

## *Discipleship Lesson 6*

# Prayer

*Key Memory Verse:*

*Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you  
great and mighty things, which you do not know.*

*Jeremiah 33:3*



# **Discipleship Lesson 6**

## **Prayer**

As you study this lesson you will understand why the following statements are **not true**.

1. People can pray to idols, saints, the dead, spirits, animals, or other men.
2. If you pray the rosary long enough and hard enough, God will answer your prayers.
3. The best prayers are those that have been written by others and are just repeated by you.

### **How Important Is Prayer in My Life?**

Someone once said that a Christian is only as strong as his prayer life. There is a great deal of truth to this because prayer is your direct communication with God. When you read the Bible, God speaks to you; when you pray, you speak to God. Your personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ cannot grow without maintaining proper communication.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this lesson is to acquaint the believer with the basics of a proper prayer life. In order to maintain clear lines of open and effective communication with the Father, there are a few essentials that must be understood.

## I. What Are the Necessary Ingredients of Prayer?

Read carefully Luke 11:1–13 (parallel account Matthew 6:9–13). Here we see some of the Lord's teaching on prayer. The following is a list of ingredients found in His prayer with additional verses to emphasize each point.

- A. **Worship, adoration, or praise**—"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name" (Luke 11:2a, NKJV)

We must first recognize God is absolutely sovereign and deserving of all praise and adoration. He alone must be the object of our prayer. More often than not, however, our prayers are characterized by selfishness. The real objective of our prayer sometimes becomes our personal fulfillment and well-being. If we worship God, we "must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4:22–23, NKJV).

Describe what actions Daniel and the elders took in worshipping God in prayer.

Daniel 9:3–4 \_\_\_\_\_

Revelation 4:10–11 \_\_\_\_\_

- B. **Submission**—"Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (Luke 11:2b, NKJV only; others see Matthew 6:9–13).

What areas in your life do you need to submit to God in prayer?

- C. **Confession and Forgiveness**—"And forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us" (Luke 11:4a, NKJV).

Sin is that which separates man from God and is therefore **man's greatest enemy**. Because man's greatest problem is sin, his greatest need is forgiveness, and that is what God provides.

Christians have been forgiven the ultimate penalty of sin, but we still need God's constant forgiveness. Forgiveness is the central theme of this entire passage.

1. How many times is "forgive" mentioned in Matthew 6:9–15? \_\_\_\_\_

Asking forgiveness implies confession. To confess means to agree with God that your sin is wicked.

## Notes and Questions

## Notes and Questions:

2. Why is it difficult to confess our sins? It is difficult because our pride, fear, and Satan fight against it.

a. What will happen if we do not confess our sins?

Proverbs 28:13 \_\_\_\_\_

b. In what condition are we if we think we don't need to confess our sins? Review 1 John 1:8.

\_\_\_\_\_

c. Why should we be forgiving of others?

1. Colossians 3:13 \_\_\_\_\_

2. Matthew 6:14–15 \_\_\_\_\_

3. Because it will keep us from the spiritual cancer of \_\_\_\_\_  
(Hebrews 12:15).

### D. Faith—James 1:5–6, 8

These verses suggest, as does the whole book of James, that we show our faith by our works. *Asking in faith* does not mean one must conjure up within himself a positive feeling of assurance that what he has asked for will take place if he believes strongly enough. Our faith is not based on our feelings or moods, but on the promises and power of God. If a *positive feeling* was a necessary ingredient, then when we are down in the midst of trouble, crying out to God while consumed in grief, we would have no hope. Instead, our attitude toward prayer should be one of assurance, believing and knowing that God is in control.

### E. Petition—"Give us this day our daily bread" (Matthew 6:11, NKJV).

Matthew 7:7–8 "Ask, seek, and knock" suggests that we not only make our requests known to God, but we ought to be persistent in our prayer requests. Jesus illustrates this principle in Luke 11:5–10. What is the main point of this parable (key verse 8)? Also see Luke 18:1–8.

\_\_\_\_\_

- F. **God's Will**—"Your will be done" (Matthew 6:10, NKJV).

Prayer is a mighty instrument, not for getting man's will done in heaven, but for getting God's will done on earth. We have no right to ask God for anything that will be dishonoring to His name, delay His kingdom or disturb His Will on earth. If we put God's concerns first, then we can bring our own needs (Matthew 6:33).

- G. **Listening**—Listening is a key ingredient to an effective and fulfilling prayer life. Listening is allowing God's Word to penetrate our lives and be applied to our present circumstances. What does Isaiah 51:1, 4 say in this regard? (See also Section V, "Prayer and Meditation.")

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Which of the seven ingredients will make your prayer life more effective? Be prepared to discuss them with your discipler.

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## II. What Should We Pray For?

- A. Pray for the will of God to be done, daily provisions, \_\_\_\_\_, guidance, and victory over temptation and sin (Matthew 6:9–13).
- B. Pray for the \_\_\_\_\_ (James 5:13–16).
- C. Pray for all men, for all in \_\_\_\_\_, and for the salvation of the lost (1 Timothy 2:1–4).
- D. Pray for personal safety (Daniel 3:16–18, 6:18–23).
- E. Pray for \_\_\_\_\_ (1 Kings 3:5–9; James 1:5).
- F. Pray for the spiritual maturity of Christian brethren (Ephesians 3:14–19).
- G. Pray for your pastors/leaders of your local church (1 Thessalonians 5:12–13, 25).
- H. Boldness to \_\_\_\_\_ (Ephesians 6:18–20).

Of the previous list of things to pray for, be prepared to discuss with your discipler those items that you had never considered praying for before.

## Notes and Questions

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### III. What Would Keep God from Hearing Our Prayers?

- A. What is the main reason why God does not answer our prayers?

Psalm 66:18; Proverbs 28:9

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- B. God does not answer our prayers when we have unresolved offenses in our relationships. What are those relationships according to the following verses?

1. 1 Peter 3:7 \_\_\_\_\_

2. Mark 11:25–26 \_\_\_\_\_

3. Matthew 5:23–24 \_\_\_\_\_

- C. God does not answer prayer when people pray just for show (Mark 12:40; Matthew 23:14). Insincere prayer is fruitless and worthless.

- D. Prayers that are repetitious in nature are contrary to the Word of God.

“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” (Matthew 6:7, NKJV).

Give an example: \_\_\_\_\_

- E. God does not answer prayer when it is used strictly for selfish reasons (James 4:3).

- F. God does not answer prayer when we will not, in humility, assume our proper place before Him (Luke 18:10–14).

- G. If the sin issue is taken care of properly, then God will answer our prayers. Sometimes the answer is yes, other times no, and sometimes it is wait!

1. God does not always answer our prayers immediately. In Nehemiah 1:4–11 and 2:1, four months pass between the request and answer.

2. Our timing is not always God’s timing. He teaches us faith and patience through circumstances that require us to wait upon Him (2 Peter 3:8).

#### IV. Basic Questions

A. Where are we to pray?

1. 1 Timothy 2:8 \_\_\_\_\_
2. Matthew 6:6 \_\_\_\_\_
3. Acts 3:1 \_\_\_\_\_

B. When are we to pray?

1. Luke 18:1 \_\_\_\_\_
2. Psalm 5:3 \_\_\_\_\_
3. Psalm 55:17 \_\_\_\_\_
4. Psalm 86:3 \_\_\_\_\_
5. Psalm 88:1 \_\_\_\_\_
6. Daniel 6:10 \_\_\_\_\_
7. 1 Thessalonians 5:17 \_\_\_\_\_

#### V. Prayer and Meditation—Joshua 1:8; Psalm 1:1–2

A. The biblical practice of meditation goes back to the book of Genesis where the word is first used. Genesis 24:63 tells us that Isaac went out into the field to meditate. It was on this occasion that he met his wife Rebekah.

1. *Webster's Dictionary* defines the verb *meditate* as follows:
  - a. To contemplate; to keep the mind fixed upon; to study.
  - b. To purpose; to intend; to design; to think deeply and continuously. Synonyms are consider, ponder, weigh, or study.
2. Biblically, meditation is associated with the following: prayer (Psalm 5:1); singing praises to the Lord (Psalm 104:33–34); witnessing and testifying for the Lord (Psalm 77:12); the Word of God (Psalm 119:15, 23, 48, 78, 97, 99, 148).
3. Meditation is to be acceptable unto the Lord (Psalm 19:14).



## Notes and Questions:

B. One of the synonyms for *meditate* under Webster's definition was "to consider." The Bible lists numerous things we are to meditate upon or consider.

1. Consider the \_\_\_\_\_ works of God (Job 37:14).
2. Consider the \_\_\_\_\_ things God has done for you (1 Samuel 12:24).
3. Consider your \_\_\_\_\_ (Haggai 1:5-7).
4. Consider the fruit of laziness (Proverbs 24:30-32).
5. Consider the end of the \_\_\_\_\_ (Proverbs 21:12).
6. Consider \_\_\_\_\_ (Hebrews 3:1, 12:3).

C. What are some of the hindrances we face in prayer and meditation?

1. Spiritual warfare (Ephesians 6:10-19)
2. Over scheduling
3. Failure to designate a quiet time and place
4. Mental fatigue
5. Failure to recognize the importance of prayer to our peace of mind and spiritual well-being
6. Laziness
7. Not knowing how to pray
8. Not knowing why to pray
9. Stress
10. Pride
11. Lack of faith
12. Resentment, anger, bitterness

Which of the hindrances to prayer listed above have you struggled with in your own prayer life?

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For most people, the single greatest hindrance to prayer is pride—not necessarily an attitude of outright rebellion against God. Most of us, at times, believe that we have control over our own lives. Praying to God for assistance or help in time of need, or just understanding through a time of meditation that God is in control of all things, is humbling. What areas do you struggle with to give God complete control of in prayer? Your marriage, your attitudes, your money, your thought life, what you read and watch, etc.?

## Notes and Questions:

### VI. Practical Application

- A. How has this lesson changed your understanding of prayer?
- B. Read Romans 10:17. How do you think a person can increase their faith?
- C. Have you set aside a time to pray? Do you have a list of things to pray for? Are you praying for people to be saved by name?
- D. Name two important truths or principles that stood out to you from this lesson.
  - 1. \_\_\_\_\_
  - 2. \_\_\_\_\_



## Notes and Questions:

## Prayer Challenges

1. If no one on earth prayed for the salvation of sinners more fervently or more frequently than I do, how many of them would be converted to God through prayer?
2. God can do more through our prayers than through our preaching. A.J. Gordon once said, "You can do more than pray, after you have prayed, but you can never do more than pray until you have prayed." If only we would believe this!
3. We are not New Testament Christians if we do not have a prayer life.
4. God manifests Himself in direct proportion to our passion for Him. The principles given in Scripture still hold true today. "You will seek Me and find Me when you seek Me with all of your heart" (Jeremiah 29:13).