

Prayer Principles – Week 1 Ingredients for Successful Prayer

Hebrews 4:14-16

"Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

This Scripture tells us of this wonderful privilege we have as believers to come into God's presence. As born-again Christians, we need to respond to this gracious invitation. The songwriter said, "What a friend we have in Jesus, All our sins and grief's to bear! What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer..."

PRAYER IS POWERFUL

James 5:16b says, *"...The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much."*

This simply means that when we pray as God wants us to, then our prayers affect the way things happen and the way God does things. God who knows all things, and what will happen before it happens; yet He still desires us to pray so that He can hear and answer our requests. Prayer can do anything that God can do, and that is powerful.

Matthew 6:6

Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him.

If you don't ask you don't receive. Asking is a Scriptural and spiritual requirement. Even though the Father knows what we have need of before we ask, He still expects us to ask. He will not impose His will on any of us. Asking is giving God the permission to move in our life. This gives God the legal right to move in the earth.

HOW DO I GO ABOUT PRAYING AS I SHOULD?

Many people want to know HOW am I supposed to pray? The disciples also had to come to Jesus and said, "*Lord, teach us to pray*"(**Luke 11:1**). Don't forget that praying is talking to God with a sincere heart. Talk with God as you would a good friend, expect results because He is more than just a good friend, He is your Heavenly Father who has saved you from your sin.

Helpful Tool:

ACTS:

A = Adore and worship the Lord first in praying.

C = Confess any sin and disobedience in your life and ask forgiveness.

T = Thank the Lord for all He has done for you, not only for salvation, but also for daily things.

S = Supplication, which means praying for others and their needs and also for yourself and the needs you have.

INGREDIENTS FOR SUCCESSFUL PRAYER

1. All Prayer must have its foundation in the Word and line up with it.

John 15:7: *If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.*

1 John 5:14-15: ¹⁴ *Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. ¹⁵ And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.*

2. All Prayer must be motivated by love.

Matthew 5:44-45: ⁴⁴ *But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, ⁴⁵ that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.*

Romans 5:5: *Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us. - Love is a choice*

Love is the basis for all Christian activity. God sets the example in His Word:

John 15:13: *Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.*

Romans 5:8: *But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

John 3:16: *For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.*

Love requires sacrifice if it is going to benefit mankind. It is almost impossible to fellowship with God or to pray for someone if we are not walking in love.

We are to be imitators of Jesus who said, "By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, that you love one another" (**John 13:35**)

3. Faith is the vehicle that causes every manner of prayer to bring results. Faith is confidence towards God and His Word.

Hebrews 11:6: *But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.*

Romans 14:23: *But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because he does not eat from faith; for whatever is not from faith is sin.*

Faith begins where the will of God is known. To know His will requires us to know Him. There can be no strong faith without a deep, intimate fellowship with the Father. Our faith and confidence in God will only be to the extent that we know Him.

Many people have a relationship with the Father as a result of the new birth, but relationship without fellowship is like a marriage without love. Lack of intimate fellowship with the father produces a lack of trust and a lack of knowledge.

1 Corinthians 1:9: *God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.*

PROBLEMS IN YOUR PRAYER LIFE

Don't get discouraged at times when you pray and there is no immediate answer. Many people get discouraged and stop praying. If you are in fellowship with God, you can be sure that God has heard your prayer.

But many people have a problem with sin in their lives. A Christian's prayers will be hindered if he has un-confessed sin in his life. **Psalm 66:18** says, *"If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear."* Note that in **James 5:26**, God says, *"The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much."* We should not expect God to answer our prayers if we are not living as we should. Being "righteous" means being "right with God." God will not bless our disobedience.

He does, however answer our prayer of confession of sin and seeks to restore us to fellowship. The problem with un-confessed sin in ones life is that it places a barrier between God and us. God says confess your sins and ask for forgiveness and He will forgive. He has promised to forgive and cleanse you from your sin if you confess them (**1 John 1:9**).

Let's consider a few more important things about prayer that will help eliminate problems in your prayer life.

1. You must ask – you can't just think it
James 4:2b says; *"Yet you do not have because you do not ask."*
2. You must pray in Jesus name

John 14:13 says, "And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son."

This does not mean that saying the name of Jesus has any magical power. When we pray in Jesus' name it means we are praying according to His will. By praying in the name of Jesus we are recognizing that we are seeking God's will and are submitting to it.

3. You must pray according to God's will.

1 John 5:14 says, "Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us." **Always want what God wants.**

4. Stay close to God.

John 15:7 says, "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you."

5. Don't ask for selfish reasons.

James 4:3 says, "You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures."

Group Discussion Questions:

1. Explain in your own words your understanding of what prayer is:

2. If the Lord knows what we need before we ask, why do we still need to ask?

3. Why must all prayer have its foundation in the Word of God?

4. How does love, or the lack thereof, affect our praying?

5. Can we pray effective prayers without knowing God's will on the subject?
Give a reason for your answer:

Prayer Principles – Week 2 The Why, What and How of Prayer

Ephesians 6:18 Amplified: *Pray at all times (on every occasion, in every season) in the Spirit, with all [manner of] prayer and entreaty. To that end keep alert and watch with strong purpose and perseverance, interceding in behalf of all the saints (God's consecrated people).*

Why Pray?

John Wesley said, "It seems God is limited by our prayer life - that He can do nothing for humanity unless someone asks Him." If this is a true statement, then it seems imperative that we learn everything we can about prayer.

Some people believe that God is responsible for everything that goes on in this world that we live in. They think He runs the entire show and we are simply victims of whatever He decides will happen. If this line of thinking is true then God is responsible for every good thing and every bad thing that happens here on earth, including every war that has devastated this planet, every baby that has died, every murder that has taken place, and every unthinkable act that has been perpetrated by mankind. The truth of the matter is that God is not ruling this world. One day He will, but this is not that day.

This is easy to see if we accept what the Bible says. The Bible says that God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance (**2 Peter 3:9**). It is obvious that His will concerning all men is not being carried out. If God were running things He would push His will off on everyone so that no one would perish.

If we go back to the book of beginnings, we can see God's intent and design from the beginning was to give man authority to carry out His will on the earth.

Genesis 1:26, 27: ²⁶ Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." ²⁷ So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

Psalms 8:6: *You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet,*

But Satan came and lied to Adam. Adam committed high treason and sold out to the devil, Satan became the god of this world - **2 Corinthians 4:4**. As a result he was given dominion in the earth. He will have that dominion, as the God of this world, until Adam's lease runs out.

God now has to get His will accomplished in the earth through those who will have the right to ask Him, namely human beings. Somebody down here has to ask Him. One day God will set up His kingdom here and have dominion, but that time is not now.

Matthew 18:18-20: *Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. ¹⁹ "Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. ²⁰ For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them."*

What to Pray For:

1. Pray for your enemies

Matthew 5:43,44: *You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' ⁴⁴ But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you,*

This is the first thing Jesus said we are to pray about.

Spitefully - full of spite, full of insult, scorn, contempt, hatred

Persecute - to pursue in a manner to cause injury; to cause to suffer because of belief, especially religious; to afflict; to attack; to harass

We are not to pray that they would be cursed, but blessed and forgiven. If we don't we will empower them to destroy us with bitterness and resentment.

Luke 23:34: *Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do."*

Acts 7:60: *Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not charge them with this sin." And when he had said this, he fell asleep. (Steven)
1 Peter 3:8-12: ⁸ *Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous; ⁹ not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing. ¹⁰ For "He who would love life and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips from speaking deceit. ¹¹ Let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it. ¹² For the eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their prayers; but the face of the LORD is against those who do evil."**

Notice the connection of good days and life with the power of words.

Vs. 11 - Some Christians seldom seek peace, but rather controversy - always trying to stir something up. "Did you hear about this or that?" "What's your opinion about...?"

2. Pray for your needs

Matthew 6:5-8:⁵ *“And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.”*⁶ *But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.”*⁷ *And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words.*⁸ *“Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him.”*

We are to pray about things we personally have need of. Be careful of vain repetitions - Prayer cards, Confession sheets, etc. God is concerned about our needs (**Philippians 4:19**).

3. Pray for the harvest

Matthew 9:35-38:³⁵ *Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.”*³⁶ *But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd.”*³⁷ *Then He said to His disciples, “The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few.”*³⁸ *Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.”* Laborers into the harvest fields.

2 Corinthians 5:18-19 - The ministry of reconciliation

¹⁸ *Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation,*¹⁹ *that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.*

We don't pray that God would save the sinner; we pray that He would send a laborer across their path. There will be more laborers going if we would do more listening.

James 5:7: *Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain.*

How to Pray:

Pray to the Father in the Name of Jesus:

John 16:23-24: *And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you.”*²⁴ *Until now you*

have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.

Jesus is our mediator:

1 Timothy 2:5: *For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus,*

Notice that Jesus is the **mediator** not the object of our approach to God. Jesus is the mediator, which means that He is the go-between God and men. He is like a bridge. You cross the bridge to get to your destination. So you go through Jesus to get to God the Father.

We don't pray to images:

Deuteronomy 5:8-9: *You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; ⁹ you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, – We do not pray to a picture, or bow down to a statue*

Deuteronomy 4:12-18: ¹² *And the LORD spoke to you out of the midst of the fire. You heard the sound of the words, but saw no form; you only heard a voice. ¹³ So He declared to you His covenant which He commanded you to perform, the Ten Commandments; and He wrote them on two tablets of stone. ¹⁴ And the LORD commanded me at that time to teach you statutes and judgments, that you might observe them in the land which you cross over to possess.*

We do not pray to any of the saints, or to some relative already in heaven. We pray only to God the Father in the name of Jesus.

Group Discussion Questions:

1. Why should we pray?

2. Why is it important to pray for our enemies?

3. Why do we need to pray for the harvest?

4. How should proper prayer be addressed and why?

Prayer Principles – Week 3 What Jesus Taught Us About Effective Prayer

1. *Effective Prayer Requires Love*

Matthew 5:43-44: ⁴³ “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ ⁴⁴ But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you,

This is the first thing that Jesus said about prayer. This is sure different from what the flesh would like to. We want to talk about those who hurt us. We want to retaliate against them; or at best pray that God make them pay for what they have done.

Our God is love and we have His nature in us. We are to react to those that mistreat us with the love of God. Jesus is telling us how to respond to our enemies. God loved us when we were His enemies. Jesus died for us even though we were enemies to the cross. There is no defense to love.

This doesn't mean that you won't have some ill feelings toward them. But love is an act and not a feeling. We can make the choice to love our enemies. God loves His enemies in spite of what they are doing.

Mark 11:25-26: ²⁵ “And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. ²⁶ But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses.” - Unforgiveness will hinder your prayer life.

Ephesians 4:26-27: *Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your wrath, nor give place to the devil.*

The need for forgiveness is essential for our freedom (**Matthew 18:21-35**). Forgiveness is necessary because of the concept of an unpayable debt. When we sin against another, or someone sins against us, forgiveness can take place, but what was done can't be undone. It really becomes an unpayable debt.

Justice - giving us what we do deserve.
Mercy - not giving us what we deserve.
Grace - giving us what we don't deserve.

Mercy is required in forgiveness, not justice. We are not to give people what they deserve, but rather what they need (Law of Love). We're to be merciful to others in the same way God has been merciful to us.

Forgiveness is essential to our freedom because if we don't forgive the door can be opened for the devil to take advantage of us.

2 Corinthians 2:10-11 *"Now whom you forgive anything, I also forgive. For if indeed I have forgiven anything, I have forgiven that one for your sakes in the presence of Christ, lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices."*

When we need to forgive someone, the issue is really between God and us. We must extend love and forgiveness to them, but reconciliation may not always be possible (the person may have passed away). Reconciliation is dependent upon others, but freedom is dependent upon us. My freedom can't be dependent upon whether or not I am able to reconcile a situation because, in the event it can't be reconciled, I will stay in bondage.

Until we choose to forgive, we empower the person to continue to hurt us. We have to let them off the hook to stop the pain. Although we let them off of our hook, they will always remain on God's hook until they make things right. Justice may not occur in this lifetime, but it will in eternity ("...vengeance is Mine," says the Lord).

What Is Forgiveness:

It is not forgetting - I thought God forgives and forgets. No. God is all knowing, and He doesn't have memory lapses. What the scripture means is that He chooses not to use that issue against us. We are to follow His example and not use the past against one another either.

Forgiveness is not tolerating sin - We can forgive, but we don't have to tolerate the sin, for that is to make a mockery of forgiveness. We forgive because it is the only means that God has to set us free from our past. God does not expect us to stay in harms way just because we forgave an abuser.

Forgiveness is not seeking resentment, revenge, or repayment - This kind of attitude would reduce us to their level. Let God deal with them.

Hebrews 12:14-15 *"Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled;"*

Forgiveness is resolving to live with the consequences of another's sin.

If I choose to forgive a person, I also choose to live with the consequences of what was done to me. But this is true whether we choose to forgive or not. This may not be fair, but that's why we need to forgive. We all are living with the consequences of Adam's sin.

Forgiveness is not using the past against those we have forgiven.

Healing begins with forgiveness.

2. Effective Prayer Requires Asking

John 16:23-24: *And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you. Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.*

Matthew 6:7-13: ⁷ *And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words.* ⁸ *“Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him.* ⁹ *In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. ¹⁰ Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. ¹¹ Give us this day our daily bread. ¹² And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. ¹³ And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.*

When we pray we are not to use vain repetitions. We don't have to beg and plead with God over and over again concerning the same thing. The more times we ask God for the same thing isn't going to cause Him to respond faster. Others believe that the more people we can get praying with us the quicker God's response will be.

He knows what you have need of before you ask Him. He knows the end from the beginning (**Isaiah 46:10**). You will never be able to surprise God with your need.

Verse 9 - He says to pray to the Father. This agrees with what we have already discussed.

Hallowed (holy, reverent, and honorable) be Your Name – We are to honor His name and not take His name in vain. We are not to use the Name of Jesus or God as a by-word. We say Jesus or God we need to be talking about Him or to Him. There should be the greatest reverence and honor displayed when referring to His name.

In verse 11 refers to asking – *“Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.”*

Daily bread indicates daily provision. We are to ask daily about our provision.

Matthew 7:7-11: ⁷ *“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ⁸ For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. ⁹ Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? ¹⁰ Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? ¹¹ If you then, being evil, know how to give*

good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!

Ask – to call for, to require

Matthew 18:18-19: ¹⁸ Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. ¹⁹ Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven.

This is what is known or referred to in Christian circles as the prayer of agreement. This has been misused by many simply because they didn't understand some basic truths about this Scripture. If there was no asking then according to this verse, you didn't agree. "Father, we agree concerning this thing together and we ask you to do this."

James 4:2-3: *You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures.*

If you don't ask you don't receive. Asking is a scriptural and spiritual requirement. Even though the Father knows what we have need of before we ask, He still expects us to ask. He will not impose His will on any of us. Asking is giving God the permission to move in our life. This gives God the legal right to move in the earth.

3. Effective Praying Requires Persistence

Luke 18:1-8: ¹ Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart, ² saying: "There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor regard man. ³ Now there was a widow in that city; and she came to him, saying, 'Get justice for me from my adversary.' ⁴ And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, 'Though I do not fear God nor regard man, ⁵ yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.'" ⁶ Then the Lord said, "Hear what the unjust judge said. ⁷ And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? ⁸ I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?"

Jesus is not comparing God to an unjust judge, but rather He is showing a contrast. If this judge who is unjust and unfair will take care of this woman and do what she is asking, how much more will our faithful Father take care of those who keep bringing things to Him in prayer.

There is an area of prayer that you must demonstrate persistence; where you must continue in it. This area of prayer is called intercessory prayer. Intercessory prayer is when we stand on behalf of another person or place before God, making request for them.

1 Timothy 2:1-3: *Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, ² for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. ³ For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior,*
Hebrews 7:25: *Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.*

Group Discussion Questions:

1. Explain the three ingredients of successful prayer that were discussed in this lesson and why they are necessary:

Love: _____

Asking: _____

Persistence: _____

Prayer Principles – Week 4 Fellowship: The Foundation of Powerful Prayer – Part 1

2 Timothy 3:1-5 *"But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!"*

This is where the church is today. One of the main reasons the church is in such a sorry state is because of a lack of prayer. One survey I read says that the average Christian spends less than two minutes a day in prayer. I believe deep in the heart of every Christian there is a longing to pray with results. However most don't see the results, so they quit. We need a restoring of not just the principles or mechanics of prayer, but a restoration of the spirit of prayer.

Too many people have focused on the principles and formulas of prayer to the exclusion of God Himself. We have, as a result, grieved the Holy Spirit by approaching Him with formulas instead of approaching Him heart to heart. The problem is we have lost the Person while pursuing the principles. Without knowledge of the Person, the principles won't do us any good.

2 Timothy 1:12 *"For this reason I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day."*

Paul didn't say I know what I have believed. He said he knew the **Person** of the Lord Jesus Christ. The reason He knew Him was because he spent much time in fellowship with Him. That fellowship gave Paul an unshakable confidence in His Word. Faith and fellowship are inseparable.

It is important to distinguish between relationship and fellowship. When we are born physically, we are related by blood to our parents. Nothing can change that fact and we will be blood related regardless of our behavior. Once born, however, we will be in and out of fellowship with our parents, dependent upon our behavior. Disobey and fellowship is broken. When we are born again, we are related to the Father through the blood of Jesus. Nothing can change this fact (**Romans 8:31-39**). We are His children and we will remain His children. We enter into this relationship by our belief, not our behavior. We may be in or out of fellowship, however; and like our relationship with our natural father, it is determined by our obedience.

Without fellowship, the relationship becomes dry and powerless. It is God, by His Spirit, that takes the Word and makes it come alive to us.

Philippians 3:10 *"that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,"*

Without this attitude and purpose, our prayer life will be powerless. We don't pray with just our minds and our mouth. We pray from the heart, where the life of God dwells. **James 5:16** *"The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much."*

1. Deep Calls To Deep:

Psalm 42:1-2: ¹ *As the deer pants for the water brooks, so pants my soul for You, O God.* ² *My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?*

Real praying comes from a heart hungry for God. When a person is hungry, the deepest part of their spirit begins to call out to God for something to fill that hunger. You can't satisfy this kind of hunger. The more of God you get, the more of Him you want. We can't live on past experiences we need fresh manna everyday.

If we want true power in prayer, we must cultivate this kind of hunger. We must let the deep in us call out to the deep in God. I am convinced that it is the lack of spiritual hunger that is at the root of a powerless prayer life. It is not that we don't know the principles or have had a lack of teachings on how to pray; no, it's a heart condition. We have been so full of ourselves that we have left very little room for God to move.

We must maintain the life of God within us daily or we will grow cold. The way we do it is to be fill with the Spirit on an ongoing basis (**Ephesians 5:18**).

2. Above All Abide In Him:

John 15:4-7: ⁴ *Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.* ⁵ *I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.* ⁶ *If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned.* ⁷ *If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.*

It is through times of daily communing with God, fellowshiping and worshipping Him that bring forth a vibrant prayer life.

The word "ask" in verse 7 has a far deeper meaning than what most people realize. It implies you and God are so intertwined, your lives so closely joined

together that when you ask Him something, it's not really you asking - it's Him asking too.

Daily fellowship promotes devotion to God. It keeps Him in the center of our heart and lives. It will cause you to become wonderfully addicted to Jesus and His presence. Religion teaches us that prayer is a duty rather than a delight, and therefore it becomes drudgery. But when we begin to discover the wonders of daily communion with God will begin to enjoy the joy of His presence. The devil will try to distract you to keep you from that place of prayer, but if you will be persistent, you'll build a great discipline into your life that you will be unable to live without.

3. Praying From Your Heart:

Isaiah 56:6-7: ⁶ Also the sons of the foreigner who join themselves to the LORD, to serve Him, and to love the name of the LORD, to be His servants—Everyone who keeps from defiling the Sabbath, and holds fast My covenant— ⁷ Even them I will bring to My holy mountain, and make them joyful in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on My altar; for My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations.”

One of the reasons the church has had so much difficulty in prayer is that we have made it more complicated than it is. We have surrounded it with religious rules and regulations that it has become almost unattainable for the average Christian. As we have discovered it is simply communication with God, and this is easy for anyone.

In fact, prayer is who you are, not just something you do.

Isaiah 56:7 “...For My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations.”

In the New Testament we are called the temple of God (**1 Corinthians 3:16**). We are the temple of prayer today. Once we realize this we will quit trying to construct the most eloquent prayer with all the perfect words, and just communicate with God honestly from our heart.

Effective praying comes from the heart, not our head. It's the heart-felt prayer that makes tremendous power available. This is why we must spend more time developing our spirit than our mind or intellect. As we read and meditate in the Word we will begin to cultivate sensitivity in our spirit. This sensitivity is important in prayer because we are a spirit and we must communicate with God spirit to spirit, from heart to heart.

Group Discussion Questions:

1. Why do you think the church overall is not a praying church and what can be done to change this?

2. Why must there be an understanding of the difference between relationship and fellowship?

3. How does abiding in Him affect our prayer life?

4. What is meant by the phrase, "praying from the heart"?

Prayer Principles – Week 5
Fellowship: The Foundation of Powerful Prayer – Part 2

4. Learning To Flow With The Holy Spirit

John 14:26: *But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.*

If you are accustomed to following rigidly prescribed formulas for prayer, you're probably wondering how you can learn to pray from your heart? If you don't have an outline to follow or certain steps to follow, you're probably thinking you'll never be able to do this. The good news is that you can do this as you learn to allow the Holy Spirit to guide you in your times of prayer.

Romans 8:14: *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.*

How does the Holy Spirit speak to us? He speaks to us in many different ways:

- He may bring the Word to your remembrance.
- Sometimes you'll have an inward knowing, or strong prompting to pray.
- Sometimes He will declare things to us - so clear that it almost sounds like an audible voice.
- At other times He discloses or reveals things to us - suddenly a revelation jumps into your heart.
- He will also transmit things to us - slips you a thought without you even realizing it. It's like it floats up from your heart.

Each of us is an individual that is absolutely unique from one another. God has gifted us and equipped us all differently. Have you ever read about or heard about certain people who had developed certain styles of prayer and then tried to copy it, only to find out you failed miserably at after a few days. Therefore we have to learn to develop a style that God would use us in. We can't imitate someone else's style. Never look at someone else and say, "They are spiritual, I'll do what they do." God uses us all differently. As we learn to fellowship with God on a regular basis, we will develop a consciousness of His presence with us at all times. We have to learn to cooperate with God.

We have got to learn to pray according to our own convictions. Locate your heart. What is God talking to you about? Most people are looking for the earth to quake, bolts of lightning to flash, and an audible voice to speak to them before they will pray. It is the still small voice that we need to be listening for. Many people have missed the supernatural looking for the spectacular.

1 John 2:27: *But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him.*

God's desire is to lead us and to teach us by His Spirit. God wants us to abide in Him. He never intended man to tune into the Holy Spirit just now and then. He didn't intend for us to fellowship with Him just when we are in our prayer closet. God intended for us to abide continually in the presence of His Spirit.

John 15:4-7: ⁴ *Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.* ⁵ *I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.* ⁶ *If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned.* ⁷ *If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.*

God's intent for man is to become so intertwined with Him that His will becomes our will, so that when we ask for something, it is because He is asking for it as well. When we have continual fellowship with God He will put His desires into our heart. Then when we pray we will be actually praying according to the perfect will of God. This is how you will begin to recognize the leading of the Holy Spirit; it will bear witness with your spirit.

Prayer is very much like a river - at times it is calm and at other times it is rushing. Prayer is working with God. Sometimes it is worship, sometimes it is supplication, sometimes it is intercession, sometimes it is very quiet before the Lord, and sometimes it is battling strong and forcibly. It is learning to flow with God. Formulas can cause us to miss working with God; they can cause us to miss the flow. We must learn to stay in the flow.

Effective praying is a result of being in the flow, and fellowship with God is what keeps us in the flow.

5. Taking Your Cues:

As we begin to develop our fellowship with the Father through praise, worship and the Word, we'll be ready to take our cues from Him. By taking our cues, I'm referring to the gentle prompting that will come to us throughout the day. You could be going about your business during the day, fellowshiping with the Father, when suddenly someone will flash across your mind. You may think to yourself, "My, I haven't thought about them in years. I wonder how they are doing?"

That's your cue. It is the Holy Spirit bringing them to you to pray for them. Thinking about someone never has helped them. Because we haven't realized this we have missed countless opportunities to pray for people. I believe that many tragedies could be avoided if we would learn to take our cues from the Holy Spirit. He knows the future and can show you things to come.

Many times we overlook such promptings because we don't realize how supernatural they are. We expect supernatural things to be spectacular. At times His leading could come in a spectacular way, but most of the time it is that gentle prompting in your spirit. His promptings are so light and gentle, that if you aren't looking for them, you'll miss them.

John 13-17 - Jesus asks the Father to glorify the church. The way we get glorified is the same way Jesus did, walking with the Father. In order to be a church that can consistently be used by God in prayer, prayer has to become a way of life. Unfortunately in most Christians lives prayer is something they allot certain segments of time to do.

1 Thessalonians 5:17 - *"pray without ceasing"*

Ephesians 6:18 *"praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints."*

We don't have to stay in our prayer closet all day to pray without ceasing. We can go about our daily business while listening to our hearts, catching the cues and lifting them up before the Lord in prayer. These simple little prayers can save lives and stop tragedies from occurring.

When we learn to pray according to the direction of the Holy Spirit, you're speaking God's words and His words make things happen. All He had to say was, "Let there be light", and light became. God's words are containers of His power. But since He has given mankind dominion over the earth, in order to release His power into people's lives, He needs a man or a woman to speak His words for Him.

God so intensely desires to pour out His mercy upon people, He'll prompt us to pray for people we don't even know.

Galatians 3:5: *Therefore He who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you, does He do it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?*

God wants to use you! Begin where you are. Begin to pray by faith lifting up those little things the Holy Spirit puts in your heart, knowing that each and every one is extremely important to God. They are important to God because they come right from His heart.

True prayer never really starts with us, it always begins with God. The cycle begins when He puts His ways and thoughts into our hearts.

Isaiah 55:6-11: ⁶ *Seek the LORD while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near.* ⁷ *Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the LORD, and He will have mercy on him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.* ⁸ *“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,” says the LORD.* ⁹ *“For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.* ¹⁰ *For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and do not return there, but water the earth, and make it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater,* ¹¹ *so shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.”*

When we forsake our ways for His ways something wonderful happens. God begins to impart His desires, dreams, and plans that are in His heart and put them into our heart. The reason He does it is so that He can bring forth those things in the earth. When these desires first manifest as promptings or cues they may seem ever so slight. They are like seeds, some seeds are large and some are very tiny.

As you begin to follow these promptings in your prayer life, you will realize that you are not always praying for those things that seem to your natural mind to be most in need of prayer. Remember, we are to be led by the Spirit, not by need.

Group Discussion Questions:

1. Why is it important to learn to flow with the Holy Spirit in prayer?

2. Explain how fellowship with God affects our prayer life:

3. What does the phrase, "taking our cues," mean?

4. Has there ever been a time when God supernaturally led you this way to pray about something or someone? Could you explain?

Prayer Principles – Week 6

Spirit Lead Prayer

1 Corinthians 2:9-10: *But as it is written: “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.”¹⁰ But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.*

Once we start learning to cooperate with the Holy Spirit, we will discover that prayer is more magnificent than we ever imagined. We will find it is not just the Holy Spirit helping us pray about matters concerning us. It is you and I helping the Holy Spirit pray about matters concerning Him. This concept staggers the imagination. The fact of the matter is, that from cover to cover the Bible reveals the partnership between God and men and women of faith and prayer.

Over and over again we hear Him say, “Ask! Ask of Me!” Behind those fervent admonitions is the loving heart of a Father who longs to pour out blessing upon the earth. Yet He restrains Himself because He has given man dominion over the earth and waits to be invited.

1. Not Just Spectators – Participators

1 Corinthians 1:9 (Amplified): *God is faithful (reliable, trustworthy, and therefore ever true to His promise, and He can be depended on); by Him you were called into companionship and participation with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.*

We are not called to be forever infants constantly asking our Father to do this and that for us. We are called to grow up and become participators and companions with Him, helping Him fulfill His purposes and intentions for all eternity. That is what prayer is truly about.

Just as we are dependent on the Holy Spirit to pray, so is He dependent on us to pray out His will. Even as we have things in our lives we want to pray about, He also has things He wants to pray about – whole realms of them.

The realms of the Holy Spirit are incredibly vast. We get a glimpse in **Genesis 1:2** where it says, “*the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.*” The word moved actually means to hover over like a mother hen hovers over her eggs. His desire is to hover over the earth to release His power and bring forth life according to the will of God. He did not split the darkness until he heard the words, “*Let there be light.*”

Today the Holy Spirit is still hovering over the realms of God. Just like in the beginning, He is waiting for someone to speak God’s words and will over those realms. He is waiting for someone to ask in the Name of Jesus. He is waiting for

someone to say, “*Let there be light in the life of that dead soul! Let there be life for that dying one! Let God’s will be done on earth as it is in heaven.*”

For the most part we haven’t entered into this realm of prayer. It isn’t because we haven’t wanted to, but we haven’t known about these realms. We have puttered around praying from our limited earthly, totally unaware that if we would release our faith, the Spirit of grace and supplication within us would open to us the eternal universe of God Himself.

2. Realms Revealed

The simple fact is that we cannot participate with God in a realm unless He reveals it to us – but once He does, it is easy. The reason that more of us don’t have a heartfelt burden to pray for the lost is because we have never asked God to reveal this realm to us. When God reveals this realm to us it will become so real to us that we will actually feel what it’s like to be slipping toward hell with no one to help. When it becomes our desire and passion to have this realm revealed to us He will continue to us visions and dreams to keep it alive in us.

Not only is He interested in revealing the realm of lost humanity to us, He also will reveal other realms as well to us. For instance, He might reveal to us the outpouring of God’s glory that is coming to the church. He may even have you stay up all night praying for a mother dog and her puppies that are about to freeze in a barn somewhere. You may think that is not as important as praying for the lost, but the Holy Spirit knows the future. It could be that one of those puppies might save the life of a child some day. So we must simply trust Him and pray as He directs.

3. Praying by the Spirit of Prophecy

It is real important that we don’t try to get into these places. We must keep our eyes on Jesus and purpose to simply know and obey Him. Once we have built our faith by mediating the Word and fellowshiping with God, we are prepared to follow the promptings of the Holy Spirit whenever they come.

This kind of prayer comes by the Spirit of Prophecy. Prophecy isn’t just standing up in church and declaring future events. Prophecy is utterance that is inspired by the Holy Spirit. It is the voice of God speaking through us to bring exhortation, edification, and comfort (**1 Corinthians 14:3**).

How desperately we need His voice speaking through our prayers in these days. For when He speaks things are changed, conditions in the spiritual realm are altered, making a way for God to move.

Isaiah 40:3-5 Amplified: *A voice of one who cries: Prepare in the wilderness the way of the Lord [clear away the obstacles]; make straight and smooth in the*

desert a highway for our God! ⁴Every valley shall be lifted and filled up, and every mountain and hill shall be made low; and the crooked and uneven shall be made straight and level, and the rough places a plain.

In Isaiah's day when a king would go to a new place a group would go before him to clear the path before him. They would fill the ruts in the road, remove any obstacles, and make it as smooth as possible. By speaking the inspired Word of God by the anointing of the Spirit, we clear the way for our God to move and work.

4. Be Willing to Grow

We must ask the Lord for this kind of spirit of prayer in our lives. We must humble ourselves and be willing to start where all beginners start, at the beginning, and be willing to grow in this gift that only God can give.

Romans 12:6: *Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith;*

The more we develop our faith through the Word of God and through practice, the easier and more accurately we will be able to flow in this gift.

5. Explore the Bottomless Things of God

Since the gifts are a result of God's grace at work in us, we can accelerate our development by asking God to increase our capacity in prayer. He'll do it because He wants to take us higher. He wants to take us on marvelous adventures in prayer and show us the great plans and realms of God.

There are wondrous things that our physical eye has not seen or our ears heard. There are realms so vast no human being could ever think of them. Yet God has revealed them to us by His Spirit. If we will learn to yield by faith to Him, the Spirit will lead us to pray for things that will absolutely astonish us. We'll find ourselves praying out truths and revelations that we could never have thought of.

All the deep and bottomless things of God are in our heart because that's where the Holy Spirit dwells – and those realms are all in Him. Every answer we will ever need to know, the whole counsel of God's divine counsel, all of His plans for the future – everything – is inside us right now. And the Holy Spirit wants to reveal them to us right now. Why? So we can become a participator in them. So we can work with Him through prayer and bring God's will to pass in those realms!

6. A Look at the Master

Jesus is our example. The prayer that He prayed just before He went to the cross is the most remarkable ever recorded and it is a wonderful demonstration of praying by the Holy Spirit. When He prayed it He was about to face the most horrible experience any man could have ever known. He would be betrayed and put to a painful death. And worst of all, He was about to bear the sin of the whole human race, and in doing so, become separated from His Father.

John 17:1-5: ¹ *Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: "Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, ² as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him. ³ And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. ⁴ I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. ⁵ And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.*

When He said, "I have finished the work", he was not praying in the realm of the present. He was praying about the glorification that was to be His on the other side of the cross. That was the realm He was seeing and hearing about in His heart.

John 17:6, 8-11: *I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. ⁸ For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me. ⁹ "I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours. ¹⁰ And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them. ¹¹ Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are.*

Here Jesus begins to pray from the future realm of His High Priestly Ministry about a time when He will be glorified – or fully made known – in His disciples.

John 17:12, 18: ¹² *While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. ¹⁸ As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.*

To us this makes perfect sense because we know that these events did take place. But remember, as He was praying this prayer, none of these things had happened yet. Sometimes when we pray by the unction of the Spirit we may hear ourselves pray things from the heart that make our mind wonder. That's because we are seeing things to come.

John 17:20-23: 20: ²⁰ "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; ²¹ that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. ²² And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: ²³ I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.

At this point Jesus steps into the realm that contains everyone who would ever believe. He prays further about a time in which all Christians will be one and so full of the glory of God the whole world will know Jesus is the Messiah. Finally, Jesus concludes His prayer by spanning the spiritual universe – from before the foundation of the world all the way to the rapture.

Group Discussion Questions:

1. How can we move from being a spectator to a participator in prayer?

2. Has the Holy Spirit ever revealed to you realms of prayer, that at the time were new to you, but now you flow in frequently? If so, please give a brief explanation:

3. Has the prayer series helped you understand prayer better? How have you been able to apply what you have learned?
