BIBLE STUDY

**Becoming A Person of Prayer**

**Lesson 4: Engaging With Prayer**

**DISCUSSION**

A tale is told about a small town that had historically been "dry," but then a local businessman decided to build a tavern. A group of Christians from a local church were concerned and planned an all-night prayer meeting to ask God to intervene. It just so happened that shortly thereafter lightning struck the bar and it burned to the ground. The owner of the bar sued the church, claiming that the prayers of the congregation were responsible, but the church hired a lawyer to argue in court that they were not responsible. The presiding judge, after his initial review of the case, stated that "no matter how this case comes out, one thing is clear. The tavern owner believes in prayer and the Christians do not."

--- J.K. Johnston, Why Christians Sin, Discovery House, 1992, p. 129.

Remember that prayer is communicating with God from the heart as to a friend.

Prayer should be deliberate. Prayer should be intentional. Prayer should be on purpose.

Prayer is me lifting up my whole soul to the God with whom I share a personal relationship.

Prayer is not a formula that you have to get right.

Prayer is praising God – for who He is, as well as for what He has done.

Prayer is an opportunity for me to reverence God for who He is**.**

When I pray, it is an acknowledgement that I am weak, but God is strong.

When I pray, I must willingly relinquish my strength and submit to God’s strength.

\***Have you ever said these words when praying, “Lord teach me how to pray and what to pray for?” What does this even mean?**

**DISCOVERY**

WHAT IS PRAYER?

“Teach me how to pray and what to pray for…”

After tonight’s Bible study, you will never have to say these words again (at least that is my hope and aim).

In the New Testament, we find Jesus teaching His disciples a **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** prayer.

This model prayer is found in two places: the gospels of **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** and **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**.

Matthew 6:5-15 & Luke 11:1-4

**“Teach me how to pray…”**

In Matthew 6, Jesus gives four (4) instructions to guide us in prayer.

* Instruction 1

Pray in **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** *before* you pray in public. (v. 6)

The word, “secret closet (KJV)”, can be translated as “private chamber”. This could refer to the store-chamber[[1]](#footnote-1) in a house.

If you are not in the habit of praying in private DO NOT try to engage in prayer in public.

**2 Kings 4:32-33; Daniel 6:10; Mark 1:35**

This could be misleading to those who observe us publicly.

* Instruction 2

Pray **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**. (vv. 7-8)

Understand this first, that repeating a request is not “vain repetition.”

**2 Corinthians 12:6-8**

A request becomes a “vain repetition” if it is only a babbling of words without a sincere heart desire to seek and do God’s will.

The reciting of memorized prayers can be vain repetition.

**1 Kings 18:26**

Many may have a “routine” in prayer. Unfortunately, the “routine” rarely encounters the power of God.

**\*Do you believe that God answers insincere prayers?**

* Instruction 3

Pray in God’s **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**. (vv. 9-13)

Jesus did not give this prayer to us to be memorized and recited a given number of times.

He gave this prayer to *keep us* from using vain repetitions.

Notice that Jesus does not instruct them to pray these ***words***; rather, He says pray in the ***way***. In other words, “Use this prayer are a **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**, not as a substitute.”

This prayer begins with God’s interests, not ours: God’s name, God’s kingdom, and God’s will.

The **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** here is to glorify God’s name, and to ask for help to accomplish His will on earth.

If we put God’s concerns first, then we can bring our own needs.

We must remember that we are part of God’s worldwide family of believers. We have no right to ask for ourselves anything that would harm another member of the family.

God is concerned about our needs and knows them even before we mention them.

If this is the case, then why pray? Because prayer is the God-appointed way to have these needs met.

**James 4:1-3**

Prayer prepares us for the **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** of the answer.

* Instruction 4

We must pray, having a **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** spirit toward others (vv. 14–15)

In this “appendix” to the prayer, Jesus expanded the last phrase of Matthew 6:12, “as we forgive our debtors.”

He was not teaching that believers earned God’s forgiveness by forgiving others.

If we have truly experienced God’s forgiveness, then we will have a readiness to forgive others.

**Ephesians 4:32**; **Colossians 3:12-13**

If I am not in fellowship with God, I cannot pray effectively.

Fellowship with my brother helps to determine my fellowship with God; hence, forgiveness is important to prayer.

**DIRECTION  
Use the list of words you created to reverence God. Open your prayer with these words.**

**Confess your weaknesses to God. Ask for His strength.**

**Consider the four (4) instructions as you pray this week. Which of these can I incorporate in my daily praying?**

**Every day, for the next 7 days, pray two one (1) sentence prayers during your day.**

1. Warren Wiersbe The Bible Exposition Commentary: Matthew 6 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)