

WEEK NINE

PRAYER

The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective...
-James 5:16

Today you begin your ninth week as a Christian. No doubt, prayer has become something very important to you, as it should be. Yet, even in this greatest of privileges you may have experienced struggles. Prayer is not natural, but like so many other facets of being a disciple of Jesus, it has to be learned. This week you will concentrate on prayer

Day 57- Approach with Confidence

1. Think of someone in your life whom you can go to with confidence in any type of situation. How does that make you feel?
2. Read Ephesians 3:10-12 and Hebrews 4:14-16. These passages both use the word "confidence" to describe how we approach God. What does this mean to you? Of what can we be confident?
3. Why, as disciples of Jesus, are we able to come to God with such confidence?
4. When would be the only time that we could not be confident in coming to God?
5. As you pray today, thank God for Jesus who has made it possible for us to come to God without fear.

Day 58 - Jesus: Man of Prayer

1. No one will have a meaningful prayer life who does not appreciate the importance of prayer and perhaps nothing helps us see this importance more than the life of Jesus. Read Luke 5:15-16; 6:12-13; 9:18; 11:1; Mark 1:32-36; and Hebrews 5:7-10.
2. Because of these statements about Jesus, G. S. Thompson has written: "Prayer was the atmosphere in which he lived. It was the air he breathed." Robert Coleman commenting on the same scriptures has written: "Prayer was indeed the sweat and tears of His ministry. The battle of the cross was fought and won on His *knees*." The same author also wrote: "Jesus never got behind in His work because He never got behind in prayer."
3. Write down what the example of Jesus means to you in relationship to your prayer life.

Day 59 - Surrender

1. There are certain things necessary for effective, joyful prayer. For the next several days, we want to concentrate on some of these.
2. As a disciple what should be your main objective as you pray? Read carefully Matthew 26:36-44 and 1 John 5:14-15.
3. What is wrong if an attitude of surrender to God is not at the heart of our prayers?
4. Why did Hebrews 5:7 say that Jesus was heard by God? How can you tell if your prayers are unsubmitive prayers?
5. What prayers of surrender do you need to pray today?

Day 60 - Faith

1. Another key element in prayer is faith. Prayer alone without faith has no effect (read Hebrews 11:6).
2. Read Joshua 10:12-14. Faith carries our prayers to the ears of God. God listened to a man-Joshua-because he prayed believing, and the sun and moon stood still. Joshua asked for something that was impossible, yet he asked the God who makes "all things possible."
3. Read again Mark 11:22-24. What doubts have you had as you prayed? What situations seem impossible? Where do these doubts come from?
4. Read Luke 18:1-8 and Psalm 34:15. When is it important to remember these passages?
5. Read James 1:5-8. What does this say to you?
6. List three things you want to pray about *with faith*.

Day 61-"Teach Us to Pray"

The disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray. For the next two days we want to concentrate on some practical guidelines for prayer.

1. Read Matthew 6:5-8 and Luke 5:15-16. What do these passages seem to be telling you about prayer?
2. As you look at your living situation, what arrangements must you make to have a time and place to be alone with God?
3. Read Psalm 55:17. David prayed regularly. Jesus often withdrew to pray. Why is it important for you to have a regular, set time to pray? Why is it worth the extra effort to work this out?
4. Read Ephesians 6:18 and 1 Thessalonians 5:17. Prayer is not limited to a set time and place, but should be spontaneous and continuous throughout the day. Why does God want us to "*pray continually*?" What does this mean to you? How might such a thing be done?

Day 62 - Pray Like This

1. Read the prayer in Matthew 6:7-13.
2. List the several different elements that make up this prayer. Which of these do you focus on regularly? Which do you tend to neglect?
3. Many times our prayers are concentrated on asking for certain needs to be met. Jesus teaches us to first of all focus on God and give him the honor and praise he deserves.
4. Do you have difficulty praising God? If so, use the Book of Psalms to train you. Start out with Psalm 24. Read it aloud.

Day 63 – The Joy of Prayer

1. If we are to pray powerfully we must not only see the importance of prayer and the need for surrender and faith in prayer, but we must appreciate the joy of prayer. Read Philippians 1:3-6; 4:47 and 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18.
2. Why should your prayer life bring you joy? Can it do this even in the midst of trials?
3. What are some possible things that are wrong if a Christian does not see prayer as a source of joy?
4. As you close this week of study on prayer, what patterns of prayer do you have in your life at this time? What changes do you want to make?