

BETTER

12

STEPS TO
BETTER 2025

BIBLE STUDY NOTES



THE HOUSE OF HOPE
ATLANTA

4650 FLAT SHOALS PKWY
DECATUR, GA 30034
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A Pattern For Prayer

Most psychologists view prayer as a coping technique. Prayer is often a response to overwhelming life situations in which people feel as though they are helpless and lack the resources to overcome. Physical illness and addictions are two good examples. Many prayers are offered for healing from physical disease. Prayer is also called for in the eleventh step of 12-step recovery programs such as Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), in which addicts pray for the knowledge and power to do God's will in order to overcome their addiction, over which they admitted they were powerless in step one. As we Focus today on our 11th Step to Better this month we commit to prayer time.

- Without a carefully structured prayer plan, we are likely to become imbalanced.
- Without a routine, we will probably fall into the “Please God” trap.
- An imbalanced prayer life will lead to feelings of guilt about praying. Guilt will then lead to faint-heartedness, and that in turn leads to prayerlessness.

A good pattern to follow to bring balance to your prayer life is ACTS:

A _____

T _____

C _____

S _____

ADORATION

PRAYER BEGINS BY RECOGNIZING WHO GOD IS. ADORATION IS PRAISE OFFERED TO THE LORD, HONORING HIM FOR HIS CHARACTER. IN SCRIPTURE, MEN AND WOMEN OF FAITH OFTEN OPEN THEIR PRAYERS BY MAGNIFYING GOD'S GREATNESS (E.G., [DANIEL 9:4](#); [PSALM 145:1-3](#)).

JESUS, WHEN TEACHING HIS DISCIPLES TO PRAY, DECLARES, “OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN, HALLOWED BE YOUR NAME” ([MATTHEW 6:9](#)). THIS STATEMENT UNDERSCORES GOD'S HOLINESS AND WORTHINESS TO BE PRAISED. ADORATION FIRMLY FIXES OUR ATTENTION ON



GOD’S MAJESTY AND POWER, REMINDING US THAT WE ARE PRAYING TO THE CREATOR AND SUSTAINER OF ALL THINGS.

- Adoration sets the tone for the entire prayer.
- It reminds us who we are addressing, whose presence we have entered, and whose attention we have gained.
- Adoration purifies the one that is praying. It purges our spirit and prepares us to listen to God.

How do we adore God?

- ➔ Psalm 8
- ➔ Psalm 19
- ➔ Psalm 23
- ➔ Psalm 46
- ➔ Psalm 95
- ➔ Psalm 100
- ➔ Psalm 148

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CONFESSION

AFTER ADORATION, THE NEXT STEP IS CONFESSION, ACKNOWLEDGING OUR SINS AND SEEKING FORGIVENESS. SCRIPTURE EMPHASIZES THE SERIOUSNESS OF SIN ([ROMANS 3:23](#)) AND OUR NEED TO REPENT. CONFESSION FOSTERS HUMILITY AND OPENNESS BEFORE GOD: “IF WE CONFESS OUR SINS, HE IS FAITHFUL AND RIGHTEOUS TO FORGIVE US OUR SINS AND TO CLEANSE US FROM ALL UNRIGHTEOUSNESS” ([1 JOHN 1:9](#)).

- In prayer, we often throw all of our sins into one big **pile** and ask God to cover the whole dirty heap.
- We need to deal with sin **specifically**. Take them out of the pile one by one and call them by name.
- When you call your sins by their names your **conscience** will be cleared, you will be flooded with relief as a result of God’s **forgiving** nature, and you will begin to experience **peace** and you will feel free to pray.

THANKSGIVING

THE LETTER “T” STANDS FOR THANKSGIVING, WHICH INVOLVES EXPRESSING GRATITUDE FOR GOD’S BLESSINGS AND PROVISIONS. SCRIPTURE ABOUNDS WITH COMMANDS TO GIVE THANKS: “GIVE THANKS IN EVERY CIRCUMSTANCE, FOR THIS IS GOD’S WILL FOR YOU IN CHRIST JESUS” ([1 THESSALONIANS 5:18](#)). THANKSGIVING IS FOUND THROUGHOUT BIBLICAL PRAYERS, AS IN THE PSALMS WHERE DAVID REPEATEDLY EXPRESSES GRATITUDE ([PSALM 138:1-2](#)).

BY VOICING THANKFULNESS, WE ACKNOWLEDGE THE WAYS GOD HAS ALREADY WORKED IN OUR LIVES. THIS ALIGNS WITH THE MINDSET THE APOSTLE PAUL RECOMMENDS: “DO NOT BE ANXIOUS ABOUT ANYTHING, BUT IN EVERYTHING, BY PRAYER AND PETITION, WITH THANKSGIVING, PRESENT YOUR REQUESTS TO GOD” ([PHILIPPIANS 4:6](#)). SUCH GRATITUDE DRAWS OUR FOCUS TO GOD’S FAITHFULNESS DISPLAYED ACROSS

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SCRIPTURE AND HISTORY-INCLUDING THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST, WHICH IS THE ULTIMATE EXPRESSION OF GOD'S LOVE AND REDEMPTIVE POWER ([1 CORINTHIANS 15:3-4](#)).

- There is a difference between feeling grateful and expressing thanks.
- You can choose to be grateful or thankful or you can choose to go through life complaining and unhappy.
- Responding thankfully requires a conscious choice.

SUPPLICATION

FINALLY, WE COME TO SUPPLICATION, PRESENTING OUR REQUESTS, INTERCESSIONS, AND PETITIONS TO THE LORD. THE BIBLE CONSISTENTLY TEACHES BELIEVERS TO PETITION GOD FOR VARIOUS NEEDS-WHETHER SPIRITUAL, EMOTIONAL, OR PHYSICAL: "ASK, AND IT WILL BE GIVEN TO YOU; SEEK, AND YOU WILL FIND; KNOCK, AND THE DOOR WILL BE OPENED TO YOU" ([MATTHEW 7:7](#)). SUPPLICATION ENCOMPASSES PRAYERS FOR OURSELVES ([LUKE 18:13](#)) AND FOR OTHERS ([1 TIMOTHY 2:1](#)).

FROM THE EARLIEST HEBREW SCRIPTURES TO THE LETTERS OF THE APOSTLES, GOD IS PORTRAYED AS A CARING FATHER, EAGER TO HEAR AND RESPOND TO THE PRAYERS OF HIS CHILDREN. ARCHAEOLOGICAL DISCOVERIES OF ANCIENT WORSHIP SITES AND EARLY CHRISTIAN GATHERINGS CORROBORATE THAT BELIEVERS HAVE CONSISTENTLY PRACTICED PRESENTING THEIR PETITIONS TO THE LORD IN CONFIDENT FAITH. CENTURIES OF CHURCH TRADITION TESTIFY TO THE POWER OF SUPPLICATION AS BELIEVERS ENTRUST THEIR CARES TO THE ONE WHO RAISED JESUS FROM THE DEAD ([EPHESIANS 1:20-21](#))

- Nothing is too big for God to handle or too small for him to be interested in.
- Don't be afraid to be specific in your prayers.

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- Break your request down into categories that suit your purposes.
- Keep track of your request to monitor what God has done and is doing in response to your requests.

Things to remember when we pray...

- Get away from distractions
 - A private place ensures a minimum of distractions.
 - A secret place away from people and alone with God is where you can pray most effectively.
 - Establishing a regular prayer time is as important as establishing a regular prayer place.
- Mean what you say
 - Jesus told his disciples to pray secretly as well as sincerely.
 - Don't fall into the pattern of using clichés or meaningless repetition.
- Pray from the heart
 - God wants us to talk to him as to a friend or father- authentically, reverently, personally, earnestly.
 - Don't pray on automatic pilot. God is not interested in stock phrases but rather sincerity.
- Reflect on your time with God
 - Reflection leads to growth.
 - Try to assess your soul's condition daily.

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Practical Guidance

1. **Set Aside Dedicated Time** - Reserve a personal quiet space. Start with a brief reading of Scripture to set your heart on truth.
2. **Adore God's Attributes** - Meditate on His holiness, eternity, and goodness. Recognize Him as Designer and Sustainer.
3. **Confess Sins Specifically** - Allow the Spirit to bring hidden faults to light. Acknowledge your need for God's cleansing.
4. **Give Thanks** - Count tangible and intangible blessings. Express gratitude for Christ's resurrection and the daily mercies you experience.
5. **Submit Requests** - Bring petitions, both personal and for others, trusting that the God who created everything also cares for you individually ([1 Peter 5:7](#)).

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