lord's prayer.

Matthew 6:9-13

These verses are not given so that we can repeat the Lord's prayer, rather, they are



to give us a pattern for prayer.

Our Father which art in Heaven - pray in the confidence of your relationship with your heavenly Father.

Hallowed be thy name - worship God in your prayer time.

Thy kingdom come - pray with the desire to see God's kingdom advance.

Thy will be done in earth, as it is in Heaven - pray with submission to the will of God.

Give us this day our daily bread - ask God to meet the needs of your life.

And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors - don't harbor bitterness or unforgiveness in your heart.

And lead us not into temptation - ask God to protect you from sin and the temptation of this world.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory Forever. Amen - pray with a heart that desires God to be glorified.

The Bible gives us this model to help us and to teach us to be systematic about our prayer. Some have found that acrostics for the words ACTS and PRAY have been a helpful guide for their prayer time.

ACTS Prayer Acrostic

A - Adoration: praise God for who He is and what He has done for you.

C - Confession: confess any sins and ask for God's forgiveness.

T - thanksgiving: thank God for His blessings on your life.

S - supplication: share your requests and needs for your life and others with God.

PRAY Prayer Acrostic

P - Praise: praise God for who He is and what He has done for you.

R - Repent: repent of any unconfessed sin.

A - Ask: ask God for the needs and requests of your life and the lives of others.

Y - Yield: submit to the will and work of the Lord in your life.

Neither system is better than another. The idea behind both is that we come before God and spend time in His presence. As you begin to spend regular time in prayer using a plan that works best for your situation, you will find that your prayer life will grow.

PRAYER IS A RELATIONSHIP.

Just as in a human relationship, communication between us and God is vital. That communication through prayer and our relationship can become broken when we allow something to come between us.

BEWARE OF HINDRANCES TO PRAYER.

The Bible tells of some specific ways our prayer can become hindered.

Unconfessed sin can hinder our prayers.

Psalm 66:18

If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.



Isaiah 59:1-2

Behold, the Lord 's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.

Unforgiveness hinders our prayers.

Mark 11:25

Behold, the Lord 's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.

1 Peter 3:7

Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.

Disregard for God's Word hinders our prayers.

Proverbs 28:9

He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination.

RESTORE THE RELATIONSHIP THROUGH PRAYER.

When our relationship with God is hindered God has given us the avenue of prayer to confess and forsake what has come between us.

1 John 1:9**APPLICATION**

Truly, prayer is a wonderful opportunity. You will never regret developing a life marked by prayer. Let's take the time to commit and apply what we have learned about prayer:

Because prayer is an invitation, I commit to bring my needs to God.

The God of the universe has invited you share your needs and requests with Him. We are quick to run to the counsel of man when problems arise. May we learn to be quick to run to the One who can do something about the problem or meet the need. Would you commit to sharing your needs and requests to God?

Because prayer is a command, I commit to obeying by regularly seeking the Lord in prayer.

Prayer is a command from God that benefits us. God has commanded us to pray because He knows how much it will help us. Would you commit to a daily time of prayer? Would you commit to developing a plan for your prayer time?

Because prayer is a relationship, I keep sin from hindering my prayer life.

When an earthly relationship is broken or hindered, we will stop at nothing to resolve it. Would you commit to doing the same with your relationship with God? Would you commit to keeping the lines of communication clear between you and God? When you do sin, take it to the Lord in prayer. He promises to forgive!



