

STUDY 4: Prayer

Prayer changes you & your world!

THE WORK OF THE CHURCH (every believer in Jesus) IS PRAYER...

THE REWARD WE GET FOR OUR WORK IS MINISTRY (God's life flowing out of us to others)...

THE MINISTRY OF THE CHURCH IS SAVING SOULS (evangelism- to see others get eternal life)

Between the humble and contrite heart and the majesty of heaven, there are no barriers; the only password is prayer.

Beware in your prayer, above everything, of limiting God, not only by unbelief, but also by fancying that you know what He can do.

Every chain that people wear crumbles in the breath of prayer!

When we repented of our sins and were saved, there was more that happened to us than the forgiveness of our sins. We actually entered into a relationship with God! We can actually know Him, His power, His mind and will. Because of what Jesus did through His death & resurrection, we have the barrier of our sins removed and we can have an audience with God whenever we want to and can be confident to receive mercy and grace from Him (Hebrews 4:16)!

The foundation of any successful human relationship is two-way **communication**. So it is in our relationship with God! **The two-way communication we have with God is called prayer.**

But prayer is very different than any

Kneel before you leap!

other form of communication. Why? Because prayer produces change in us and in the world around us- change that is supernatural, powerful and lasting. Apart from prayer, you cannot live the life God desires you to live; you will never become like Christ. If your prayer life is weak, you will be weak!

Also, apart from you praying, God cannot do anything in this world because God has created things in such way that the singular means by which He pledged to gain control of this world is by His people praying. God works with us- through our submission to His will and partnership with Him- to see this planet change! What a privilege! What a responsibility!

To better understand prayer and how to pray, this study will look at **spiritual reality, prerequisites to successful prayer (also types, positions, hindrances), and God's gift to help you pray the best.**

Prayer provides *power* over temptation, *poise* in crisis, *peace* in times of trouble, and *purpose* for our future.

"Why are you sleeping?" He asked them. "Get up and pray so that you will not fall into temptation."

"Could you not keep watch (pray) with Me for one hour?"

- Luke 22:46 & Matthew 26:37

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Prayer clothes
human weakness
with divine strength

Prayerlessness is sin
and a form of pride. It
makes us self-reliant
not God-reliant

Prayer can do
anything God can
do

Spiritual Reality- A careful study of the Bible's teaching on heaven (the Kingdom of God), and a number of Scriptures (Philippians 3:20, John 17:11, Ephesians 2:2 & 3:20, 2 Corinthians 4:18, Hebrews 11:3, etc.) reveals so much. The world we know consists of what we see- the physical world- and what we don't see- the very real spiritual world. In essence, the way God exists in this physical world is through His people who have been saved. When we were apart from Christ, we were spiritually dead, but physically alive. When we were saved, we became spiritually alive as well, with God actually living in us (Colossians 1:27). Hence, He is now physically in the earth because He lives spiritually in our physical bodies.

We are now very unique creatures (2 Corinthians 5:17). We have a form of dual citizenship in two worlds at once- heaven and earth. This is very real and gives us access to the things of those two worlds. We have access to the things of heaven (the Kingdom of God)- things like health, peace, power, joy, etc. We also have access to the things of this fallen world- some good, a lot bad (like sin, disease, depression, war, etc.)

Therefore, when we pray, we access the world of heaven and actually bring that world into the physical world we are now in. For example, when you pray for God to bring healing to a friend who is sick, the reason that person gets better is because in heaven there is no sickness (see Revelation 21:4)! There is

God rewards those who persist in prayer

“If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer”
- Mark 21:22

“They all joined together constantly in prayer” – Acts 1:14

actually a spiritual overlap of the spiritual into the physical- all because you prayed! See it this way: you are like a hose with an open end in heaven and the spigot on earth. When you pray, you open the spigot and the water of heaven flows through you into the earth, bringing what is in heaven into the world you live in. Isn't that awesome?!

Prerequisites to successful prayer- The Bible has many teachings on how to pray. In fact, it even implies there is a kind of praying that isn't particularly effective (James 5:16). Before we get into some of the essentials, here is the most important of all: **you need to set a daily, uninterrupted time and place for prayer. Jesus made time for you- shouldn't you for Him?** If you are too busy to pray, you are too busy!

Did you know?

The best way to know the voice of God is to be devoted to the Bible. The more you read the Bible the more you know the way God thinks. Then you can compare what you hear with what He has already said!

Prayer is listening, not just asking

God promised us if we called to Him He would answer us and show us awesome things (Jeremiah 33:3).

That is why every prayer time requires us to quiet ourselves and to listen. He will speak to us! We can know God's voice (John 10:4)!

There are different kinds of prayer. The four most common are:

1. *Thanksgiving*, where we spend time thankfully counting our blessings before God.
2. *Waiting or soaking*, where one waits on God quietly to hear His voice or receive spiritual blessings from Him to be made more like Jesus.
3. *Intercession*, where requests are brought up to the Lord regarding things or people we are praying for.
4. *Praying in Tongues*, where we use the supernatural spiritual language God gives us to make sure we are praying the will of God (see below for more on this)

There are also different positions people use in the Bible to pray. Among them are: kneeling, walking, bowing, with hands outstretched, laying on the ground facedown, and even running! This teaches us that the position of the body is not what matters. It is the position of the heart that does!

Knowing what we now have

learned, we can discover the most effective way to pray by seeing what the Bible teaches us.

Here are some helpful insights on how to have a fruitful prayer life:

1. Prayer must be **passionate**, fervent (James 5:16). In other words, your mind & body must be engaged. If your prayers don't keep you awake, they won't keep God up either! The Greek text in James literally means to "pray energetically"!
2. Prayer must be **sincere**, offered with reverence and Godly fear (Hebrews 10:22).
3. Prayer must be **according to God's will**. Prayer is not "God do my will!" Rather, it is "Not my will, but Yours be done!" In fact, you are promised if you ask according to God's will, He hears you and you will have

what your are asking (1 John 5:14, 15).

4. Prayer must be offered **in faith without doubting**, believing that God is listening and answering (James 1:6, 7; Hebrews 11:6; Mark 11:24).
5. The great teaching Jesus gives us in Luke 11:5-10 illustrates this essential: answers to prayer ultimately come from our **bold persistence**- i.e., once we know we are praying God's will, we don't take 'no' for an answer. Remember this: **our relationship with God gives us access; our bold persistence gives us answers**. That is why we are to ask and keep asking; seek, and keep seeking; knock and keep knocking!

Knowing those things that can help us be successful in prayer and bring about the blessings of heaven into this world we live

in, what are the most common hindrances to our prayers? Though there are many, here are ones you can be sure will challenge you in your new walk with Jesus:

1. **Being distracted** by busyness or busy thoughts of work, your family, or the things of this world (Mark 4:18, 19). Have you ever tried talking to someone when his or her mind was on the TV or on something else? Enough said!
2. **Being double-minded**, i.e., being unsure of God's intent to honor your request and His Word, the Bible (James 1:6-8). This ultimately demonstrates a lack of faith in God's willingness & capability to be good to you.
3. **Sin!** There is nothing that stops prayer more than having unrepented sin in your heart! God will not hear the prayer of the wicked! (Proverbs 15:8, 29 & Psalm 66:17, 18)
4. **Asking with wrong motives.** There is nothing clearer regarding this than James 4:3: "When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures."
5. **Not knowing/praying God's will.**

The last point above brings up one of the greatest challenges that faces each of us. How do we know if we are actually asking something that is in accordance with God's will? We can pray back to God what we read in the Bible as one of His promises to us. But how do we know *for sure* that is God's will at that moment for our lives? Or worse yet, how can we be sure that what we are praying is God's will for someone else? God has us covered! He has made a way!

God's gift to help you pray the best- God's answer to help you pray His will is to partner with you by giving you the ability to pray supernaturally in tongues! We have already discussed this some in a previous study, but let us see how God helps us pray through this awesome gift.

In Romans 8:26, 27, God not only tells us we are weak and don't know how to pray as we should, but He also tells us that His Holy Spirit aids us by praying through us- and He prays through us in complete agreement with the will of God! We can then know for sure that whatever we pray for in tongues is

Pray at all times in the Spirit (tongues)... - Ephesians 6:18

definitely going to be answered. When we lift our voice to pray in tongues it is a divine flow of God's will and purpose from heaven, through us, and into our world (as we learned earlier).

Since tongues is equated with praying in/with the Spirit (Acts 2:4, Acts 10, 19, etc.), whenever we read about praying in the Spirit, we need to see that God is encouraging us to pray with His help using the gift He gives so that we might be truly effective. The questions that arise about this are:

1. *Do I understand what I am saying when I am praying in this prayer language?* Not with the mind.
2. *How can praying in this unknown language help?* Easy! It isn't completely unknown to you. Much communication and understanding comes not from the mind but from the depth of our hearts. Having a 'heart to heart', or a 'gut feeling' means we know something deep within hard to put into words, but we try expressing it anyway. That is what tongues does! We speak God-given prayers from our 'gut'. These prayers flow from, and are understood in, that deepest part of us. And think about this: if we differ with God over His will on some matter of prayer how can we pray without doubting? By praying in tongues! We need His help! **So isn't it time to pray?**

WHAT HAVE YOU
LEARNED?

ANSWER THE
QUESTIONS ON
THIS PAGE...

UNDERSTAND
WHAT THE BIBLE
TEACHES ON:

PRAYER AND
PRAYING
EFFECTIVELY...

1. **How can we effectively bring the good things of heaven into our friends' lives?**

2. **Matthew 21:22 says that to get answers to prayer, the one requirement is to what?**

3. **What are the four most common kinds of prayer? Name a characteristic of each. How can you make sure your prayer life is a balance of these four?**

4. **Of the five insights on successful praying offered on page 3, which stands out to you the most & why?**

5. **Name several hindrances to prayer. Which do you see in your own life? What can be done regarding these pitfalls to effective prayer?**

6. **How does praying in your supernatural prayer language (tongues) lay a building block that is essential for you?**

7. **Write down the following:**
 - **THE TIME I WILL PRAY EACH DAY: _____ AM/PM**
 - **WHERE I WILL PRAY: _____**
 - **WITH GOD'S HELP, I PROMISE TO STAY COMMITTED TO THIS TIME!**_____ (SIGN NAME)