

Pursuing a Life of Prayer

Where to Begin?

“10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. 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—” (Ephesians 6:10, 18)

Introduction

1. Previously:
 - a. Jesus is our model.
 - b. Simplicity in prayer is good.
 - c. Humbly face our sins and address them.
2. In future lessons we will deliver into the details of confession and learning to offer prayers of supplication and intercession.
3. In this lesson:
 - a. Let us set our minds to *embrace* prayer.
 - b. Prepare our hearts for growth and to pursue a life of prayer.

Discussion

I. Discussion Questions

- A. Is your prayer life what it ought to be?
- B. In class, discuss common obstacles that may hinder each of us from pursuing a life of prayer as we ought to.
- C. Romans 12:2: With “renewing our minds” as the premise, let us consider briefly what a life of prayer looks like, and then consider a few practical steps we can take today to begin pursuing that transformation.

II. A Life of Prayer as Described in the New Testament

- A. The apostles teach, exhort, and command God’s people to:
 1. Rom. 12:12: Be constant in prayer.
 2. Eph. 6:18: At all times, with prayer and supplication.
 3. Col. 4:2: Continue steadfastly in prayer
 4. 1 Thess. 5:17: Pray without ceasing.
 5. 1 Tim. 2:1, 8-9: Supplications, prayers, intercessions be made for all men.
 6. 1 Tim. 5:5: Continue in supplications night and day.
 7. 1 Pet. 4:7: Being serious and watchful in prayer.
 8. Jude 1:20: Building ourselves up in prayer.
- B. Remember.
 1. The above passages describe what we are to be striving for. Many are not there yet.
 2. Let us pursue it, but it is good to begin slow. Instead of becoming overwhelmed, let’s begin by...
 3. Establishing a basis for prayer and being convicted as to the role prayer needs to fill in our relationship with God.

4. Our aim is to become settled in our pursuit of prayer and not become discouraged.
5. Allow time for growth and learn persistence when we experience resistance to prayer.

III. Where Does Prayer Belong If We Are Seeking God?

- A. Heb. 11:6: Faith is the foundation, correct?
 1. Where does this verse put prayer?
 2. “...*For he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who **diligently seek Him.***”
 - a. Do you see where prayer fits in this verse?
 - b. How does one begin to “seek” God?
 3. In other words, seeking God by calling on Him belongs at the foundation of our relationship with God along with faith.
 4. Faith and seeking God go hand-in-hand – we cannot have the one without the other.
- B. Seeking God by faith **BEGINS** with calling on Him.
 1. Isaiah 55:6: “Seek the LORD while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near.”
 2. Jeremiah 29:12-13: “Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek Me and find *Me*, when you search for Me with all your heart.”
 3. In both of these passages, the parallel or equivalent statements equate seeking God with “calling” on His name. Calling on the name of the Lord is an expression synonymous with praying to Him.
 4. Psalm 14:2-4: the Psalmist here describes God as looking down from heaven to see if there are any among the sons of men “who seek Him.” Indeed, He finds that they are workers of iniquity and “do not call upon Him.”
 5. CONSIDER: Even if we believe God is, if we are not calling on Him in prayer, the implication is that we are not **seeking** Him – we are not drawing near to Him.
- C. Psalm 145:18: By Contrast God is *near* all who “call upon Him.”

Conclusion

1. **REMOVE:** Identify obstacles to prayer; the reason we give for not praying:
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. There are not valid reasons to not pray to God. The enemy wants us to believe there is, but God says otherwise.
2. **EMBRACE:** Put prayer where it belongs in our relationship with God – at the foundation with faith.
3. **DECIDE:** Pick a time, maybe even a place (Matt. 6:6). Don’t let anything stop you.
4. **JUST PRAY:** Call on Him, speak to Him. Even if you don’t know what to say, just say what is in your heart.
 - a. It is okay to pray, “God, I don’t know where to begin. Please help me.”
 - b. You can also pray the prayers recorded in the Bible: “Our Father in heaven...”
 - c. Psalm 145:2: Bless, praise and thanks to God.
 - d. Psalm 145:18-19: Ask for what you know you need, tell Him your struggles, and know He is near.