

## Prayer – Lesson 1

*“Our relationship with God involves communication – not just an occasional brief chat, but a deep sharing of ourselves and our concerns with God. In the Bible God speaks to us; in prayer we speak to God. Both are essential – both are gifts God has given us so we can know Him. He has given us the privilege of prayer because He loves us and wants our fellowship.” Billy Graham*

Prayer is one of the essential habits of maturing Christians...

1. In order to grow we need to eat—The Bible
2. In order to grow we need to breathe—Prayer
3. In order to grow we need good spiritual hygiene—Confession of Sin
4. In order to grow we need a caring family—Fellowship
5. In order to grow we need regular exercise—Service
6. In order to grow we need protection—Temptation
7. In order to grow we need to give—Stewardship

Powerful prayer is God’s will for every believer. You can develop a dynamic prayer life.

Romans 12:12, “Base your happiness on your hope in Christ. When trials come endure them patiently, steadfastly maintain the habit of prayer.” (JB Phillips NT)

1. What is the first word that comes to mind when you hear the word prayer?
2. What are the situations in which you are most likely to pray?
3. What is the nature of your most common prayers?

There was a time in America that one of the first things we heard in public schools, civic organization meetings, high school football games and government meetings was a prayer. That still happens occasionally, but most often now, if there is anything, it’s a moment of silence.

No one can take away your right to pray ... you can always pray, if you want to pray. But the real question is, how important is prayer to you?

Is prayer something you dread, a token to God at meal time or something you look forward to? In reality, prayer is our spiritual life support system. Without prayer you will be a weak, defeated Christian.

For many people prayer is nothing more than a formula, or a scripted arrangement or words we must repeat or a ritual we must follow.

*“Prayer is not about formulas or rituals, but about faith and relationship, a relationship with God the Father. In that relationship, are we calling on Him daily, walking and talking with Him, listening and learning from Him. Are we depending on Him moment by moment? That is what He created us for in the beginning, and that is what He recreated us for in Christ.”* Rick Shepherd

Where are you on the prayer growth chart?

- Casual Praying – Mealtime, bedtime, when you have to, when it’s expected. Routine, repetitive and quick prayers.
- Committed Praying – Focused, purposeful. Getting serious because there is a burden on your heart driving you to your knees.
- Combat Praying – This is serious. This is exertion...hard work. This kind of praying is what a parent does when there is a child backslidden on God. Colossians 4:12, “Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings. He is always wrestling in prayer for you...”

We will never fully understand prayer until we grasp God’s primary purposes for prayer.

- Prayer is God’s primary means of our coming to know Him, worship Him and experience transformation through the indwelling Christ.
- Prayer is not primarily about what we can get out of God, but what He purposes to do in and through us for His own pleasure.
- Prayer is the major way we learn to communicate with God and hear His voice.
- Prayer is how we abide in Him and allow Him to live through us.
- Prayer is how Christ purifies His Bride and builds His Kingdom.

The great secret of prayer is to align ourselves to God’s purposes rather than seeking to align Him to ours. Until you are totally convinced of the importance of a lifestyle of prayer, you are not likely to take steps to achieve one.

What Does God Want You To Gain Through Effective Prayer?

Seven Results of a Powerful Prayer Life...

1. Your relationship with Him will become much more real and personal.
2. You will experience ever deepening holiness and life transforming discipleship.
3. Your ability to hear God’s voice will rise dramatically.
4. The spiritual power of your life and ministry will increase greatly.
5. You will experience an increase in answered prayer.
6. You will be able to better withstand trials, temptations and spiritual attacks.

7. You will see people saved.

No matter how big or small your task, no matter how devastating your problems, significant daily prayer is the key to that new walk with Christ.

Powerful prayer is God's will for every believer. You can develop a dynamic prayer life.