

# *Prayer*



*“Talking with God”*

*A Spiritual Journey*

*The Prayer Ministry of  
Stafford Crossing Community Church*

*My heart has heard (God) say,  
“Come and talk with me.”  
And my heart responds, “LORD, I am coming.”  
Psalm 27:8 (NLT)*

*God calls us to talk with Him.  
How often do you think He hears from you?*

God wants all followers of Him to talk with Him in prayer. Yet many Christians don't have a Biblical concept of prayer, they don't know what to pray, or they don't pray regularly enough to see God answer. This study focuses on what is a Biblical definition of prayer, how should we pray, who should we pray for, how to be persistent in prayer, and how to pray in God's will and use Scripture in our prayers. The purpose is to help you see the tremendous privilege to come before God in prayer.

Also included in this study are tools to help strengthen your daily walk with God – Having a daily Quiet Time with the Lord, How to fellowship with others, How to do effective group prayer, and How to set Spiritual Goals. Included are also ideas to make your small group more productive. So learn how to make your life really count for Christ, and be part of His ministry to the world. Become a prayer warrior! Come answer God's call! You'll be glad you did!

## *About the Stafford Crossing Community Church Prayer Ministry*



Left to right are Paula Fulton, Shelley Gregory, Brandon Carroll, Janice Blankenship, Jean Snyder, Ed Blankenship, and Mike and Dianne (not pictured) Farren, all part of the Prayer Ministry Team at Stafford Crossing Community Church near Fredericksburg, Virginia. All have been Christians for several years and love to pray and get into God's Word. In this study they share from the Word and their own experience. Please visit our church website at [staffordcrossing.org](http://staffordcrossing.org) for more information on our church and ministry.

# *Prayer*

*Talking with God...*

*A Spiritual Journey*

## ***Dedicated to Jesus, who taught us:***

Our Father, which art in heaven,  
Hallowed be thy Name.  
Thy Kingdom come.  
Thy will be done on earth,  
As it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
As we forgive those that trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
But deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, and the power,  
and the glory, forever and ever.  
Amen.

### **Some Studies in *The Transformation Series***

- *Reflections* – Spending Time With God
  - *Excavations* – Digging Deep Into God’s Word
  - *Meditations* – Become a Person After God’s Heart
  - *Directions* – Moving Others Towards Christ
- And a journal, *Life’s Log Book* – Your Time with God

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# *Introduction*

God wants all of His children to talk with Him in prayer. Yet many Christians don't have a Biblical concept of prayer, they don't know what to pray, or they don't pray regularly enough to see God answer. This study focuses on the Biblical definition of prayer, how we should pray, who should we pray for, how to be persistent in prayer, and how to pray in God's will and use Scripture in our prayers. The goal is to help you see the tremendous privilege to come before God in prayer.

## *Study Purpose and Suggested Use*

God wants each of us to be communing with Him daily; to spend time regularly in His Word and to pray for ourselves and others. We should also be part of His mission to reach the world. That is the purpose of this study, to help you grow in your Christian walk and learn how to pray effectively to impact those around you.

In this study we do this by first teaching a concept called a daily Quiet Time, or Devotional Time as often called. Spending time with God daily is foundational to prayer. The more we meet with Him, the better we will pray. During this study you will share Quiet Time thoughts with each other weekly. We also have a Goals page which allows you to tailor the study to meet your own needs. The purpose of this is to include some accountability which we all need and insure that the concepts we learn are those we practice.

All the lessons in this study are on prayer and there are practical applications throughout. This study is intended for small group use, with each member having his or her own copy. The Bible lessons are meant to be filled out before the group meets, particularly after week 3. The lessons aren't long or difficult, but will require about an hour each week as homework. This study is also a journal designed to be used for 10-15 minutes on a daily basis. Our hope and prayer is that God will show you key insights from His Word that we could never begin to teach you. As you go through this may you meet with God daily and also have the blessing of seeing many of your prayers answered!

# *For the Small Group Leader*

Thanks for leading this study on prayer in your small group! Prayer is a tremendous responsibility and joy for all Christians and God has allowed you the privilege to help a group of believers become better “pray-ers”! This study not only teaches on prayer, but more importantly it allows you individually and as a group to spend time in prayer. Yes, spend LOTS of time in prayer!

We also encourage you to model what is being taught by doing the lessons ahead of time and then applying them to your life. This is particularly important as far as the Quiet Time is concerned. In week 1 you will share what meeting with God regularly has meant to you. Even if you have had a Quiet Time regularly, we encourage you to do the practice Quiet Time in week 1 ahead of time and use the Journal Pages for 2 weeks to personally see the benefits before you teach it. Each week, there is material that is to be read. It is best if this is read aloud by group members (rather than by the leader), going around the room and letting each person read a paragraph aloud, in sequence. This helps all to share.

Each week group members will share something they have written in their Journal. This is not to be rushed. In week 1, during the practice session have everyone share as time permits. In subsequent weeks, ask for volunteers, and encourage them in what they have written down, encouraging all to share. It is recommended that members choose their own book in the Bible to read rather than assigning specific devotional readings. This provides better sharing. Encourage people to get a paperback New Testament or Bible for their Quiet Times so they will mark in it.

One idea is to have your own Personal Prayer Retreat discussed in the Appendix. If you haven’t had one before we highly recommend it. Let God speak to your heart in this extended time with Him. Then tell your group how much it meant to you and encourage them each to also have one on their own.

The Goals Page is a measure of accountability to encourage members to complete the assignments and grow. Allow time for people to share their accomplished goals and get them initialed off. As the leader, add a note of encouragement!

# WEEK 1

**Get acquainted and Open in prayer**

**Read the material on The Privilege and Joy of Prayer**

**Leader share about his or her Quiet Time**

**Read the material on Personal Worship (“Quiet Time”)**

**Practice having a Quiet Time**

**Share practice Quiet Time writings**

**Have someone read assignment for next week**

**Close in Prayer**

## **The Privilege and Joy of Prayer (by Janice Blankenship)**

What a privilege to come before the Lord in prayer. From the very beginning of time God talked to His people and His people talked with Him. 2 Chronicles 30:27 says “Their prayers reached to the heavens.” Today we too have that wonderful opportunity to send our prayers up to heaven. Isn’t that fantastic! And what it does for us! Deuteronomy 4:7 says, “The Lord our God is near to us whenever we pray to Him.” When we pray it draws us closer to God and He draws close to us. That’s one of the real benefits of prayer – drawing close to God. And to have Him in our life and then to talk to the Lord of the universe is a real joy. John 16:24 says, “Ask in His name and you will receive and your joy will be complete.” The joy I’ve had since becoming a Christian and drawing closer to Him through His Word and prayer is beyond comprehension. The more time we spend with Him through His Word and in prayer, the closer He’ll be in our lives. I can honestly say as Psalm 42:1 says, “My soul really does thirst for You, God!”

And what should we pray about? Anything! Nothing is too small to take before God. That can include praying about the weather so we can go do what we were planning. Or that we’ll have a safe trip, or do well on a test. The Scriptures tell us to pray about everything and everyone. Even our enemies. Matthew 5:44 says,

“Not only love your enemies (which is hard enough), but pray for them too!” That’s hard, but He said it! Scripture says we should also pray for other believers. That includes missionaries in other lands as well as friends at church. And if we ask in faith, the answer will be ours (Matthew 5:44). As James 5:16 says, “The prayers of a righteous person has great power in their effects!”

That brings us to ask, “How should we pray?” We’ve already seen that we should ask in faith. But we should also ask humbly. As 2 Chronicles 7:14 says, “If my people humble themselves and pray and seek my face and stop doing wrong, then I will hear them...” You see the very quality of our life impacts our prayers. That’s why confessing our sins is so important. As Psalm 66:18-19 says, “If we have sin, it separates us from God and He doesn’t hear our prayers.”

Most importantly, we should pray in the Spirit (Ephesians 6:18). That means to pray according to God’s will, not ours. So if we pray in the Spirit then God will not only hear our prayers, but we can also be sure He’ll answer them. That’s like “icing on the cake!”

During this study we’ll learn more about these aspects of prayer and more. But first let’s start with a good foundation.

## *Personal Worship (“Quiet Time”)*

Being a disciple first involves being a follower of His! That certainly begins by coming to know Jesus personally through salvation. Inviting Christ into your heart and receiving God’s gift of salvation is the start of a wonderful experience, here and in eternity!

But it shouldn’t just stop there. God wants us to grow in our knowledge and love for Him each day. But how does a believer do this? The answer is simple - "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you." James 4:8a. "Drawing near to God" involves daily meeting Him, talking with Him, and He with you. As we do this, we begin to build a deeper and deeper relationship with Him, the most important relationship of all.

One key habit that can help build this deeper relationship with God is having a daily “quiet time”, or a daily “devotional” as it is sometimes called. This is a time of Bible reading and prayer where you quiet your heart before God and listen to Him through His Word and then also commune (or talk) with Him in prayer. It doesn’t have to be long, maybe just 5 to 10 minutes at first, but it is a time you will soon find grows and means more and more to you each day!

### **WHY HAVE A DAILY QUIET TIME?**

**First, God desires to meet with you daily!** He died on the cross to make that a possibility. Each and every day, He is interested in your life, and having a daily quiet time is a wonderful way to commune with Christ. (Zephaniah 3:17 and Revelation 3:20)

**Secondly, you need a daily quiet time.** By doing so, you will get to know Jesus better. It will enrich your day. God will use it for cleansing and to guide you in everyday decisions. It will help in all areas of your life. (Luke 10:38-42)

**Third, it will give you something to share with others.** A passage you read today may be just what someone else needs to hear. Keeping a journal is an excellent way to have those thoughts from God available to you for others' needs. (Colossians 3:16, 1 John 1:3, and 2 Timothy 2:2)

### **HOW TO HAVE A DAILY QUIET TIME.**

While there are many ways to have a quiet time with God, here is one that can often work best to get you started.

1. Find a quiet place, apart from distractions, where you can be alone. Many find the morning to be the best time. My Time will be: \_\_\_\_\_  
My Place will be: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Pray, telling God you love Him, and ask for wisdom and for Him to speak to your heart. Also thank Him, and confess any sin that comes to your mind.
3. Read a passage in the Bible. Start with a chapter, perhaps in the New Testament, particularly if the quiet time is a new concept. As you read, underline verses that stand out to you. Many people prefer a paperback

Bible for their quiet time so they feel "more free" to underline.

4. When completed reading, go back and review the verses you underlined. Pick one underlined verse that impresses you. Fill out a journal entry on it. For the appropriate day, write down in a journal what you read in the Bible, what verse stood out to you the most, what that verse said (paraphrase it or put down what it said verbatim), how it impressed you, and your response.

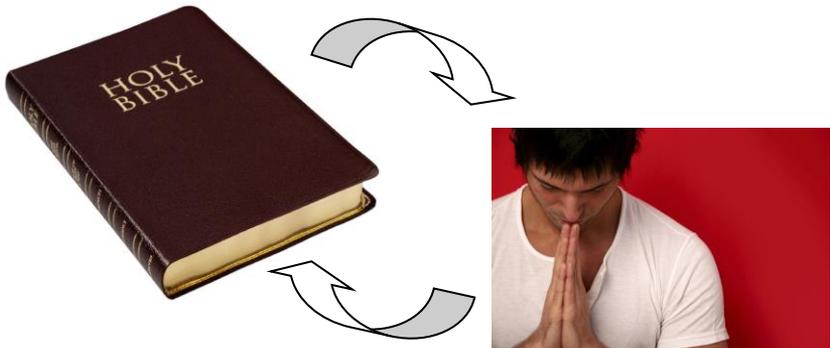
**An Example, Here is part of Philippians 1 and how I (Ed) marked it:**

21. For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. 22. If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! 23. I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; 24. but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. 25. Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, 26. so that through my being with you again your joy in Christ Jesus will overflow on account of me.

Based on marking the above, I choose verse 25 as the verse that stood out most to me and then filled out the below journal entry:

◇ **Monday:** Date: 12/4/09 What I read: Phillipians 1 Best Verse: 25  
What it said: Paul lived so he can help others grow and experience the joy of salvation.  
How it impressed me: He was focused on helping people grow more mature in their faith.  
My response: Lord, help me (and use me) to help others grow and experience You daily!

5. After completing your journal entry, talk to God in prayer about this verse, how it impacts you, and how you want to respond as a result of it. Then go on to pray about other items from your daily prayer list(s).



# Practice Having a Quiet Time

**Read and mark the passage that corresponds with your birthday, then fill out the practice journal entry that follows:**

**Birthday is from January 1 – June 30**

## **1 John 1**

1. That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched--this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. 2. The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. 3. We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. 4. We write this to make our joy complete. 5. This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. 6. If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. 7. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. 8. If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. 9. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. 10. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives. (NIV)

## **Practice Journal Entry**

◇ **Today:** Date: \_\_\_\_\_ What I read: \_\_\_\_\_ Best Verse: \_\_\_\_\_

What it said: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How it impressed me: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

My response: \_\_\_\_\_

**Read and mark the passage that corresponds with your birthday, then fill out the sample journal entry that follows:**

**Birthday is from July 1 – December 31**

**1 Thessalonians 1**

1. Paul, Silas and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace and peace to you. 2. We always thank God for all of you, mentioning you in our prayers. 3. We continually remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. 4. For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you, 5. because our gospel came to you not simply with words, but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction. You know how we lived among you for your sake. 6. You became imitators of us and of the Lord; in spite of severe suffering, you welcomed the message with the joy given by the Holy Spirit. 7. And so you became a model to all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia. 8. The Lord's message rang out from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia--your faith in God has become known everywhere. Therefore we do not need to say anything about it, 9. for they themselves report what kind of reception you gave us. They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, 10. and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead--Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath. (NIV)

**Practice Journal Entry**

◇ **Today:** Date: \_\_\_\_\_ What I read: \_\_\_\_\_ Best Verse: \_\_\_\_\_

What it said: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How it impressed me: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

My response: \_\_\_\_\_

## **One Final, Yet Most Important Word Before We Go Further**

This is a guide on prayer with verses from the Bible. Jesus says in John 5:39-40, “You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life”. This Scripture points out that we don’t just want to know the Bible (or even to pray), the real goal is to know God Himself! So let us ask you a few questions: Have you realized that God has a wonderful plan for your life, but that we are all separated from God and His plan because of our sin? Have you been convicted of that sin and are you willing with God’s help to turn from it? Do you believe that Jesus died on the cross to pay the penalty for those things and to give you the gift of eternal life? Have you asked Him to come into your life, take away your sins, and give you the gift of eternal life? Turning your life over to Christ is the only way to really understand His Word and to have a full and meaningful prayer life. That is our prayer – that you truly know Him!

### **Assignment for next week**

1. Get a paperback Bible or New Testament in a version you prefer and begin reading in it daily wherever you like. You have just read an entire chapter of one of the books of the Bible during our practice time. You may want to continue in the same book by reading the next chapter in that book. The book of John is also a good place to start if the Bible is new to you. (Note that the Bible actually consists of numerous individual "books". Use the table of contents in your Bible or New Testament to find a particular “book”.) Each day, underline what stands out to you, pick one underlined verse and complete a journal record. Be ready to share at least one journal entry next week from pages 66-67.

2. The group will fill out the Bible study lesson together in your small group next week. If you prefer you may also do this as homework prior to your meeting next week. Your leader may request you do so. If so, then please complete it all for next time.

# WEEK 2

**Get further acquainted and then open in prayer**

**Time for Group Members to share from their Quiet Time**

**Read the material on Using Your Bible**

**Complete Lesson 1 – What is Prayer?**

**Discuss Praying for Loved Ones**

**Read A-C-T-S to guide your prayers**

**Praying using A-C-T-S**

**Have someone read the assignment for next week**

## Using Your Bible

The Bible actually consists of numerous individual "books". The table of contents in your Bible should be used to help you locate the individual "books" of the Bible. Note that some book titles are very similar, such as the book of John, the book of 1 John, the book of 2 John, and finally the book of 3 John. If a particular verse you are looking up doesn't make sense in regards to the question, you may be in the wrong Bible book!

The references to Bible passages in this study are in the traditional manner - by book, chapter, and verse. Example - John 3:16 refers to the book of John in the Bible, chapter 3, the 16th verse. Sometimes a verse reference may indicate "a" or "b" afterwards, indicating either the first half or the second half of a verse. It is also helpful to read the context (the verses before and after) as well. Finally, if you encounter difficulty in answering a particular question, reading the verse in another translation may also help.

It is helpful to have a separate Bible for Bible study in addition to the paperback Bible or New Testament used for your Quiet Time. Bibles are available in any book, department, or discount store. Note that there are major differences in the language used by different versions of the Bible sold today. While all English Bibles were translated from the original Greek and Hebrew texts, some versions (e.g. the King James Version) were translated in the 1600s and use old English. Others were translated recently and use

modern English. Make sure you use a Bible you can fully understand for your Bible study as well as for your Quiet Time.

## **LESSON 1 - What is Prayer? (Part 1)**

**Nothing in the Christian life is more intimate or fundamental than talking with God.** If God's Word is like our food (which it is, see Matthew 4:4) then prayer is like breathing. We just can't live spiritually without it. Even the newest believer can pray - no seminary degree required. Our children and even grandkids like to pray. But what is prayer? Is it some mystical process like some religions make of it? Or is it just sharing your heart? Let's see what the Bible says about this most important discipline every Christian should practice.

### **Prayer is Talking with God**

1. Nothing is more fundamental in relationships than talking. How does the Bible say prayer is like talking?

Psalm 5:3

Psalm 27:8

How do you "picture" this?

Also, how regular should prayer be? (see again Psalm 5:3)

Does God want this also? (See again Psalm 27:8.)

2. Going to God is like going to a friend. Sometimes when we talk with someone we get emotional. How does Psalm 28:2 put this?

Prayer is talking with God. It should be daily, and it is desired by God Himself. It is a way for us to connect emotionally with Him.

### **Prayer is Opening Up Our Heart to God**

3. We've already seen that it's OK to get emotional in prayer. But it's also OK to NOT be emotional when we pray. However, many of the prayers in the Psalms are often very emotional. Look at Psalm 118:5-6. How emotional would you rate it?

4. What else should our heart be like when we pray? (Hebrews 10:22)

5. Finally, what is the ultimate source of what we say to God? (Luke 6:45)

Jesus also says we should look at His Word as our food (Matthew 4:4). What would happen to your heart (and your prayers) as you get more of His Word in your heart?

When we pray we open our hearts up to God. He knows not just what we say, but how we feel. God knows when we're just

playing games or praying mechanically. To help in this get His Word in your heart. Then you can really pray!

### **Prayer is Two-Way Communication**

6. If prayer was only one-way, why bother with it? One-way communication is never worth doing. What does the Bible say about prayer? How is it two-way?

Psalm 3:4

How does God answer us, do you think?

Psalm 17:6

7. Besides answering us, what else does God do when we pray?

Psalm 34:4

What fear would you like to be free of?

Psalm 4:1 and 3

God responds back to us as He answers prayer. He also relieves our distress and frees us from our fears. He even cleanses us and sets us apart, just for Him. Yes, prayer is definitely two-way!

## Praying for Loved Ones (by Jean Snyder)

I think back as a child when my mother and grandmother prayed for my sister and me. Wow, so many years ago but I remember thinking, why do they pray every day for us? God knows they prayed yesterday or last night for us. Now I am so thankful they took the time to pray for us. I have a personal relationship with my Lord and so does my sister. God wants us to talk to Him. He does know our needs, wants and desires. He wants you and me to KNOW Him and to seek after Him. We need a personal relationship with our Lord and Savior. If you don't know Him, ask him into your heart then talk to Him like you talk to a friend.

Some thoughts to guide you: **1) Pray and Seek Him** (2 Chronicles 7:14), **2) Search for the Lord** (Psalm 105:4), and **3) Keep asking and looking** (Matthew 7:7-8). Remember, God hears the prayers of His children. He loves us so much and we need to tell Him of our love for Him. So: **4) Pray without ceasing**. Open your heart and mind to allow the Lord full occupancy of you. The more you talk to God the more you want to tell Him. Also, **5) Pray about everything** (Philippians 4:6-8). Because of the patient, constant, enduring prayers of my family, who dared to believe God's promises, our whole family believes and goes to church. What a blessing to see my children and grandchildren serving a risen Lord. And this can happen in your family too! And **6) Thank Jesus for answered prayer** (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 NLT), "Always be joyful. Keep on praying. No matter what happens, always be thankful, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus."

### Prayer:

Oh God, may we lift our eyes to Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our faith. Let us be bold in sharing this free gift of Christ through Your love, power and grace. **May we never give up praying for our loved ones** who don't know You yet. Thank you for the joy in our hearts that we have through you. In Jesus name we pray.

Amen.

# Use “A-C-T-S” to guide your prayers

Adoration – Tell God how great He is. (His majesty, greatness, power, love, kindness, purity, faithfulness...)

Confession – Tell Him how you’ve strayed from Him. (Any sins that come to mind, any doubts...)

Thanksgiving – Tell Him what you’re thankful for. (Your family, friends, job, salvation, health...)

Supplication - Pray for your needs and for others. (Your health, salvation, guidance, peace, trust...)

## **PRACTICE PRAYING USING A-C-T-S**

Now have some group time praying using the A-C-T-S format. The leader should say, “Let’s practice praying using ACTS. First we’ll have several people praise God, Then we’ll ask God to forgive our sins, third we’ll thank him for what he’s done for us and for specific things. Finally, let’s bring up prayer requests for others and for ourselves. I’ll start with Praise or Adoration. Then ask someone to pray for confession. Next have someone give thanks. Ask if others would also like to do that? Finally, ask for volunteers to bring up some prayer requests. Several may pray. Then the leader should close in prayer. (STOP HERE TO PRAY!)

## **AN IDEA: Group Prayer Using Topics!**

Usually most groups first share prayer requests and then pray about those requests in random order. One thing you have just seen in your group meeting today is another type of praying – by topics. This allows a small group to get right into praying rather than taking all the time sharing prayer requests. Sometimes the topics can be A-C-T-S as we’ve just done. Other times it can be about upcoming events, or about specific people. Try praying in your

group occasionally by topic. **No need to always take time sharing prayer requests, just pick a topic and bring up requests as you pray.** It's a nice change of pace. And it helps the group get more time praying!

### **Assignment for next week**

1. Continue your Bible reading and marking in your daily Quiet Time. Continue to record your daily journal entries and come prepared to share at least two entries from your journal next week.

2. Next week we will continue to look up some verses in the group time. You will get much more out of the lesson, however, if you complete the Bible study for next week ahead of time, using your regular Bible to look up the verses and then write down your answers to the questions. So please answer at least questions 8-11 at home. Next week will be the last time we take time to read all of the verses during the group. Your leader may request you complete all questions as preparation for next week. If requested, please come prepared.

3. (Advanced) One good way to pray is “praying Scripture”. Read the appendix this week on pages 59-62 and try praying several verses for someone. Report back to group next time how this went.

4. Have a “Prayer Walk”. Do this individually, as a couple, or the whole group. Walk around your neighborhood, your work, school, whatever, and pray for the families represented, for safety, for openness to the gospel, for a heart towards God, for their health, for physical needs, etc.



# WEEK 3

**Open in prayer**

**Time for Members to share from their Quiet Time Journal  
Advanced – Report on praying Scripture (Appendix)**

**Read the material on Using a Prayer List**

**Discuss and complete the Lesson**

**Read and discuss the material on Setting Goals**

**Have someone read the assignment for next week**

**Close in Prayer**

## Using a Prayer List

Many Christians use prayer lists to help them be more consistent in their prayer life. In the back you will find several prayer pages that have a column for specific prayer request and another for God’s answer. (There is also some space for prayer items on each weekly Journal Page.) It helps to be specific in your prayers as much as possible. For example if some friends you know are going through a difficult time, in addition to just saying, “God, I pray for Bill and Sue”, also ask that “God, please provide a job and finances for Bill and Sue.” This will help you see specific answers.

Remember that God can answer in 3 ways – Yes, No, or Wait. If he answers No or Wait, he is not trying to be mean, but knows that this isn’t either the best thing or not the right time. Keep praying and be consistent in your prayers and God will bless you with many wonderful answers to prayer. (Colossians 4:2)

## LESSON 2 - What is Prayer? (Part 2)

Last week we saw that prayer is talking with God. It is opening up our heart to Him as He opens up His heart to us. Prayer is two-way communication. This week we will see that prayer is also

seeking God. This involves surrendering to Him. As we do this, our prayers rise to heaven as a form of worship. In fact worship is key to prayer. So let's dig in and see what else we can learn about what prayer really is.

### **Prayer is Seeking God**

8. When we talk with a person we first have to get in contact with them (or go to them). How do we do that with God? (2 Chronicles 7:14)

What do you think it means to “seek God’s face”?

9. In order to get a good conversation in with someone we have to be near them (or have a good connection). How is this true in prayer also? (See Isaiah 55:6)

How should we seek God? (Jeremiah 29:13)

How do you think we do that?

We need to seek God. So humble yourself and call on Him. Get near to Him and He'll get near to you (James 4:8). Seek Him in prayer with all your heart!

### **Prayer is Surrendering to God**

10. When we pray, what do the following say our attitude should be?

Psalm 25:11

Psalm 86:4

11. What is part of surrendering to God in prayer?

Psalm 139:23-24

Psalm 5:7

Daniel 10:12

What part of you does God not know?

Our prayer life should be where we give ourselves fully to God. This makes sense as He knows us anyway. But He wants us to humble ourselves as we truly go to Him. Be honest. Be open!

### **Prayer is Pleasing Worship to God**

12. One reason for surrendering ourselves to God is so we can truly worship Him. What do the following verses say about this and how can we do that in prayer?

Psalm 66:1

1 Thessalonians 1:2-3

Hebrews 4:16

Think: How could you be more bold in your prayers?

13. What can help us worship God in our prayers?

Psalms 141:2

Revelation 5:8

How could raising hands or kneeling sometimes help in prayer?

John 15:8

What might be fruit we could pray for?

14. Finally, how does God view our prayers? What does he want, and says that we need?

Psalms 27:8

Luke 10:38-42

Are you a “Mary” (Listen/Peaceful) or a “Martha” (Doer/Busy)?

We should worship God in our prayers with joyful praise, upraised hands, kneeling, and thanksgiving. (Although it's OK to pray without doing some of those things too!) In fact our prayers are like a fragrant aroma (incense) to Him! They are also the fruit that we produce being a Christian. **Remember, even if you don't feel like it, He desires our prayers and He desires that we spend time with Him! So do it for Him!!!**

## A Prayer of Jesus

A good example of prayer that we can all learn from is Jesus' prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane before His death. Looking at Matthew 26:36-46 we see that Jesus was very emotional, so it's **OK to be emotional** when we pray. **Jesus was persistent**, He prayed three times to the Father about the same thing. **He was very specific**, asking the Father to take this suffering away from Him. But **He also prayed according to the Father's will**, that His humanity would not get in the way. (Remember He could have gotten out of it anytime He wanted as He was God!) **So follow His example in your prayers! As Nike says, "Just, do it!"**

## Setting Goals

We set goals in many areas of life. It may be to get a new job, to save for a down payment on a house, to start a family, to lose 10 pounds, to start college, etc. It is often helpful to set goals in the Christian life as well. During this study we have made it a priority to have daily Quiet Times, to read the Bible, to do Bible study, and regularly attend small group. Hebrews 10:24 says, "And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works." And Proverbs 27:17 says, "Iron sharpens iron and one person sharpens another." We want to be an encouragement and help to each other. Part of that is to set some goals and help each other achieve them.

In the back of this study you can use page 79 to set spiritual goals for this quarter, semester, or some other period. A Quiet Time goal is already given of 7 consecutive days. Note that it may take several attempts to get 7 days in a row, but that is OK, for as you continue to try and eventually succeed your walk with God will be greatly strengthened. In future journals you may want to increase the number of consecutive days as experience has shown it takes 21 days to form a new habit. So moving up to 14 and eventually 21 consecutive days can help build this habit into your walk with God for a lifetime. Just remember that the ultimate goal is spending time with God, not some legalistic number of days.

Another goal that is also given is to pray regularly for 7 consecutive days using your prayer list. You can mark this on your journal by putting a check mark by (or filling in) the small diamond-shaped box by each day you pray. A third goal is to have a prayer walk.

You can add your own goals if you like. Another goal might be to read certain books of the New Testament, or even the entire New Testament. It could be to complete all the questions in the Bible study lessons or to memorize a verse from each of the studies. It could also be to pray for a specific person or for something specific to happen. Another goal could be to bring someone to church, or to get involved in a specific ministry. It is sometimes good to set long-term goals, but to begin we recommend setting goals you can achieve in one to three months. This helps make your goals more achievable and help build on success. As Proverbs 13:19 says, “A desire accomplished is sweet to the soul.” During the rest of this study we will be weekly checking each other on our progress towards meeting our goals. And your group leader may also want to see your progress and write a specific note of encouragement about the growth evidenced in your walk with God during this study. Prayerfully consider what goals you should set and work towards achieving them. Remember, goals are not an end in themselves, but are an aid to help each of us grow to spiritual maturity.



Set Goals for Yourself to Grow Spiritually!

## **Assignment for next week**

1. Continue your Bible reading and marking in your daily Quiet Time. Continue to record your daily journal entries and come prepared to share at least one entry from your journal next week.
2. Put some items on your prayer list. Use these to help be more specific and consistent in your prayers. Pray these requests **AFTER** you have responded back to God about what he has impressed on your heart during your Quiet Time. Come prepared to share at least one item next week.
3. Complete the lesson for next week. Next week, during the Bible study portion we will look up only selected verses in the group time. We will not go over every verse, but will allow for group members to share their answers to the questions. Therefore answer all the questions in the next lesson ahead of time in preparation for next week. It has been shown that adults learn best by discovering for themselves rather than simply being told. Taking the time to answer the questions will allow you to learn key truths on your own and then be able to share them with others in the group. This will allow you to share not only your own opinion, but also the knowledge you are gaining from getting in the Word. Remember, the more you put into your study, the more you will get out of it. As 2 Timothy 2:15 says “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.”
4. Look over the Goals page (79) in the back of this study and prayerfully consider what goals God would have you set for your Christian life for this quarter or semester. Write down some goals for the next month or so. Come prepared to share next week what you’ve written down.
5. Advanced – The Appendix on page 62 has a format for a 3-hour Personal Prayer Retreat. Look over this and put one on your calendar to do in the near future. It will deepen your prayer life considerably. Also, if you haven’t had a prayer walk yet, do so.

# WEEK 4

**Time for Members to share from their Quiet Time Journal**

**Share an item from your prayer lists. Pray in your group.**

**Share Goals you have set for yourself with your group**

**Read the material on Keeping Track of What You Read**

**Discuss the Lesson**

**Discuss Fasting and Prayer**

**Discuss assignment for next week and Close in Prayer**

## Keeping Track of What You Read

It is important for every Christian to read their Bible regularly. This is true both for encouragement and for guidance. Psalm 119:9 says that a person should guard his (or her) life according to God's Word. But to do so you must be in The Book, it's not enough just to have it in your house! The more you get into the Bible the more God can show you His will. The New Testament is an excellent place to start reading. Some people like to keep track of where they read to record their progress. Use the chart (page 78) near the back of this study to keep track of your reading in the New Testament. This chart lists every book of the New Testament and every chapter number. Put an "X" through the chapter numbers as you read them. Our prayer is that this will encourage you to read through the entire New Testament. You should be able to do so in about 9 months if you read 1 chapter daily. Then you can read it again, or go on to the Old Testament. 3 chapters a day will get you through the entire Bible in about a year.

## LESSON 3 - How should His people pray?

### (Part 1) (by Brandon Carroll)

O my, what a profound question and one with unparalleled importance when it comes to our relationship with God! A question, when once studied and greatly learned, that has the

capability of positively impacting one's life and God's kingdom like few other things can do. How should His people pray? The disciples posed the very same question to Jesus nearly 2000 years ago (Luke 11). What better place to find an answer to this question than from the mouth of Jesus Himself. In His response He lays out a model prayer for his disciples, and us, to follow in Matthew 6. The focus of this lesson will be to study and learn the meaning of the model laid out for us. It reads,

### **Matthew 6: 9-13**

**New American Standard Bible (NASB)**

<sup>9</sup> "Pray, then, in this way:

'Our Father who is in heaven,  
Hallowed be Your name.

<sup>10</sup> 'Your kingdom come.

Your will be done,

On earth as it is in heaven.

<sup>11</sup> 'Give us this day our daily bread.

<sup>12</sup> 'And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

<sup>13</sup> 'And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.'

The Lord's Prayer, it can be prayed word for word or used as a guideline for prayer. We can pray a part of it or a line of it but the important part is that we grasp each of the components that God wants us to pray about. Let's study verse by verse and pull out the meaning of the text, being sure not to read our own meaning into it, so that we can understand all that Jesus desired for his people to learn about prayer in this passage.

Note: There are a large number of questions in this section. Leader should pick key ones to discuss in your group time.

1. Our Father who is in heaven (Matthew 6:9). This first line brings out the relationship that we have with God. Explore your relationship with God a little more with the following questions.

a) By what name is God addressed in this beginning verse? Is He given the title of someone you'd picture in a far-off, distant land or is He addressed as someone who would know you intimately and desire for you to know Him in the same manner? Elaborate on this. Discuss.

b) FATHER! What does that word mean to you? What images does your mind conjure up when you begin thinking about that word? If you didn't have a loving, caring father, can you think of someone who is a good role model of such a father? Bring awareness to how your relationship with your earthly father was or is and how that affects the light in which you see God as your Father.

c) Now, read some Scriptures that depict the truth about who God is as your Father. 2 Corinthians 6:18; 1 John 3:1; Romans 8:15-17; Psalm 89:26, and Galatians 4:6.

Any differences between your earthly father, or your role model father, and your heavenly Father?

Any similarities?

Remember God is "in heaven". He is above all. He has all power. He is all knowing. He can do the impossible. Now how has your understanding of God as your heavenly Father changed?

If so, how does it affect how you will approach Him in prayer in the future?

Think about spending time with your father, or your role model father. What is it like? If he was (or is) a good Dad then you couldn't wait to do things with him. And he couldn't wait to do things with you! God is like that. If you already had a clear picture of God as your Father then that is great. Still, what does reflecting on this do for you? Does it bring a renewed freshness to your approach to Him? Does He seem a little closer than before?

Are you now expecting Him to hear and answer you with renewed or new found enthusiasm? Why? Discuss.

Hopefully you do. He is your Father in heaven who cares deeply for you and He loves when you come to Him in prayer and address Him as Father.

2. Hallowed be Your name (Matthew 6:9). Hallowed = to honor as holy; consider sacred.

a) How is Jesus instructing us to address our Father in heaven? It is not with a lackadaisical attitude, so how?

How would you approach the President of the United States of America? Should it be something we do as we are dozing off in bed?

What does it mean to honor God as holy? To honor Him as sacred? (See Romans 12:1-2 for ideas.)

How can we show our adoration for God when we approach Him in prayer?

Think of His attributes - who He is, what He has done, and what He has yet to do. Pray about some of these: His holiness, righteousness, love, our peace, our hope, trustworthy, etc. Also think about His names – Lord, Almighty, God, Father, Messiah, Creator, Comforter, “I AM”... Pray about these too. Praise Him for who He is!

b) Studying other scriptures that speak on the same topic of your particular study is a good practice to get into. Here’s a few others that speak of us honoring Him as holy:

Psalms 86:12

Psalms 149:3

1 Corinthians 10:31

In summary, how can we honor God in our prayer lives?

And in every other area of our lives?

In your group time share with one another on this. Relate with one another – Is this difficult, easy, new, different? Discuss.

3. ‘Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven’ (Matthew 6:10).

a) The word kingdom here means “reign.” Your kingdom come is an expression that God would “reign” everywhere

on earth; His rules obeyed and the good news about Jesus Christ spread to every man, woman, boy and girl. What happens to us when we pray for such things?

Look at Matthew 5:16 about letting your light shine so God our father is glorified! What are our minds and thoughts stretched to? What desire(s) does it began to create or cause to grow in us?

What desire(s) does it began to drown out?

b) The second half of the verse exclaims that God's will is perfectly and most completely accomplished in heaven. There is a perfection of love in heaven that leads to a perfect adherence to his law. This is what we are to pray for here on earth.

Read 2 Peter 3:9 and Ezekiel 18:23. What is happening everyday that God does not wish to see happen?

How can we respond in prayer?

What other things do you see the enemies hands in that we should be praying against?

Reflect on this. Then pray. Pray hard. Pray that His will would continue to unfold here on earth as it is perfectly played out in heaven.

## **Fasting and Prayer (by Mike and Dianne Farren)**

One thing we do that has helped us feel closer to God is fast and pray. As a guide, we have read the booklet entitled: *Tony Evans Speaks out on Fasting*. It explains not only why we should fast, but also how and the benefits of fasting.

At one point we would both skip a breakfast and lunch on a Monday and Friday as a “Fast for God”. When you give up something in order to draw closer to God, He also draws Himself closer to you. For Dianne, due to diabetes, she cannot skip meals, but does give up drinking coffee on Mondays and Fridays.

But one of our most personal experiences regarding prayer occurred in 2001 on a Tuesday, September 11<sup>th</sup>. That’s right on THE 9/11. On that day Dianne felt an overwhelming burden by the Holy Spirit to make sure to read from the Bible and pray before leaving for work. She opened the Bible to read a passage. It was Psalm 23. She wondered why she opened the Bible to that particular Psalm that morning. But she read, “even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I fear no evil.”

Well you see Mike worked at the Pentagon at the time. And we all know what happened on that day. Thousands of people died, hundreds at the Pentagon alone. But Mike was safe amidst all that death and destruction. When Mike got home after the tragic events of the day, the Bible Dianne had read from was left open on our kitchen table, and he was also drawn to realize what Psalm she had read that morning. When she got home from the school, we both hugged and kissed.

Mike told her he knew what Psalm she had read that morning. He said, “You read Psalm 23 today. Well I did too!” The Holy Spirit had led us both to that same comforting Psalm on that tragic day!

### **Assignment for next week**

1. Continue your Bible reading and marking in your daily Quiet Time. Continue to record your daily journal entries and come prepared to share at least one entry from your journal next week. Also keep praying for the people on your prayer list daily.
2. Complete the lesson for next week. Next week, during the Bible study portion we will not look up the verses in the group time, but will allow for members to share answers to the questions.
3. Work towards achieving one of your goals in the next few weeks. Maybe it's having a Quiet Time for 7 consecutive days, or completing all the questions in the Bible studies. Maybe it's praying for a specific person. Maybe it's being a friend to someone. Whatever it is, seeing God work to help you accomplish it will be an encouragement to you and to others in your group.
4. If you've had a “Prayer Walk”, consider doing another one, maybe at a different location. Pray silently or out loud softly as you walk along. Take turns praying if doing it with someone else.

# WEEK 5

**Open in prayer**

**Ask Members to share from their Quiet Time Journal**

**Share progress on your Goals**

**Discuss the Lesson**

**Discuss Seasons of Prayer**

**Discuss assignment for next week and Close in Prayer**

## **LESSON 4 - How should His people pray? (Part 2) (by Brandon Carroll)**

Last week we began the process of learning from the Lord's Prayer. This week we'll continue and take the focus outward. First let's re-read the entire prayer:

### **Matthew 6: 9-13**

**New American Standard Bible (NASB)**

<sup>9</sup> "Pray, then, in this way:

'Our Father who is in heaven,  
Hallowed be Your name.

<sup>10</sup> 'Your kingdom come.

Your will be done,

On earth as it is in heaven.

<sup>11</sup> 'Give us this day our daily bread.

<sup>12</sup> 'And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

<sup>13</sup> 'And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.'

Note for Leaders: Like last week there are a large number of questions here. Choose to discuss what you feel is best.

4. 'Give us this day our daily bread' (Matthew 6:11).

a) We are to pray that God would provide our physical needs. What are some of those?

A few are clothing, shelter, and food. Take note of the quantity of which we are to pray for. Is it one month, one week, or one day?

What does this teach us to do?

What if God were to provide everything we ever needed the first time we prayed for it? What would likely happen to most of us?

What is Jesus encouraging us to rely upon for our daily needs? Discuss and share in your small group.

b) It is likely that you already have a pantry full of food, sufficient shelter, and plenty of clothing if you live in America. Well, what a blessing and a reminder to give thanks to God! And what about others in the world? What do they have? How could that change the way we

approach this prayer? Or does it change it at all? Why or why not?

Do we have to guard against depending on these things? Think and discuss. Pray.

5. ‘And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors (Matthew 6:12).

a) We are to pray for our spiritual needs as well. We cry out to God to cancel our debts owed to Him! We are recipients of God’s abundant grace each and every day through our Lord Jesus Christ. We are all deserving of eternal punishment and separation from Him. We all sin each and every day. How do we sin?

Spend time asking for God’s forgiveness!

God wants us to also be thinking about how we forgive others too. How should we pray for those who have committed sins against us?

Is there a part of your heart that has been taken captive by unforgiveness? Who is the person?

How does this change your prayer life? Your relationship with God? The offender?

Will you be praying differently in the future about those who are indebted to you?

Remember when asking God to forgive your sins also be thinking about how you forgive others who are in debt to you.

6. ‘And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen’ (Matthew 6:13).

a) More spiritual need. Temptation! All of us experience it at some time or another. We know that God tempts no man to do evil (James 1:13). So, what is Jesus telling us to pray for in this verse?

The prayer is directed towards the power of temptation overcoming and destroying us. When we face temptations we are to pray that God would help us to overcome. We must realize we are utterly dependant on God’s help to successfully carry out His will in our lives. We are utterly dependant on the power of the Holy Spirit to work in us to win those battles each day. How often do you cry out to God when you find yourself being tempted with lust, anger, greed, idolatry? Rate yourself from one to ten. 1-rarely ever / 5-half the time / 10-almost always / or a number in between those. How often do you cry out to God when you are tempted? (Rate yourself 1 to 10)

However you rated yourself the question remains the same for all, how do I climb the ladder to ten? How do I get to the place where I am always crying out to God for help in the midst of temptation?

Identify some of YOUR temptations.

Pray against them right now. Ask God that he keep them from overcoming and destroying your life. (See 1 Corinthians 10:13 for additional help.)

b) “Evil” or “evil one” as it is sometimes translated could very well refer to the devil in this passage although there is no direct reference. However, we all know that the devil is the father of evil so he must come to the reader’s mind here whether it be naturally or by force. We also know that Satan roams around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour (1 Peter 5:8). Knowing that the enemy is after us and knowing that God is our protector we must pray for God to protect us from that evil which the devil would delight in seeing destroy us. Evil exists in many forms. Our bosses, co-workers, family members, neighbors could all be agents of the enemy that he is capable of using to attack us. He also uses our own lusts and misplaced desires to destroy us. There is an unseen spiritual battle that is warring all around us and we need to enter that battle through prayer. It is mandatory that we pray for protection against the evil that seeks to kill and destroy us. And remember that God gives us victory over evil if we want it (see 1 Corinthians 10:13.) That is a lot to think about and even more to pray about. **Go back and reread this paragraph and pray over it.**

Do you normally find yourself entering this battle through prayer? If so, wonderful! Did you learn anything new?

If not, then get engaged in the battle. Daily pray for God to protect you from all forms of evil and pray that the light of Christ in you would actively and aggressively push back against the darkness. Be careful not to depend on yourself but the immeasurable power of the Holy Spirit within you. Read Ephesians 6:10-20. Do you use the armor of God - truth, God's righteousness, peace, faith, prayer, salvation, and His Word? Ponder. Pray. Engage. Discuss how this is going in your life with your small group.

c) For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever...Amen. This is a common response at the end of prayers that is found throughout Scripture. What a powerful closing declaration about the mighty and majestic nature of our King. We start prayer in awe of God and we end in a declaration of awe! Spend some time praising God for His kingdom, His power, His glory, and for His eternalness!

With a quick Google search one could learn that approximately 90% of an iceberg's mass is located below the surface of the water. So what one sees with the eye is only a fraction of the whole. Similarly, what has been read in this lesson is but a small fraction of the iceberg of prayer. There is so much more to learn and understand. Let that not be a discouraging thought but recognize that you have just taken a step towards becoming more effective in prayer and releasing the power of God that already resides within you. Be encouraged by the steps you have taken and walk in the assurance that God will lead you into a greater understanding of prayer if you desire to be taken there. Pray that he gives you that desire and then hold on because it will be a most wonderful and joyful ride!

You can pray the Lord's Prayer word for word, use it as a template, or focus on particular parts of it throughout the day. It will not be necessary to pray through the Lord's Prayer each time you pray but it is a good guide for the important things that God wants you to be focusing on when you pray. Some prayers are quick and concise while at other times it will be necessary to spend

extended periods of time in prayer. Whatever the case, you can use the Lord's Prayer to guide you and help you pray without ceasing - **for the life of a praying person does much in the arena of accomplishing the will of God. Be blessed in your endeavors to dig deeper and be prayerful!**

## **Seasons of Prayer (by Paula Fulton)**

“There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven:” says Solomon in Ecclesiastes. This is true of prayer as well, at least in my life. From learning how to pray to maneuvering the stages of motherhood, the command to pray continually (1Thessalonians 5:17) doesn't change, but the “how” of prayer does. My prayer life looks very different than it did when I first became a Christian at 18 and when I was the mom of small children. In each stage though, God has been so faithful to teach me how to pray.

When I was the mom of 2 little boys my prayer life was forever changed by reading Becky Tirabassi's book, *Let Prayer Change Your Life*. I was challenged to pray an hour each day, to organize my prayer time throughout the week, and to be very specific with God. I had been praying before this. “God please help us find this contact lens.” He did. “Lord please help me to find a parking space in DC.” He did. “Lord please heal our friends from church.” But this was different and more personal. I began a time of prayer with God that lasted until I had another baby, and then another. But it's difficult to spend an hour praying with four small children. I muddled through longing for more time with God and shooting desperate prayers to the sky. Don't get me wrong, God hears and answers those as well. But I missed those longer times of prayer with God.

During this time, my friend and I went on a retreat of sorts. We left our children in the capable hands of our husbands and went to a bed and breakfast to escape, but also to pray. We spent the better

part of the afternoon praying together and lifting our children, our husbands and ourselves to God in prayer. That was a precious time, and even today I see how God is at work answering the prayers we prayed that weekend. In this way, I was able to meet with the Lord and really pour out my heart to Him. It was refreshing.

God's challenge to me came from His Word absolutely spoken to my heart in Deuteronomy 8:2—"Remember how the Lord your God led you all the way in the desert these forty years, to humble you and to test you in order to know what was in your heart whether or not you would keep His commands. He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna." My fourth baby was finally sleeping mostly through the night. The other three, ranging from 2 to 7, were pretty good sleepers. It was finally time to start getting up and praying regularly again. But of course, each day when I planned on getting up someone was up in the night, or someone was up WAY too early. I just wanted sleep. I put the early offender back upstairs and sank on the love seat with a sigh and a "see God!" attitude. Then He showed me this verse from Deuteronomy. Oh, I see. This is a test to see if I will obey. O.k. then. Let's pray! Each morning I would awaken to spend time with the Lord in prayer and in His Word, even if it was only for twenty minutes.

Then I learned another way to pray. I would get up and walk on the treadmill and pray. I needed to exercise, and I needed to pray. It worked very well until I hurt myself, and we sold the treadmill. It was like starting over again. I didn't know what to say or how to start when I wasn't walking. But each time something changed, I would ask God to show me how to keep praying. When my oldest entered high school, things changed again. I was subbing and didn't have an hour in the morning unless I wanted to get up even earlier. For a sleep deprived mama, that wasn't the answer. God taught me how to pray throughout the day. Instead of turning on the radio, I would pray in the car. While I'm driving home from dropping kids off at school in the morning I pray for my friends and my family. While I am washing dishes or waiting in line, I

pray. I still try to take that concentrated time with God each morning, but I no longer feel the necessity to get through that list. God hears my prayers throughout the day.

I'm sure that things will change again soon. They always do. I have found, though, that in the midst of that change, God is faithful to keep seeking me out -to keep wooing me into conversation with Him. Right now I feel a lack of praise in my life. I think I'm going to spend a week only praising—no requests. I'm not sure how that is going to work. I may try praying through the Psalms. I'm sure that God will teach me what He wants me to know. **The look of prayer may change through each stage of life, but the act of prayer is a command that I long to keep.**

### **Assignment for next week**

1. Continue your Bible reading and marking in your daily Quiet Time. Continue to record your daily journal entries and come prepared to share at least one entry from your journal next week. Also continue praying daily using your prayer sheets.
2. Complete the lesson for next week. Again, we will not look up the verses in the group time, but will allow for group members to share their answers to the questions.
3. Work towards achieving one of your goals in the next few weeks. Come prepared to share next week what you've seen God do in your life.
4. Advanced – Have you read the Appendix about having your own Personal Prayer Retreat and Praying Scripture?
5. Had your “Prayer Walk” yet?

# WEEK 6

**Open in prayer**

**Time for Members to share from their Quiet Time Journal**

**Share progress on your Goals**

**Advanced – Discuss Personal Prayer Retreat if you’ve had one**

**Discuss the Lesson**

**Discuss the article Prayer – The One Thing I Needed to Do**

**Discuss assignment for next week and Close in Prayer**

## LESSON 5 – Persistence (by Brandon Carroll)

“My greatest point is my persistence. I never give up in a match. However down I am, I fight until the last ball. My list of matches shows that I have turned a great many so-called irretrievable defeats into victories.”

-Bjorn Borg (Swedish athlete)

Bjorn was a professional tennis player in the 1970’s and 80’s and made a brief comeback in the early 90’s. Over the entirety of his career he was a very successful player and the first ever to earn a million dollars in a single season. He won \$3.5 million overall. He greatly considered persistence to be the key ingredient to his success. He recognized that his greatest quality was not his physique, stature, or strength, nor his size, vision, or quickness, which all played a part in his success, but it was his persistence.

To win a men’s tennis match one must usually win 3 out of 5 sets and within each of those sets they have to win six games. Not everyone understands all the rules of tennis but what most do understand is that if you play best of 5 then the first to win 3 takes home the gold. Now picture this, it is 1975 and you are at a match watching Bjorn Borg get his tennis racket handed to him and he is losing badly! He has just now lost the first two sets and is taking a break before the third set begins. The temperature is a sizzling 98 degrees and he is sweating. He is obviously frustrated having lost the first two sets. He is confused because he cannot understand

why he is having such difficulty against his opponent and now he is tempted to go out and half-heartedly play the third set, lose, and call it a day. After all, he realizes that he would have to win the next three sets consecutively to win the entire match. That would be a tall feat and one that could easily overcome him with discouragement. Bjorn is at a crossroad!

There is something different that you know about Bjorn though. You have followed him over the years and he is not like the majority of other players. You have seen him play in other matches and however great the odds or obstacles may be before him you notice that he always seems to finish strong, win or lose. It is because he plays with persistence! He plays every point, from the first to the last, persistently! When others give up he endures tenaciously! When his opponent figures him to be discouraged and defeated Bjorn continues to fight! Bjorn recognized the importance of persistence in achieving success in his career as a tennis player. Let us now consider the importance of persistence in our prayer lives if we are to achieve success.

## **Persistence in prayer**

Perhaps you are already in the practice of praying with persistence. Then please allow this lesson to fan your flame into an even greater intensity. Or, if you are thirsty for a deeper, more meaningful prayer life then take this lesson and your questions to God and see what he does within your heart. Either way, we are all trying to head to the same place, a place of greater intimacy with God through a well established, persistent prayer life. That is the success we are striving to achieve!

We all have a basic understanding of persistence and recognize its importance in accomplishing things in life. Transition those thoughts into the arena of prayer. How could persistence be important in prayer?

Persistence and prayer. Ever thought about the two together? Someone has! In 1 Thessalonians 5:17 Paul instructs the church in Thessalonica to “pray without ceasing.” The word used for *without ceasing* is the same word used to describe a hacking cough. So, there you have it. Pray like you have a hacking cough that will not go away! ☺ God, just like a hacking cough that will not cease, so **let us not cease from praying to You.**

Read 1 Thessalonians 1: 2, 3 and 2:13 to see how Paul prayed without ceasing for the Thessalonians.

a) What word do you find in both passages?

Would you use that word to describe your own prayer life?

If so, great! If not, you can if your heart desires it. Take an assessment of your prayer life. Give three descriptive words that you would use to describe your prayer life as of right now.

Then give three descriptive words of the prayer life that you desire.

With God’s help, how do you plan to travel from where you are to the prayer land of your heart’s desire? (Consider Colossians 4:2)

As we move towards persistence in prayer we will notice that God will also be taking steps towards us. Answer the ‘who’ and ‘what’ questions that God might impress upon your heart.

b) Whether past or present, ‘who’ or ‘what’ has God impressed upon your heart to lift up to Him persistently in prayer?

Was it an unsaved relative, a besetting sin in your life, a diseased friend? Who else could (or should) you pray about?

Take action. Be disciplined. Answer the ‘when’ of the matter. Rubber hits the road here. It is time to be practical about our prayer life.

c) ‘When’ will you pray? Will it be each morning, afternoon, and night?

Will it be once a day?

Will it be over the next week, month, or year?

You may not know and that is ok too but be prayerful and persistent about the matter. Set some goals. Measure yourself. It is ok to do that.

Be intentional. Be persistent. Answer the ‘why’ of the matter

d) 'Why' will you be praying for this person?

'Why' is it important to you?

To God?

Share your reason with your small group. If you have a reason behind your plan than chances are you will be more intentional and persistent in your prayers.

### **With a friend, persistence paid off (Optional)**

Read Luke 11:1-10 then come back to the lesson. Check when done\_\_\_\_\_.

In verse 1 we read the disciples' request of the Lord. They had the desire to learn to pray. In verses 2-4 we read of a pattern for prayer. Jesus instructed them to pray for the need of God's kingdom to come, their physical needs, and spiritual needs. We've already studied this. But with the context of the passage set up, what do we learn next about persistence in prayer from verses 5-10?

a) What was it about the man that he was successful in obtaining what he needed?

Had he given up on the first try, do you think he would have received what he needed?

b) The man asking for bread was doing so out of need. In those times it was inhospitable and certainly a good way of making a bad name for yourself if you did not provide for your guests. This man was persistent with his asking. He had a physical need that needed to be met and he was persistent in his asking, seeking, and knocking until he had received it. Identify needs in your life. Are they physical, spiritual, or do they stem from a desire to see God's will unfold in an area of your life or someone else's?

Is your asking, seeking, and knocking as persistent as the man who needed bread at 12 a.m.?

If not, do you have the desire to get to that place, and will you do it?

c) Jesus said the man in bed did not give his friend the bread because they were friends but because of his friend's persistence in asking, seeking, and knocking. The sleeping friend was inconvenienced and did not want to disturb his household on the account of his friend's problem. He did however grant his request due to his friend's persistence.

So, if a man receives what he needs from a friend who did not wish to fulfill his request in the first place how much more should we ask of our God who delights in meeting our needs? How much more should we ask knowing that God will not give grudgingly but freely and willingly?

**God delights in us recognizing that we are completely dependent upon Him to provide our every need.** Discuss all this in your small group.

Think of this. You are persistent in eating. Why? Because you get hungry. **So pray that you would have a hunger for prayer. That you would want something to happen so bad that you can't stop praying for it!**

d) You are probably quite familiar with verses 9 and 10 (about asking, seeking, knocking) as they are often quoted and found in other parts of Scripture. Do you see them a little differently through the lens of persistence now?

How do these verses speak of persistence in prayer?

How might you be asking differently?

Seeking differently?

Knocking on God's door differently?

## **Prayer – The One Thing I Needed to Do! (by Ed Blankenship)**

My Dad was 49 when I was born. As a teenager I thought it was odd that my friend's parents were so young. Mine were in their 60s by that time, and not in the best of health. So after I went away to college and became a Christian at age 18, I was excited and came home one weekend and told them what I had done. My Mom was pleased that I had become a Christian, and I found out she was one too. My Dad, however, seemed bothered by what I said and asked if I thought he had raised me wrong, and then told me “not to go off the deep end on this”. Well as I grew in my faith I learned several ways to share the gospel, and whenever I came home I would talk with my Dad, but he would always change the subject. As the years went by his health issues increased and despite having had cancer twice he reached age 79, yet still wasn't interested in the gospel. I began to think to myself, “You know, my Dad's not going to make it spiritually.” I had shared with him every way I knew how to become a Christian. I didn't know what else to do. So **I resigned myself to the fact that the only thing left for me to do was pray.**

I started praying for my Dad regularly. Don't get me wrong, I had prayed some for my Dad before, but I now made a commitment to God that I would pray daily for my Dad to come to Christ. I also prayed that if God had anything else He wanted me to do regarding my Dad that He would let me know. Well I believe He did tell me one thing. The Good News Bible had just come out, and so I got the idea to get two copies, one for my Dad and one for my Mom (so my Dad wouldn't feel singled out) and I wrote something in the front of each one. To my Dad I said, “Thanks Pop for all the things you've taught me”, and then I listed 12 things and then signed it. I wrote a similar thing for my Mom. I gave them to my Mom and my Dad. Then I began praying daily that my Dad would somehow read that Bible.

I bet I prayed that daily for almost a whole year. We lived about 1,000 miles away and so didn't see them for about a year and when we did come home to visit as soon as we came in the house my Dad said, "Son, sit down here." Well my Dad started asking me questions about the Bible. Questions about Moses, questions about Abraham, questions about David, questions about Jesus, questions about Peter and Paul. I had answers to some of them, but he had answers to all of them. I said, "Pop, how do you know so much about the Bible?" He said, "Son, you know that Bible you gave me a year ago? I bet I haven't missed a day reading that thing!"

Well I about fell off my chair! I had prayed that he would read it, and had wanted to believe that he would, but hadn't really thought it possible. But God took my tiny scrap of faith and blessed it. So I talked some more with my Dad that day. I had just learned a new way of sharing the gospel and asked him if I could tell him what I was learning. He now said, "Yes!" which was definitely different from past conversations. I shared what I had just learned. That God has a wonderful plan for our life, but that we are all separated from God and His plan because of our sin. That we need to be convicted of that sin and be willing with God's help to turn from it. That Jesus died on the cross to pay the penalty from those things and to give us the gift of eternal life. That we need to ask Him to come into our life, take away our sins, and give us the gift of eternal life. I then asked him if he would like to receive Jesus Christ personally. He said he would think about it. The next day Janice and I visited my wife's parent for a few days and I kept praying for my Dad. When we came back a few days later and walked in the door he grabbed me by the shoulder and said, "You know that thing you talked with me about the other night? Well I prayed and asked Jesus into my life just after you left!"

So my Dad became a Christian at age 80, and he lived to 83. I got him memorizing a few key verses and having a Quiet Time. (He was already reading the Bible daily.) I saw changes in my Dad's life those last 3 years that you sometimes don't see in someone much younger who comes to Christ. God softened his heart towards others, and he and Mom started going to church.

Yes, I had discouragingly thought that the only thing left for me to do was pray for my Dad as I had exhausted all possibilities. I was relying on myself, not God. Now I know that committed prayer was the one thing I needed to do! And I also now firmly believe that we should pray not only for someone to come to Christ, but also pray for ourselves that God would show us what He wants us to do in regards to that person. I believe God laid that Bible and the inscription on my mind and heart. I found out later that my Dad was so proud of that Bible after I gave it to him that he showed it to everyone he knew. He'd say, "See what my Son thinks of me!" I bet after saying that numerous times he thought, "Gee, if my Son thinks so much of me, then maybe I should read the book that he gave me." He probably started reading it just to please me, but it helped change his life. So thank you God for using your Word and prayer in my Dad's heart, and in mine too!

### **Assignment for next week**

1. Continue your Bible reading and marking in your daily Quiet Time. Continue to record your daily journal entries and come prepared to share at least one entry from your journal next week. Also continue praying using your prayer list.
2. Complete the lesson for next week. Again, we will not look up the verses in the group time, but will allow for group members to share their answers to the questions.
3. Work towards achieving some of your goals in the next week. Come prepared to share next week what you've seen God do in your life. You may also want to ask your group leader to write something on your Goals page. This will be an encouragement to you and to your leader as well.
4. Look over the questions on "How Has Your Life Changed?" and think through each of them. Come prepared to share what God has done in your life through this study and your time with Him.
5. Had your "Prayer Walk" yet?

# WEEK 7

**Open in prayer and then Share progress on your Goals  
Time for Members to share from their Quiet Time Journal  
Discuss the Lesson and Pray Together as the study suggests  
Discuss 24/7 with God! and How Has Your Life Changed?  
Discuss Continuing On and Close in Prayer**

## **LESSON 6 – A Time of Prayer**

Prayerfully look up, read, meditate and then reflect on each of the verses given below. Pray about whatever comes to your mind on each one. (In your small group you can also do this.)

### **A. Who or what should we pray for? (Spend time in prayer...)**

For a mate. For your mate. (See Genesis 24:12-20)

For a task. For a sign from God. (Judges 6:36-40)

For healing. (1 Kings 17-19-23)

For God's power to be revealed. (1 Kings 18:41-45)

When things are tough. (Daniel 6:10)

For salvation. (Luke 23:42-43)

For freedom from oppression. (Acts 12:3-11)

For our leaders. (1 Timothy 2:1-2)

For others. (1 Samuel 12:23)

For wisdom. (James 1:5-7)

What might be some other things you can/should pray for?

B. What are some **Conditions for answered prayer**? (Fill in the missing words.)

Pray in His \_\_\_\_\_. (Matthew 26:39, 42)

Pray in the \_\_\_\_\_. (Ephesians 6:18)

Pray \_\_\_\_\_. (James 5:15)

Ask \_\_\_\_\_. (Ephesians 3:12)

Abide in \_\_\_\_\_ and His \_\_\_\_\_. (John 15:7)

\_\_\_\_\_. (1 John 3:21-22)

Praise God for each of these aspects of prayer and that you can learn and experience them fully in your life.

**C. Pray Scripture.** Make it a habit to pray the very words of the Bible directly for yourself and others. As you have your daily Quiet Time, look for verses that lend themselves to this type of praying. To try this out pray Ephesians 1:18-19 for someone you know. Write here who you prayed these verses for:

The Psalms are also prayers. Pick a favorite Psalm and pray over it. (Stop here, pick a Psalm and pray for it.)

The Psalm I prayed over was \_\_\_\_\_. I prayer this for \_\_\_\_\_. What God showed me in all this was:

**Other prayer verses are in the Appendix on page 59.**

## **24/7 With God!** (By Shelley Gregory)

People today are in constant communication. Parents, Teens, even many kids “text” and “cell” each other all the time. But what

about God? Do we talk with Him? Does He talk with us?

Since a young child, I have always prayed. Sadly, I never really knew why or for what real purpose, other than being told that it is what people who believe in God are ‘supposed’ to do. My prayers through those years and into my mid-twenties were not much more than repetitious prayer-book offerings. I recall a rare heart-to-heart conversation with God, but I certainly did not speak to Jesus, and never considered the Holy Spirit because I did not understand what He was. I was lost in my misguided faith and did not stand much of a chance in figuring out what it meant to have a prayer life. Unfortunately many are like that today. They don’t talk with God.

All that began to change when I met Christ by being “born again” 12 years ago (Sunday, October 15, 2000 to be exact). It’s been a continuous ‘prayer journey’ since then. I could write so much on how my prayer life developed and grew over the past 12 years, but I could also write about the times when I was stalled in prayer, overwhelmed in prayer, and unable to pour out all that was in my heart in prayer to my Lord. During those latter times, I could not do more than simply sit quietly and say, “Lord, you know everything about me. You know every thought and concern that is within me. Please just let me sit with you in silence.” Even total silence brought a feeling of comfort, peace and His presence. I have always believed that you can only sit in silence with family or friends that you are VERY comfortable with -- where there was no pressure to carry on a conversation if there is nothing to say at the moment. I learned this is true with God as well. No pressure. Sometimes I sit with a hot cup of coffee in a quiet house and say, “Lord, I’m here. I just want to think about you. Is there anything you want to tell me?” Then, I think about Him, wait, and listen.

Over the years I started longing for a deeper prayer life and more time with the Lord, but found I was filled with questions. Time in His word gave me answers:

**When should I pray? (God’s answer: Simple...All the time)**

1 Thessalonians 5:17 says, “Be joyful always; pray continually;

give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will...” Luke 18:1 says, “Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up.”

**Where should I pray? (God’s answer: Privately... me & God – alone)** Matthew 6:5-6: “And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.”

**How should I pray? (God’s answer: No need to go on & on. Pray...Ask...Give thanks!)** Matthew 6:7-8, “When you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.” Philippians 4:6, “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.”

**Who should I pray for? (God’s answer: Everyone – My enemies, believers, missionaries, friends, leaders...)** Luke 6:28: “...bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.” James 5:16 says, “Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.” Colossians 4:3: “And pray for us (missionaries), too, that God may open a door for our message.” Acts 8:15 says, “They prayed for the new believers”. Job 42:10 says, “Job...prayed for his friends.” And 1 Timothy 2:1-2 says, “I urge...that...prayers...be made for all people—for kings and all those in authority.”

**What should I pray for? (God’s answer: Anything and everything!)** Philippians 4:6 says, “Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.”

**And the best part?** The 24x7, open 'talk' line between me & my God! **No busy signal, no recording to leave a message, and no waiting! I'm always first in line!** ☺ Peace friends...Shelley!

## **How Has Your Life Changed?**

1. Overall what have you thought of this study?
2. Since going through this study how has your life changed?
3. Any new habits you've picked up? Have your prayers changed?
4. What new attitudes are beginning to develop in your life?
5. Where would you like to see your Christian life in 1 year? 2?

Your prayer life?

## **Continuing On**

Prayer should be the expression of what God says to our hearts. The more in tune we are with Him, the more our prayers will be!

In John 15 Jesus likens Himself to a vine, and us to the branches. We should abide in Him and He in us. This refers to a life-long process of becoming one with Him - trusting Him, obeying Him, really getting to know Him, loving Him. He then says that if we do that, then we'll bear much fruit. The fruit of answered prayer!

And what we've seen here is that as we **continue** doing the things we've learned - spending time in the Word and prayer, having fellowship with other believers, praying in His Spirit and in His love, then He will answer our prayers. But remember that it's not us, it's Him! **That's the ultimate key to prayer – relying on God! It's all Him, not us!**

# APPENDIX

## Praying For Others (and Yourself) Using Scripture

There are several places in the Bible where specific prayers are given. Philippians 1:9-11 is one, but there are many others. Many New Testament “letters” begin with prayer. 1 John 5:14-15 says God answers prayers when they are according to His will. **Praying for others using Scripture is an excellent way to pray in His will.** Let’s look into how we could pray Philippians 1:9-11.

**Philippians 1:9-11** says, “And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God.” **This a prayer about being blameless.**

### **An example of how to do this:**

Reflecting on this verse, when Philippians 1:9 says, “your love will overflow more and more”, I can in confidence pray, “Lord, please help my grown daughter’s love just overflow to those around her. Help her be an example of Your love.” And when it goes on to say, “that you will keep on growing in knowledge and understanding”, I can pray in confidence, “God, please help my son grow in his understanding and knowledge of Your Word. Let it flow into his heart, mind, and life.” And when it says in Philippians 1:10, “That you may live pure and blameless lives”, I can pray, “Father, help the teens, singles, and others in our small group to be pure and blameless before You, and to not get into anything that would lead them astray.” **Praying like this adds power to our prayers!** Isaiah 55:10-11 and Hebrews 4:12 say God’s Word changes people’s lives and accomplishes what it says!

Where are other prayers in the Bible? Often these types of prayers are in the first chapters of the New Testament “letters”. In addition to Philippians 1:9-11 other prayers in the New Testament are:

**Ephesians 1:15-19 (To be strong)** For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength,

**2 Thessalonians 1:3-4 (To stay at it)** We ought always to thank God for you, brothers, and rightly so, because your faith is growing more and more, and the love every one of you has for each other is increasing. Therefore, among God's churches we boast about your perseverance and faith in all the persecutions and trials you are enduring.

**Philemon verses 4-7 (To refresh others)** I always thank my God as I remember you in my prayers, because I hear about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints. I pray that you may be active in sharing your faith, so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ. Your love has given me great joy and encouragement, because you, brother, have refreshed the hearts of the saints.

In addition to Paul's prayers you can also pray any specific Bible promise for others. Here are a few promises that you can pray:

**Psalms 138:7 (For those in trouble)** Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you preserve my life; you stretch out your hand against the anger of my foes, with your right hand you save me.

**Psalm 18:2 (For those needing strength)** The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge. He is my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.

**Matthew 11:28-30 (For those who need rest)** "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 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. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

**Proverbs 14:26 (For those who need safety)** He who fears the Lord has a secure fortress, and for his children it will be a refuge.

**Proverbs 20:7 (Blessings for the righteous)** The righteous man leads a blameless life; blessed are his children after him.

**Proverbs 22:6 (For those raising children)** Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.

**Proverbs 31:28-31 (For a woman seeking God)** ...Her children arise and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her: Many women do noble things, but you surpass them all. Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.

**Ephesians 6:1-4 (For families)** Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honor your father and mother" - which is the first commandment with a promise - "that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth." Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

**James 1:12 (For those in need of perseverance)** Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.

**2 Chronicles 15:2 (To know God is with you)** ... The LORD is with you when you are with him. If you seek him, he will be found by you, but if you forsake him, he will forsake you.

**Deuteronomy 4:29 (For those seeking God)** But if from there you seek the LORD your God, you will find him if you look for him with all your heart and with all your soul.

**Psalms 9:10 (For those needing reassurance)** Those who know your name will trust in you, for you, LORD, have never forsaken those who seek you.

**Jeremiah 29:11 (For those needing a plan)** I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

## **Personal Prayer Retreats**

You can greatly strengthen your walk with God by having your own quarterly Personal Prayer Retreats. These are times when you get alone with God, enjoy His presence, get extended time in prayer and the Word, and also review and plan your schedule.

Jesus spent forty days alone with God in the wilderness. Moses was upon the mountain communing with God for many days as well. Great men and women of God have made it a habit to spend extended times alone with God. Here God can speak to you in a fresh new way. I recommend you begin with a morning or an afternoon, basically half of a work day with God. You can work up from there. I can personally attest that once you've done this, your walk with God will be greatly enriched. **During this time you will attempt to answer the questions, "Who are you, Lord?" and "What would you have me do?"** These will be times God will use to increase your love and effectiveness for Him

and for others. (It is helpful if husband and wife also have an annual Planning Retreat together as a couple.)

You will need to plan these on your calendar and find a location where you can be alone. Some prefer the solitude and beauty of the outside, such as a park, while others prefer a room somewhere such as a hotel, library, or a room in their church. Make sure there is a place you can sing, talk, or pray aloud to help keep you alert. Also be sure you can get up and walk around for a change of pace.

Allow three hours for your first Personal Prayer Retreat. This will be long enough for God to speak to you, for you to be refreshed, and for you to review and plan your schedule. Bring several Bibles, prayer lists, missionary letters, your journal, a songbook, prayer lists, reading glasses, and a snack. Get these ready the night before. Plan what you will do if you are meeting outside and the weather is bad. And don't get overly concerned with following a schedule or that you come away with any earth-shattering insights. Instead, **Let the Lord Direct.**

**A schedule you can follow for your first Quarterly Personal Prayer Retreat is given below:**

### **1<sup>ST</sup> HOUR - FOCUS ON GOD**

- **Realize His presence** – Read, meditate, and pray on passages about God, such as Isaiah 40:31, Psalms 27:13-14, Psalms 62:5, Psalms 139, and Genesis 28:16.
- **Grasp His Holiness and Our Need for Cleansing** – Read, meditate, and pray on such passages as Revelation 4, Isaiah 6:1-8, Psalms 139, Psalms 51, Psalms 32, and 1 John 1:9. Confess any sin that God reveals.
- **Worship Him** – Sing some Praise songs and read passages such as Psalms 103, Psalms 111, Revelation 5. Give thanks.

### **2<sup>ND</sup> HOUR – FOCUS ON PRAYER**

**A. PRAYER FOR OTHERS** – Family, friends, neighbors, co-workers, missionaries, leaders, enemies, etc. Use prayer and missionary letters if you like.

- **Pray specific things** – Spiritual strength, physical stamina, mental alertness, salvation, spiritual growth, family, relationships, effective ministry.
- **Pray one of Paul’s prayers for others** – Such as Philippians 1, Colossians 1, Ephesians 1, or Ephesians 3.
- **Pray for others what you pray for yourself.** – Think of your needs and pray for others.

### **B. PRAYER FOR YOURSELF (Could come 1st if needed.)**

- **Guidance & wisdom** – Read and reflect on Psalms 119:18, Meditate on Scripture you’ve memorized or enjoyed from this, or some other study, or from one of your quiet times.
- **Godliness** – Meditate on 1 John 1:9, Philippians 4:8, Galatians 5:22-23.
- **Concerns & needs** – Look into Scripture (Read a small book of the New Testament such as Philippians, 1 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, Titus, James, or 1 John), Look for specific direction or promises to claim. Then pray over issues facing you, asking for His help. Things such as your walk with God, your relationships, and your ministry.

### **3<sup>RD</sup> HOUR – FOCUS ON PLANNING**

- **Review and meditate on Scripture** such as Philippians 4:13, Psalms 90:10&12, Psalms 119:105, Proverbs 16:9, Jeremiah 29:11, John 4:34, and 1 Chronicles 4:10.
- **Reflect on your Schedule and Activities (Write down any needed changes)**
  - What am I not doing that I should do?
  - What am I doing that I should stop, or do less?
  - Who and what are my priorities?
  - What should be my main objectives?
- **Have a Final Closing Prayer:** Read and pray one of the closing Psalms (144-150).

**Vary things: Read a while, then Pray some, then Sing, then Walk, then Sit, Review verses, etc.**

**Allow the Lord to direct, but center it in His Word.**

# PERSONAL PRAYER RETREAT INSIGHTS

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Location:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Use the space below to record your key insights:**

# QUIET TIME JOURNAL (Week 1)

**GET STARTED:** Pray for guidance, then pick a chapter in a **modern paperback Bible or New Testament such as the New Living Translation or The Message.** (You could start in 1 Thessalonians chapter 2 or 1 John 2 as you read chapter 1 in practice.) Read and underline what stands out to you. Pick what you consider to be the best verse and fill out the appropriate journal entry. Then talk to God about it. Do this daily. As God leads, share what He shows you with others.

◇ **SUNDAY** Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Read: \_\_\_\_\_ Best Verse: \_\_\_\_\_  
What it said: \_\_\_\_\_

How it impressed me: \_\_\_\_\_

My response/prayer: \_\_\_\_\_

◇ **MONDAY** Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Read: \_\_\_\_\_ Best Verse: \_\_\_\_\_  
What it said: \_\_\_\_\_

How it impressed me: \_\_\_\_\_

My response/prayer: \_\_\_\_\_

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My response/prayer: \_\_\_\_\_

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My response/prayer: \_\_\_\_\_

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What it said: \_\_\_\_\_

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My response/prayer: \_\_\_\_\_

**QUIET TIME JOURNAL: Pray, Read, Underline, Record**

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My response/prayer: \_\_\_\_\_

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How it impressed me: \_\_\_\_\_

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My response/prayer: \_\_\_\_\_

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## NEW TESTAMENT READING CHART

It is important for every Christian to read their Bible regularly both for encouragement and for guidance. Psalm 119:9 says that a person should guard his (or her) life according to God's Word. But to do so you must be in The Book, not just have it in your house! The New Testament is an excellent place to start. Some people like to keep track of where they read to record their progress. Use the chart below to keep track of your reading in the New Testament. Put an "X" through the chapter numbers as you read them. Our prayer is that this will encourage you to read through the entire New Testament. You should be able to do so in about 9 months if you read 1 chapter daily. 3 chapters a day will get you through the entire Bible in about a year. (A sheet like this listing all the chapters in the Old and New Testaments is found in the back of *Growing Strong in God's Family* by NavPress.)

Matthew	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28
Mark	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16
Luke	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24
John	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21
Acts	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28
Romans	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16
1 Corinthians	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16
2 Corinthians	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13
Galatians	1 2 3 4 5 6
Ephesians	1 2 3 4 5 6
Philippians	1 2 3 4
Colossians	1 2 3 4
1 Thess.	1 2 3 4 5
2 Thess.	1 2 3
1 Timothy	1 2 3 4 5 6
2 Timothy	1 2 3 4
Titus	1 2 3
Philemon	1
Hebrews	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13
James	1 2 3 4 5
1 Peter	1 2 3 4 5
2 Peter	1 2 3
1 John	1 2 3 4 5
2 John	1
3 John	1
Jude	1
Revelation	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22

# My Goals

Prayerfully set up specific goals in your spiritual life for this study. Three goals are given: to have a Quiet Time for 7 consecutive days, pray using your prayer lists for 7 consecutive days, and having a “Prayer Walk”. Set up any others that you like. Then **have someone else in your group initial on the line before each goal as you complete them.** You may also want to show them to your leader and ask for him or her to write about the growth they have seen in your walk with God during this time.

\_\_\_\_\_ ***Have a Quiet Time daily for 7 consecutive days (as shown by 7 consecutive journal entries)***

\_\_\_\_\_ ***Pray using your Prayer Sheets for 7 consecutive days (as shown by 7 consecutive Journal checks.)***

\_\_\_\_\_ ***Have a “Prayer Walk” at \_\_\_\_\_***  
*(location)*

\_\_\_\_\_ *Tell \_\_\_\_\_ about Christ*

\_\_\_\_\_ *Invite/Bring \_\_\_\_\_ to church*

\_\_\_\_\_ *Complete these Bible studies:*

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ *Read \_\_\_\_\_*

## *Other Goals*

\_\_\_\_\_ *Memorize some verses on the next page to pray \_\_\_\_\_*

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*Leader Comments (Optional)*

# *Other Verses to Memorize and Pray*

There are particular verses that you will find mean so much to you or impact your life in such a significant way that it makes sense to commit them to memory so you can carry them with you everywhere and pray about them at any moment! This page is for you to write down these verses as you find them so you can begin to memorize and put them in your heart and mind and then pray using them as God leads. **Excellent verses for praying over are: Ephesians 1:17-18, Ephesians 3:16-19, Philippians 1:9-12, 1 Thessalonians 3:12-13, 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12, 2 Thessalonians 3:5, 1 Peter 3:8, Colossians 3:15, Hebrews 6:11-12, Hebrews 12:1-2, and any of the verses in Psalms.** Learn the verse a phrase at a time, adding phrases until you can say it all from memory. And also learn the address (reference) of the verse as well (e.g., John 3:16) so you can show someone else where it is. I find it helpful to also write the verses out on small cards and carry them with me for review. Research has shown that once you can say a verse from memory, however, you will be unable to do so in about an hour. But you will find that it will then take much less time to re-learn it. The same thing then occurs about a day later, a week later, etc., but each time taking less and less time to re-learn. Eventually it will be in there for good. I know verses I learned 42 years ago, and it's made such an impact on my life that I'm still learning new ones today. So the key to remembering a verse is not only to memorize it, but also to review. Reviewing with another person is also helpful, and will be an encouragement to them. Think about this, if the Bible is ever banned, the verses we've memorized will be the only ones we'll have. But even now, with Bibles in every book store and home, there are times during the day when we don't have one with us, or it is impractical to pull out our Bibles. So at those times, the verses you've memorized are all that you have at that particular moment. The Holy Spirit will then use the verses you've memorized in your life and help you to be a ministry to others at any time! God bless you as you memorize and pray His Word!

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