

Volume V

# The Essentials



# Prayer

**We'd like to welcome you to the educational series "The Essentials". These series of study books are designed to equip the believers of Christ with the essentials to live the life the scripture say we should have. This series will also help us to understand and embrace our anointed call to change our view about ourselves and give ourselves to become ambassadors of change in world around us.**

**To properly understand the calling of Christ it is mandatory that we give ourselves to grasping some clarity related to His call. The central resource to discover what Christ has called us to is the Bible. In the pages of the bible, we will discover that we have been made for a purpose. As a matter of fact, "we have been made for this time and this time is made for us". Since so much of who we are and who we are to be is held within the sacred scripture, we must develop a new mind-set in seeking to learn about our Lord's plan for us.**

**We must embrace this reality: “Our assured purpose is rooted in the word of God. To understand our assignment and the father’s destined will for us, it is imperative that we engage the searching of the scriptures as a lifetime journey”. 1 John 3:2 ...it doth not appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear we shall be like him...**

**There are principle fundamentals that God has laid out for our benefit that will help us to understand that “there is nothing that has happened to us that God is not aware of and has made to work for us”. We discover these truths as we study our God and His ways.**

**Special thanks to Bishop Timothy J. Clarke of the First Church, Columbus, Ohio for his permission to use the Foundation class material.**

# **PRAYER**

## **INTRODUCTION**

**Perhaps, nothing is more poorly understood by the average person--both Christian and non- Christian--than prayer. It is generally thought to be a means of persuading God to fulfill one's dreams and ambitions and to satisfy one's desires. The true purposes of prayer are clearly illustrated and explained in the Bible in numerous places. This lesson will lead you through a look at what the Bible says about prayer.**

### **WHAT IS PRAYER?**

**Before we take a look at what prayer is, let's take a look at what prayer is NOT. Prayer is not part of man's natural life. By "natural" we mean the ordinary, sensible, worldly-minded life. Normally people don't pray until there is a need in their life they cannot meet, or there is something going on they do not**

**understand. Prayer is not for emergency uses only. Prayer is not a way to overcome God's reluctance. Prayer is not an "Aladdin's Lamp" or a Wishing Well. Prayer is not and was never intended to be something that is ritually repeated, like the Lord's Prayer.**

**What is prayer? Prayer is communion or a conversation with God. Prayer involves getting to know God intimately. Prayer is the expression of our desires to God, but not the insistence of those desires. Prayer is getting ourselves attuned to God, not getting God attuned to us. Prayer is developing the life of God in us, not self-development.**

**REVIEW:**

**Prayer is not part of man's natural \_\_\_\_\_ . Prayer is**

\_\_\_\_\_ or a \_\_\_\_\_  
with God.

## **WHY PRAY?**

**There are many wrong reasons for praying: Praying because your grandmother, mother, father, etc, used to do it; praying because you've made a huge mess of your life, and you're blaming God because you don't want to blame yourself; praying because you are desperate for money, and none of your friends or family will give you any; praying because everyone else at church does, and you don't want others to think you have no spiritual depth. The single best reason to pray is that God commands us to. A psychiatrist costs \$175 per hour, but God is free!**

### **Ephesians 6:18**

**18And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in**

**mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.**

**Hebrews 4:16**

**Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.**

**Colossians 4:2**

**Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.**

**Romans 12:12**

**Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.**

**You might ask, “Why should I do what God says?” The answer to that question is: “Because God’s nature is perfect.” He would not and could not tell us to do anything that would be harmful. If He commands us to pray, it must be for our own good. So, we should do it because He says to, whether we understand the benefits or not. As we begin**

**to pray, we will grow in knowledge and understanding while experiencing the benefits first hand.**

**The most logical reason to pray is that it works--it makes some kind of difference for you, other people, or even God. Prayer changes things, but most of all be prepared for your prayers to change you because that is the greatest effect of prayer. Prayer brings you into God's presence. Conversing with God takes you out of your self-centered world and immediately connects you with the Creator of the universe. Prayer changes your attitude and focus. Let's admit it. We all tend to be self-centered. Even our prayers can be that way. Our prayers should properly focus on who God is and what He wants to accomplish in our lives. As we pray sincerely, we begin to align ourselves with God's plans rather than our own, and we begin to set aside our wants for His desires. We move from being self-centered to God-centered.**



## **REVIEW:**

**The single best reason to pray is that God**

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**\_\_\_\_\_.**

**Prayer brings you into God's**

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**\_\_\_\_\_.**

## **DIFFERENT TYPES OF PRAYER:**

**The Bible says in Ephesians 6:18 that we should “pray all kinds of prayers.” The following are the different types of prayer seen in the Bible:**

### **1) Confession of Sin:**

**If our prayer is to be effective, our sin must be dealt with first. Unconfessed sin forms a barrier when fellowshiping with God and hinders God's answer to our prayer.**

**Therefore, our prayer needs to begin with confession where we acknowledge our sin to the Lord (Isaiah 59:1-3; Psalms 66:18).**

**2) Praise:**

**Praise is the expression of our love and adoration for who God is. We should constantly praise God for who He is (Hebrews 13:15).**

**3) Thanksgiving:**

**This is the expression of gratefulness to God for all the things He has done, is doing, and is yet to do for us. It is the giving of thanks to God for supplying all of our material, physical, and spiritual needs (Ephesians 5:20).**

**4) Intercession:**

**“Intercessory prayer” is vital to our Christian Life. It is one of the highest callings in the Christian life. Intercessory prayer is the act of serving God through praying for others in specific requests as a ministry of the priesthood He has given us (James 5:16).**

**5) Petition:**

**Making petitions of the Lord is the act of praying for our own needs, while acknowledging your inadequacies and God's sufficiency (Philippians 4:6).**

**You have to believe that God exists. If your prayers are going to be effective, you've got to believe in God. This sounds basic doesn't it? But, you would be surprised at how many people who have no belief in God utter some kind of prayer when they have a problem.**

**Hebrews 11:6**

**6And without faith it is impossible to please God because anyone who comes to Him must believe that He exists.**

**REVIEW:**

**Intercessory prayer is praying**

**\_\_\_\_\_.**

**Praise is the**

\_\_\_\_\_ for  
**who God is.**

**What has to happen before we can pray?**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

**If your prayers are going to be effective,  
you've got to**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

**WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO PRAY "IN THE  
NAME OF JESUS?"**

**As you read your Bible daily (yes you should  
read daily!), you will notice references to  
prayer in the New Testament. There are a  
lot of references to praying "in Jesus' name."**

**John 14:13**

**And I will do whatever you ask in My name,  
so that the Son may bring glory to the Father.  
You may ask Me for anything in My name,  
and I will do it.**

**Praying in the name of Jesus doesn't mean we have to keep repeating the phrase "in Jesus' name" during our prayer. It is not a magical formula that makes wishes come true. Rather, praying in Jesus' name means that we are praying with the authority that He gives to us as children of God because He paid the penalty for our sins. Praying in His name also means that we are praying in His will for the things that He wants, not for the things we want. This means that prayer doesn't give us whatever we ask for out of selfishness, just whatever we ask for within the parameters of His will. How do we know what those parameters are? Well, that's where reading the Bible on a daily basis comes in!**

### **REVIEW:**

**Praying in the name of Jesus doesn't mean we have to \_\_\_\_\_ "in Jesus' name" during our prayer.**

**Praying in His name also means that we are not praying for \_\_\_\_\_**

**\_\_\_\_\_.**

## **WHEN SHOULD WE PRAY?**

**Daniel used to pray at set intervals during the day. King David had a habit of praying early in the morning. Don't worry about when to pray. God doesn't have to schedule a time slot in His planner to avoid conflicts with the prayer times for the rest of the world. Anytime is a great time to talk with God.**

**Having a regular prayer time (not just at meals and before you hop in the bed) will help you so that your time with God doesn't get lost in the shuffle of your busy day. You should also have spontaneous moments of prayer during the day about what's going on in your life. Here are some examples:**

**You're suddenly caught in a dangerous situation--you will want to pray for safety.**

**You can pray that God will help you resist temptation if you find yourself at a place where you shouldn't be or with people who are doing things that you shouldn't do.**

**When you see a magnificent, natural setting, talk to God and thank Him for creating such a beautiful world.**

**Anytime is the right time to pray. In fact, anytime is the best time to pray.**

**REVIEW:**

**\_\_\_\_\_ is a great time to talk with God.**

**Having a regular prayer time will help you so that your time with God doesn't**

**\_\_\_\_\_.**

## **HOW SHOULD WE PRAY?**

**God cares more about what you say than how long it takes you to say it, but there are times when we don't know what to say to God in prayer.**

**Jesus understood that all of us would have difficulty talking to God unless we knew what to say. To help us out, He gave a sample prayer outline to His disciples in Matthew 6:9-13. Let's look at the components of this prayer--typically called the Lord's Prayer:**

**Our Father: It is always good to start off our prayer reminding ourselves of our personal relationship to God. He is our heavenly Father, and He loves us because we are His own children.**

**In heaven: We need to remind ourselves of God's majesty, that He is in control of the**



**universe, and that nothing is too difficult for Him.**

**Hallowed be your name: We shouldn't just speak rudely at God. He is worthy of our respect and devotion. Our praise to Him is appropriate because of who He is, and it keeps us in the right frame of mind.**

**Your kingdom come: Christ is going to come back to earth someday, and God will rule over all. Remembering this fact will help remove some of the arrogance out of our lives. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. We need to adopt God's priorities as our own. He needs to be the primary influence in our personal life, in our family life, on the job, and in whatever we do.**

**Give us this day our daily bread: God wants us to ask Him for the things that we need and want. If we are praying in His will, then we will ask for the things He already wants us to have.**

**And forgive us our debts: Debts should be translated sins. We must keep the door of our heart open to God by confessing our sins. Sin interrupts the conversation we can have with Him.**

**As we forgive our debtors: We must forgive those who sin against us because God freely forgives when we sin against Him and ask for forgiveness. He wants us to pray about our relationships and how we treat other people.**

**And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one: God doesn't cause us to be tempted, but we should pray that God will help us overcome (and avoid) those circumstances that tempt us to sin. We live at the center of spiritual warfare, and we want God on our side.**

**For Yours is the kingdom and the power and glory the forever: The prayer ends the same way that it begins--praising God. Isn't it**

**amazing that God cares for us and that He wants us to talk to Him? Don't forget to tell Him that you appreciate it. Look at the different categories that this one prayer covers:**

- 1) Praise (acknowledging God's importance in our lives)**
- 2) Priorities (wanting His will instead of our own)**
- 3) Provision (asking for what we need)**
- 4) Personal relationships (talking about how we relate to God, as well as other people)**
- 5) Protection (asking for help to live a godly and moral life)**

**Prayer is talking with God--not talking at God. Prayer is a two-way conversation. We do some of the talking while God listens,**

then we need to let God do some of the talking while we listen. How does God talk to us in prayer? Well, I'm glad you asked. God is most likely to speak to you in the quietness of your thoughts.

As you pray in His will, you are going to get a sense of what He wants. He will speak to you by prompting your thoughts and providing confirmation through His Word {the Bible}.

In your prayer time, you should leave time for God to talk to you.

**Psalms 46:10**

**10"Be silent, and know that I am God."**

**REVIEW:**

The Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13) is really a \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ of how we should pray.

**In your prayer time, you should leave time  
for God to \_\_\_\_\_ to you.**