



"Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth." 2 Timothy 2:15

Disciplemaking 1 - Abiding in His Word

LESSON 2 - PRAYER

"And it came about that while He was praying in a certain place, after He had finished, one of His disciples said to Him, 'Lord, teach us to pray.'" Luke 11:1

A pattern for prayer is clear in the teaching and examples of the Bible. That pattern includes praise, thanksgiving, confession, and requests. All four of these do not have to be in every prayer ... but they should all be included in our prayer lives.

PRAISE ... because of who He is. Praising God exalts, honors, and glorifies Him, Psalm 34:1-3. It is a very important part of what our prayers should be. We are taught to *"continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God,"* Hebrews 13:15. Helpful Biblical examples of praising God are Psalms 144-150. Many examples of praise can be found in throughout the Psalms and in other books of the Bible.

THANKSGIVING ... because of what He has done. God gives so much to us to be thankful for in our lives ... based on our requests ... and often just because He loves us, *"It is good to give thanks to the Lord,"* Psalm 92:1. *"Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving,"* Colossians 4:2. *"In everything give thanks,"* 1 Thessalonians 5:18. And lack of thankfulness is a last days sin, 2 Timothy 3:1-5.

CONFESSION ... because of our sin. To confess is to acknowledge our sins to God. When we do that, He has promised to *"forgive us and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness,"* 1 John 1:9. David outlined the great blessings of forgiveness in Psalm 32 ... and gave us a great example of confession in Psalm 51:1-13. Unconfessed sin hinders our fellowship with God.

REQUESTS ... because He loves us. It is God's desire to meet our needs and give us the desires of our hearts, Psalm 37:4. We are instructed to let our *"requests be made known unto God,"* Philippians 4:6. However, sometimes we do not have because we do not ask ... or because we ask with bad motives, James 4:2,3. Spiritual needs are often much more important than physical needs. Examples of both types are found in the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6:9-13.

THE BIBLICAL EMPHASIS. The Bible is a record of men and women committed to prayer. The Psalms have example after example of man pouring his heart out to God. The rest of the Bible records over 600 prayers and 400 specific answers. Adam and Eve talked openly with God in the Garden of Eden. In the days of their third son, Seth, *“Men began to call upon the name of the Lord,”* Genesis 4:26. Great men and women of the Old and New Testaments were committed to prayer ... Moses, Hannah, Samuel, David, Daniel, and Paul. Even the last few words of the Bible include the prayer, *“Come, Lord Jesus,”* Revelation 22:20.

THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS. Jesus demonstrated and taught that prayer should be a high priority. At the beginning of His ministry, He prayed at His baptism. He also taught His disciples how to pray. He prayed for Himself ... for His disciples ... and for the world. He went out alone early in the morning to talk with His Father. Sometimes He prayed all night. Jesus prayed for the food that He ate and prepared for others. The night before He died, He prayed so fervently in the Garden of Gethsemane that His sweat became like drops of blood. Then as He hung on the cross, He prayed, *“Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing,”* Luke 23:34. As the great intercessor, Jesus is praying for us now, Hebrews 7:25, Romans 8:34. The Holy Spirit also prays for us when we don’t know how we should pray, Romans 8:26.

THE CHALLENGE TO US. With such an emphasis on prayer throughout the Bible, we should commit ourselves to prayer and to learning how to pray more effectively. It is our special privilege and opportunity to talk with the living God. *“The eyes of the Lord are toward the righteous, and His ears are open to their cry,”* Psalm 34:15. *“Therefore, let everyone who is godly pray,”* Psalm 32:6. *“Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praises,”* James 5:13. The answers to the following five questions help to understand prayer.

1. WHERE SHOULD I PRAY? It is a normal occurrence to think of praying in a religious building. Jesus referred to the temple as a *“house of prayer,”* Matthew 21:13. However, prayers are not limited to religious buildings and public meetings. In talking with the woman at the well in John 4, Jesus made it very clear that true worship was offered *“in spirit and truth”* and was not dependent on the location of the worshippers. He condemned the hypocrites for their public prayers in synagogues and on street corners to be seen of men ... and suggested that proper prayer may better be offered in the privacy of an inner room away from others, Matthew 6:5-6. It is clear that proper prayer does not depend on where it is offered. It depends on the condition of the heart of the one who prays.

2. SHOULD I PRAY ON MY KNEES? Jesus knelt to pray, Luke 22:41. Daniel knelt and prayed three times a day, Daniel 6:10. Paul, on his departure from Ephesus, knelt and prayed, Acts 20:36. Jehoshaphat bowed his head to pray, 2 Chronicles 20:18. Because of the sins of the people, Ezra tore his clothes and fell to his knees with outstretched hands ... but wouldn’t lift his face to God, Ezra 9:5-6. At his martyrdom, Stephen lifted his face and gazed into Heaven as he prayed, Acts 7:55-60. Bowing down before God in prayer and worship, even to the point of having their faces to the ground, was commonplace in the lives of the men of the Bible. Standing while praying is found in Mark 11:25. Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed, 2 Kings 20:2. The position of the body has no intrinsic value for effective prayer. It is important only as it expresses the posture of the heart.

3. WHOM SHOULD I PRAY TO? In all aspects of prayer, we should strive to follow the teaching and examples of Scripture. The Bible makes no mention of prayer addressed to anyone but God Himself. We have no examples or teaching that leads us to pray to angels, saints, or any dead Christians. Prayer *requests* should be made to the Father, John 15:16, 16:23. We should pray in the Spirit, Ephesians 6:18, Jude 20 ... under His leading and direction. We are instructed to pray "*in the name of Jesus,*" John 14:13, 15:16 ... that is, in His will and by His power. This Biblical pattern assures us that the full resources of the triune God are with us as we pray.

4. HOW SHOULD I PRAY? The *how* of prayer is as important as, or more important than, the *what* of prayer. Jesus taught His disciples the Lord's Prayer, Matthew 6 and Luke 11, as a model to follow. Biblical examples include Daniel prayed for the people, Daniel 9 ... David prayed for forgiveness, Psalms 51 ... Jesus prayed, John 17 ... and a Pharisee and a Publican prayed, Luke 18. Biblical prayer is open and honest pouring out of the heart to God. Scriptural guidelines include praying ...

Humbly, 2 Chronicles 7:14, 34:27.
With a thankful heart, 1 Thessalonians 5:18, Philippians 4:6.
With sincerity, not by rote, Isaiah 29:13.
Openly and directly, Isaiah 37:14.
With great devotion, Colossians 4:2.
Without ceasing, 1 Thessalonians 5:17.
Persistently, Luke 11:5-10, 18:1-8.
With great striving, Romans 15:30.
With simplicity, Matthew 6:7.
Without wrath or dissension, 1 Timothy 2:8.
In unity with other Believers, Matthew 18:19-20.
With great faith, James 1:6-7, Hebrews 11:6.
According to His will, John 15:7, 1 John 5:14-15.

5. WHAT SHOULD I PRAY FOR? It is a privilege to ask God for His involvement in our lives. It should be treated seriously. In the Lord's Prayer, Jesus taught His disciples to pray for their daily physical and spiritual needs. In His prayer in John 17, He prayed for Himself, His disciples, and for the world in very specific requests. Jesus promised that the faithful prayer, fitting into His will, offered to the Father, in His name would be answered, John 15:7,16, 16:23, 1 John 5:14-15.

Other Biblical suggestions include praying for...
Wisdom, James 1:5, 2 Chronicles 1:7-12.
Spiritual prosperity, Colossians 1:9-12.
Those who mistreat you, Luke 6:28.
Healing, James 5:14-15, 2 Corinthians 12:7-9.
Each other, Ephesians 6:18, James 5:16.
The government, 1 Timothy 2:1-2.
Our food, Mark 6:41, 8:6.
Those who need Christ, Romans 10:1.
Laborers to proclaim the Gospel, Matthew 9:37-38.
Open doors for the Gospel, Colossians 4:3-4.

DENIALS AND DELAYS

God hears all our prayers and answers all our prayers. His answer may be *yes*, *no*, or *wait* [an answer of keep asking but no answer yet]. Sometimes He goes beyond a yes and gives us more than all that we ask or think, Ephesians 3:20. Other times His answer is *no* or *wait*. Some of reasons for those *no* or *wait* answers are below.

Not asking. The principle of James 4:2 applies indirectly to this issue ... “*You do not have because you do not ask.*” Do not expect God to answer un-prayed prayers.

Wrong motives. “*You ask and do not receive, because you ask with the wrong motives, so that you may spend what you request on your pleasures,*” James 4:3.

How a man treats his wife. The Bible teaches that a husband is to love his wife as Christ loves the church, to cherish her, be understanding of her, and honor her as an equal heir of the grace of life ... as 1 Peter 3:7 states, “*so that your prayers will not be hindered.*”

An unforgiving spirit. Being unforgiving hinders our prayers and our forgiveness of others demonstrates the forgiveness we should expect from God, Mark 11:25, Matthew 5:23-24, 6:12-15. In the Lord’s prayer, we essentially ask God to forgive us in just the same way that we forgive others.

Unrighteousness. We are to be clean before God, and then our prayers accomplish much. “*The prayer of the upright is His delight,*” Proverbs 15:8. If one turns away from His law, “*even his prayer is an abomination,*” Proverbs 28:9.

Protection, preparation, or perfection. Denials and delays can be for our good. Sometimes God protects us because we do not know that what we are asking for will hurt us. God knows us better than we know ourselves ... and sometimes, He says *no* because He knows what is best for us. Sometimes a delay is there to give us time to prepare, or to be prepared, for His answer. And sometimes denials and delays come to perfect our faith.

Final denials. Some denials are final. For Moses, “*The Lord was angry with me on your account, and would not listen to me; instead, the Lord said to me, ‘Enough! Do not speak to Me any more about this matter. Go up to the top of Pisgah and raise your eyes to the west, the north, the south, and the east, and see it with your eyes; for you shall not cross over this Jordan,’*” Deuteronomy 3:26. And Paul requested that his thorn in the flesh be removed. But as he wrote, “*Because of the extraordinary greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me - to keep me from exalting myself! Concerning this I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might leave me. And He has said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.’ Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me,*” 2 Corinthians 12:7-10. Accept God’s no’s with thanksgiving ... God knows what He is doing.

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Disciplemaking 1 - Review Questions

Lesson 2 - Prayer ... pages 23 - 26

Part of learning is review ... storing new knowledge into your long term memory. Print this review test or use separate paper to answer the following questions. Then repeat this test, open book or closed book, until you can accurately and easily answer all the questions. These *review exams* are available with correct answers on VirtualBibleAcademy.org.

1. What are the four primary elements of prayer?
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.

2. What is the difference between praise and thanksgiving? Give an example of each.

3. Define confession.

4. Why should you make your requests to God?
 - a.
 - b.
 - c.
 - d.

5. In the next six days, spend at least 2 & 1/2 prayer minutes each day in each of these: praise, thanksgiving, confession, and requests. Circle each day you have successfully completed this.
Day 1 ... Day 2 ... Day 3 ... Day 4 ... Day 5 ... Day 6

6. What Biblical examples do we have of people who prayed [page 24]?
7. Where should you pray? What new places will you be adding to your prayer life?
8. Which answers to page 25's *How should I pray?* were most meaningful to you?
9. Whom should you pray to ... and whom should you not pray to?
10. What body positions for prayer would be new for you?
11. From "What should I pray for?" [page 25] what will you add to your prayers?
12. Why are some prayers hindered or unanswered?
13. The prayers of the upright are _____ and
the prayers of the disobedient are _____.
14. Why can *denials* to prayer requests be good?
15. Why can *delays* in answers to prayer requests be good?
16. What changes to your prayer life have you made because of this lesson?

Disciplemaking 1 - Answers to Review Questions

Lesson 2 - Prayer ... questions pages 27 - 28

Do not use these answer sheets to find your answers. Please use them only to check your answers. Go back into the lesson to find the information to correct your answers. Repeat the test until you can accurately and easily answer all the questions. All the lessons, review tests, and answer pages are available on VirtualBibleAcademy.org.

1. What are the four primary elements of prayer?

- a. *Praise*
- b. *Thanks*
- c. *Confession*
- d. *Requests*

2. What is the difference between praise and thanksgiving? Give an example of each.

Praise is about who God is.

Thanks is about what God has done or is doing.

My example of praise:

My example of thanks:

3. Define confession.

Confession is my agreement with God about my specific sins being sin.

4. Why should you make your requests to God? *Some reasons are listed here.*

- a. *Because He loves me.*
- b. *Because we often don't have because we don't ask.*
- c. *Because we have spiritual and physical needs.*
- d. *Because God wants to give us the desires of our hearts.*

5. In the next six days, spend at least 2 & 1/2 prayer minutes each day in each of these: praise, thanksgiving, confession, and requests. Circle each day you have successfully completed this.

Day 1 ... Day 2 ... Day 3 ... Day 4 ... Day 5 ... Day 6

6. What Biblical examples do we have of people who prayed [page 24]?

*Adam & Eve, men in the days of Seth, Moses, Hannah, Samuel,
David, Daniel, Paul, and Jesus*

7. Where should you pray? What new places will you be adding to your prayer life?

Everywhere ... and new places such as:

8. Which answers to page 25's *How should I pray?* were most meaningful to you?

9. Whom should you pray to ... and whom should you not pray to?

*Primarily to God the Father ... but also to Jesus and the Holy Spirit.
We should never pray to any idol or to anyone else (alive or dead).*

10. What body positions for prayer would be new for you? *See page 24.*

11. From "What should I pray for?" [page 25] what will you add to your prayers?

12. Why are some prayers hindered or unanswered?

Wrong motives, an unforgiving spirit, sin, a husband mistreating his wife.

13. The prayers of the upright are God's delight and

the prayers of the disobedient are an abomination to God .

14. Why can *denials* to prayer requests be good?

Denials can be God protecting us .

15. Why can *delays* in answers to prayer requests be good?

Delays can perfect us ... and/or ... prepare us for God's answer.

16. What changes to your prayer life have you made because of this lesson?