

A PRAYING LIFE* (Week 1)

June 22, 2014

COURSE OUTLINE

Today

- I. DIFFICULTIES IN PRAYER
- II. CHILDLIKE PRAYING

June 29

- III. HELPLESSNESS
- IV. ASK ANYTHING
- V. PRAYER AS A STORY

July 6

- VI. PRAYING THE WORD
- VII. PRACTICAL HELPS

I. DIFFICULTIES IN PRAYER

Why is prayer difficult?

- Lose focus, distractions
- Why even pray if God knows everything?
- Fear of not measuring up
- Not doing it right
- Scattered thoughts
- Unanswered prayer disappointments
- Trivial requests
- Unworthy—why would God want to listen to me?
- Lots to pray about, lists can get overwhelming
- Hearing God's voice is hard
- Having a good attitude vs discipline, balancing that
- Spiritual battle

Mark 10:14-15

32 Then they went to a place called Gethsemane, and Jesus said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray." 33 He took Peter, James, and John with him, and became very troubled and distressed. 34 He said to them, "My soul is deeply grieved, even to the point of death. Remain here and stay alert." 35 Going a little farther, He threw himself to the ground and prayed that if it were possible the hour would pass from Him. 36 He said, "Abba, Father, all things are possible for You. Take this cup away from Me. Yet not what I will, but what You will." 37 Then He came and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, "Simon, are you sleeping? Couldn't you stay awake for one hour?" 38 Stay awake and pray that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." 39 He went away again and prayed the same thing. 40 When He came again He found them sleeping; they could not keep their eyes open. And they did not know what to tell Him. 41 He came a third time and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Enough of that! The hour has come. Look, the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners."

II Corinthians 12:8-10

8 I asked the Lord three times about this, that it would depart from me. 9 But He said to me, "My grace is enough for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness." So then, I will boast

most gladly about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may reside in me. 10 Therefore I am content with weaknesses, with insults, with troubles, with persecutions and difficulties for the sake of Christ, for whenever I am weak, then I am strong.

Romans 8:26

In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness, for we do not know how we should pray, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with inexpressible groanings.

Matthew 17:20

I tell you the truth, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, "Move from here to there," and it will move; nothing will be impossible for you.
(see also Mt. 21:21-22)

John 15:7

If you remain in Me and My words remain in you, ask whatever you want, and it will be done for you. (see also Jn. 13-14)

II. CHILDLIKE PRAYING

Coming As Children

Mark 10:14–15

But when Jesus saw it, he was indignant and said to them, "Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it."

Matthew 18:3

"Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."

1. Come Messy

Matthew 11:25, 28-30

²⁵ *At that time Jesus said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children..."*²⁸ *"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."*²⁹ *Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."*³⁰ *For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."*

2. Come Real

Luke 15:1–2

Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear him. And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, "This man receives sinners and eats with them."

Luke 19:10

"For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."

3. Come to God as Father

Matthew 6:9

Talking with Our Father (Practical Ideas)

1. Ask like a child

Matthew 7:7–11

⁷ "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. ⁸ For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened. ⁹ "Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? ¹⁰ Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? ¹¹ If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!"

2. Believe like a child

- Persistent widow in **Luke 18:1-8**
- Man who badgers neighbor, **Luke 11:5-8**

3. Talk like a child

- Paul's example, **Ephesians 1-3, Galatians 4:6**
- **Psalms 131**

¹ My heart is not proud, O LORD, my eyes are not haughty; I do not concern myself with great matters or things too wonderful for me. ² But I have stilled and quieted my soul; like a weaned child with its mother, like a weaned child is my soul within me. ³ O Israel, put your hope in the LORD both now and forevermore.

4. Follow Jesus' example

Prayer was a huge part of his relationship with the Father!

- He prayed regularly *"often withdrew to lonely places"* (Luke 5:16)
- He often prayed alone (Mark 1:35; Matthew 14:23)
- He prayed at major points in his life and before major decisions
 - At his baptism (Luke 3:21-22)
 - Before choosing the disciples (Luke 6:12-13)
 - Before the transfiguration (Luke 9:28-29)
 - Before his death, and on the cross (Mt. 26:36-46; Mt. 27:46)
- He prayed to commune with his Father, to continually submit to Father's will, and to give praise and thanks (Mt. 11:27; Heb. 5:7; Mt. 11:25-26)

Dann Spader says,

“Jesus knew that His prayer life was what made Him different from all the other leaders. Never did they ask, ‘Lord, teach us to do miracles’ or, ‘Teach us to preach like you do.’ But they did ask Jesus to teach them to pray... Prayer was central to who Jesus was. It was a way for Jesus to renew His energy and determine his next step. Prayer was a priority that at times demanded that He withdraw from the crowds to communicate with the Father.”

Paul Miller says,

“Jesus’ example teaches us that prayer is about relationship. When he prays, he is not performing a duty; he is getting close to his Father. Any relationship, if it is going to grow, needs private space, time together without agenda, where you can get to know each other... You don’t create intimacy, you make room for it.”

5 MINUTES OF PRAYER

DISCUSSION GROUPS

- 1. Share your observations from you two prayer times. What were the similarities or differences between the two?**
- 2. What stands out to you as meaningful or important from this talk on prayer?**
- 3. Based on what was taught, what do you hope to practically apply to your life?**

* This class is generally based on Paul Miller’s book by the same title.
Scripture quotations are from the NET (Section I) and NIV, ESV (Section II).