**Lesson #3 PRAYER - PART 1 - WHY SHOULD WE PRAY?**

It has been said that the greatest sin of the church is prayerlessness. If this is true, it is probably because the average Christian has little knowledge in the area of prayer.

This section of your Spiritual Notebook or Spiritual Journal is to be used during your daily “quiet time” and other special periods of prayer. The following outline will be helpful in learning how to use this prayer section with maximum effectiveness.

I. UNDERSTANDING PRAYER

A. Prayer is CONVERSATION with God.

1. As in all good conversations, there needs to be an openness and honesty as you converse with the Lord.

2. When you pray, talk to him using the language that seems most natural and meaningful to you personally.

3. Notice the simplicity of the prayer prayed by the thief on the Cross. He simply said, *“Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom” (Luke 23:42)*

4. Notice the highly personal quality of Jesus’ prayer in John 17. With complete frankness and openness, He speaks to the Father in prayer about His disciples, His eternal glory, and the world. He is confident that His prayer is being heard.

*Father, the hour has come; glorify thy Son that the Son may glorify thee, since thou hast given him power over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom thou has given him. And this is eternal life, that they know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou has sent (John 17:1-3), RSV).*

II. Prayer is a means of FELLOWSHIP with God.

 A. It should be consistent.

 1. Pray constantly (*1 Thess. 5:17*, RSV).

 B. It should be personal.

1. *And in the morning, a great while before day, he rose and went out to a lonely place, and there he prayed (Mark 1:35, RSV).*

III. Prayer is a means of AFFECTING THE LIVES of others.

A. Paul’s most frequent kind of prayer was a petition specifically asking God’s blessing in the lives of his fellow Christians.

*I do not cease to give thanks for you remembering you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints (Eph. 1:16-18, RSV).*

B. Paul encourages Timothy to intercede in prayer for the lives of all men and especially for those in positions of leadership.

*First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all men (1 Tim. 2:1, RSV).*

IV. Prayer is a means of thanking God and giving Him praise.

*We give thanks to God always for you all, constantly mentioning you in our prayers (1 Thess. 1:2, RSV).*

**How God Speaks**

*Heb 1:1-2 1 In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, 2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. (NIV)*

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| **How** | **Old Testament Time** | **New Testament Time** |
| **Fire** | *Deut 5:24 And you said, "The LORD our God has shown us his glory and his majesty, and we have heard his voice from the fire. Today we have seen that a man can live even if God speaks with him. (NIV)* |  |
| **Kings and Leaders** | *Heb 4:7 Therefore God again set a certain day, calling it Today, when a long time later he spoke through David, as was said before: "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts."(NIV)* |  |
| **Visions** | *Gen 15:1 After this, the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward."(NIV)* | *Acts 18:9 One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision: "Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent. (NIV)* |
| **Clouds** | *Num 11:25 And the LORD came down in a cloud, and spake unto him, and took of the spirit that was upon him, and gave it unto the seventy elders: and it came to pass, that, when the spirit rested upon them, they prophesied, and did not cease. (KJV)* | *Matt 17:5 While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him. (KJV)* |
| **Dreams** | *IKing 3:5 In Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night: and God said, Ask what I shall give thee. (KJV)* | *Matt 1:20 But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. (KJV)* |
| **Lots** | *Lev 16:8 He is to cast lots for the two goats-- one lot for the LORD and the other for the scapegoat. (NIV)* | *Acts 1:26 Then they cast lots, and the lot fell to Matthias; so he was added to the eleven apostles.(NIV)* |
| **Prophets** | *Deut 18:18 I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. (KJV)* | *Matt 21:26 But if we shall say, Of men; we fear the people; for all hold John as a prophet. (KJV)* |
| **Angels** | *Gen 16:9 And the angel of the LORD said unto her, Return to thy mistress, and submit thyself under her hands. (KJV)* | *Luke 1:30 And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. (KJV)* |
| **Disciples** |  | *John 21:24 This is the disciple (John) which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true. (KJV)* |
| **Other Believers****(Preachers, teachers, Saints)** | *Gen 41:39 Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Since God has made all this known to you, there is no one so discerning and wise as you. (NIV)* | *Acts 18:26 And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly. (KJV)* |
| **Apostles** |  | *1 Tim 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope; (KJV)* |
| **His Spirit** | *2 Sam 23:2 The Spirit of the LORD spake by me, (David) and his word was in my tongue. (KJV)* | *Rom 8:16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: (KJV)* |
| **His Son Jesus** |  | *Heb 1:2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. (NIV)* |
| **Circumstances** | *Gen 45:5,8 And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you. 8"So then, it was not you who sent me here, but God. He made me father to Pharaoh, lord of his entire household and ruler of all Egypt. (NIV)* |  |
| **His Written Word** | *Jer 30:2 "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'Write in a book all the words I have spoken to you.(NIV)* | *2 Tim 3:16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: (KJV)**Rev 19:9 Then the angel said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!'" And he added, "These are the true words of God."(NIV)* |
| **Conscience** | *2 Sam 24:24 And the king said unto Araunah, Nay; but I will surely buy it of thee at a price: neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the LORD my God of that which doth cost me nothing. So David bought the threshingfloor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver. (KJV)* | *Rom 9:1 I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, (KJV)* |
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