

## Christian Discipleship Vol.2-Prayer

### 1. What is prayer?

- According to Webster's, *prayer* means "to have communication with God: It expresses praise, thanksgiving, confession, or a request."
- Prayer is a dialogue with the Almighty. It implies relationship. The very purpose for which God created us is to have a relationship. (Deuteronomy 8:3)
- Prayer is not only speaking, but also more importantly, *listening*. A question to ponder: Who has more profound things to share, God or us? (Job 40:1-6)

### 2. Why should we pray?

- **Closeness to God:** Prayer is our lifeline to God. Prayer, to put it simply, is spending time with Him. Prayer will always keep us in step with Him. (John 17:6:25)
- **Prayer ushers us to the very throne of God:** We are introduced into the supernatural life of the Almighty. (Hebrews 4:16)
- **Prayer provides us with power for godly living.** If people spend time with God in prayer, they will have what they need to live victoriously when temptation comes. (2 Peter 1:3)
- **Prayer gives us God's insight that changes our outlook about life:** Since we don't have His perspective, it is imperative to be with God in prayer to know what His will is for our lives. Many have said, "I wonder what God's will is for my life?" Most haven't earnestly sought after God's pleasing and perfect will for their lives. (Romans 12:1-2)
- **Jesus prayed!** Jesus prayed constantly. Prayer (and fasting) preceded his three-year ministry. (Matthew 4:1) Prayer sustained him through His three-year, day-in-day-out ministry. (Hebrews 5:7-10) Prayer prepared him in Gethsemane to endure the cross. (Mark 14:32-40) And, He would breathe his last crying out to God. (Luke 23:46).

### 3. How should we pray?

- The disciples asked Jesus to teach them *how* to pray. Much like the disciples, many people struggle knowing how to pray. The first words in Jesus' prayer, "Our Father..." shed light on the way we should pray. Our prayer is relational. God is our Father. We can discuss anything with our Dad. Be yourself and speak to God like you would your own parent. (Luke 11)
- Prayer is less the words you pray and more the heart of your prayer. Eloquent words do not impress God; our being real with God is what He wants. (1 Samuel 16:7)
- Prayer consists of **praise and thanksgiving** (i.e. Psalms), **intercession** (1 Timothy 2:1), **requests and petitions** (Philippians 4:6), and finally, **meditation/ listening**.

- Sometimes people of the Bible spoke with God matter of factly, (i.e., Abraham and Moses). King David cried out to God out of his distress. Others sang praises to Him. *Dialogue* is what a relationship with God (or any other relationship for that matter) is built upon.

#### 4. When should we pray?

- Every day and throughout the day. Jesus prayed early before the sun was up. He began every day, first, with getting connected to his heavenly Father. Jesus often withdrew himself to lonely places to be alone with God without any distraction. Intimate, alone time with God will determine the kind of Christianity you will have. Without it, there is no relationship.
- In order to be victorious over temptation, we must begin with prayer. If we wait until the time of tempting, our intention alone, will not be enough and we will fall. We need God *before* that time of tempting! (Matthew 26:41; Luke 11:2-4; 2 Thessalonians 3:2)
- The Bible says, "...pray without ceasing..." Everyone has a busy life and while this statement seems impossible, God is constantly speaking. If we will be ever listening, prayer continues through our day. (Luke 18:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:17)
- The people of the Bible went to prayer when they were in trouble, when things were going well, when they were tempted, for their everyday needs, to help them with their crops, etc. What if we consulted God in everyday life? God will be involved in whatever we open our lives for Him to be involved in.

#### 5. What things will prayer yield?

- **A deeper walk** with the God who created you. (John 17:20)
- The **power of God** to *know and do* His pleasing and perfect will. (Romans 12:2)
- **Victory** over temptation and sin. (1 Corinthians 10:13)
- **Pain and suffering**. God will show you how you have to change. (Hebrews 12:7-8)
- **Growth**. If we will allow God to say and do what He wants in us, we will grow in our faith! (James 1:2-4)
- **Discernment**. We will see God and the things of God in His reality. We will see the world and our role in it with a God-perspective. (Romans 8:26:27)
- **Wisdom**. We will have what we need to live out our lives, witness, do ministry, be a parent, manage God's resources, etc. 2 Peter 1:3 says, "We have been given *everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him...*"

#### 6. What is stopping me from having this kind of a prayer life?

- **Sin**. Sin will hinder any discussion of intimacy with God. Every time we go to God and we have sin, every human senses a barrier. The first step would be to get rid of the rebellion. Repentance will bring us back into relationship with our Father.
- **Distractions of this life**. It will be imperative to "fight" for that time with God. Intentionality will be necessary for consistent alone time with God. The devil will

see to it that you are drawn away from this. Early mornings are good, because the house is quiet and the phone isn't ringing.

- **Me.** Whatever is important to someone, they will make time to do it. If a relationship with God is *really* important, we will make that time to do it. There's no one to blame if we don't pray, except us!