

Reasons We Should Pray

Adapted from "How to Pray" by R.A. Torrey
Lesson for Sunday, August 4, 2024

LESSON GOAL: To create a hunger in the lives of our people to become a praying people!

- ⇒ This is the first in a series of lessons on the topic of prayer. Our ultimate goal is very practical: We want to teach our people a way to pray that they can begin utilizing on a personal level.
- ⇒ The first few lessons are on the general topic of prayer, and they are designed to create a hunger in the lives of our classes to learn how to pray.
- ⇒ The key to this series: Your personal prayers. Pray that your class will transform into a praying class.
- ⇒ **SUGGESTION:** For this series, create lesson handouts for your class to use in class and to keep for future reference. The church will print them for you IF you will get them to us by Thursday at 5 PM.

INTRODUCTION:

- ⇒ Isn't it a shame how often we (Christians) have to be reminded to pray?
- ⇒ An elderly lady had come under some hard times.
 - She was faced with having to sell her home and move to a retirement center.
 - Her children had tried to help her understand the situation but she couldn't seem to grasp it. She was worried, fretful and upset all the time.
 - Her son approached her one day and said, "Mom, everything is going to be all right. You just need to pray about it and leave things to the Lord."
 - She gasped and said, "Oh, no! Has it come to that?"
- ⇒ Many times, that is our attitude regarding prayer. We approach it like a last resort alternative.
 - Many people never seriously pray until they face serious problems.
- ⇒ **DISCUSS:** Have you ever thought about why that it is? **IMPORTANT BUT QUICK**
 - We are self-sufficient...the inevitable problems of life have a way of suddenly helping us realize that we are not as in control as we thought we were.
 - We are self-reliant...we look at our day and our plans and our needs and we think, "I got this." We fail to recognize our complete dependence on God.
 - We are self-focused...we tend to be obsessed with what we want to do and what we want to accomplish. As a result, we are out of tune with what God wants to do.
 - We are selfishly motivated...we don't think God will do anything about our situation; and if He does, it won't be the answer we are looking for.
- ⇒ ***The Bible is a book about prayer.*** On almost every page someone is praying or there is a passage that can be turned into a prayer to the Lord.

WE SHOULD PRAY BECAUSE...

IDEA: GROUP WORK!

1. Jesus expects us to pray (Matthew 6:5-7).
 - a. In this passage, Jesus is giving instruction on how to pray. But notice that in each of these verses what Jesus says...
 - b. Read each verse and look for "when you pray."
 - c. What is Jesus assuming in these verses? The question is not if we will pray, but how we will pray! Either way – we are expected to pray!
2. There is a Devil (Ephesians 6:12-18).
 - a. In this text, Paul is warning us that we are in a spiritual battle, and a spiritual battle requires spiritual weapons.
 - b. In verses 10-18 the Armor of God is described and Christians are encouraged to get properly dressed every day so we will be equipped to face our enemy!
 - c. As Paul describes the different pieces of armor, he concludes with verse 18. In addition to all these separate pieces we must add prayer or else all else will be in vain.

- d. In Ephesians 6:18 – Notice the “alls:”
 - i. Pray at all times; with all prayer; in all perseverance; for all the saints
- e. We are in a spiritual battle facing a real enemy. Therefore, we must pray!
- 3. Prayer is God’s appointed way for obtaining power and provision in our lives (James 4:2).
 - a. Prayer is not a good luck charm, or a ritual to get what we want.
 - b. Prayer is the way we synch with the Lord so we can know His will and have power to accomplish His purposes.
 - c. Many Christians wonder why they struggle to make any progress in their Christian life. God answers, “Because you neglect to pray. You have not because you ask not.”
 - d. Many churches wonder why they do not see God working in their ministries and services, why people are not being regularly saved. God answers, “Because you neglect to pray. You have not because you ask not.”
 - e. It makes you wonder, what does God want to give us, but we have yet to ask?
 - i. Do you want to see God work in your life?
 - ii. Do you want to have peace, contentment, and joy?
 - iii. Do you want to see God’s power working in your church?
 - iv. You must learn to pay the price in prayer.
- 4. The Apostle’s regarded prayer as important (Acts 6:1-4).
 - a. Many churches and Christians work to squeeze prayer into their schedules instead of dedicating significant times for the purpose of prayer.
 - b. When the work was growing in the book of Acts, the disciples wanted to be sure to preserve two specific areas: preaching the Word and prayer.
 - c. In fact, one of the themes of the book of Acts is prayer! In good times – they prayed! In times of persecution – they prayed! The early church was a praying church!
 - d. Is prayer as important to us today as it was to the Apostles in the book of Acts?
- 5. Jesus made prayer an important part of His earthly life (Mark 1:35; Luke 6:12).
 - a. The words “pray” or “prayer” are used at least 25 times in connection with Jesus in the Gospels.
 - b. Look at Mark 1:35. Notice that Jesus rose early in the morning and went to pray. What makes that so special is when you see everything He did the day before.
 - c. The day before had been full of ministry. There was no doubt Jesus was tired when He went to sleep that night. But Jesus shortened the hours of needed sleep so that He could rise early and give Himself to a greater need – the need to pray.
 - d. In Luke 6:12 we see that Jesus even dedicated an entire night to pray. What an example!
- 6. Prayer is still a part of the ministry of Jesus Christ today (Hebrews 7:25; Romans 8:34).
 - a. The ministry of Jesus Christ did not end when His earthly ministry ended.
 - b. The Bible teaches that when He ascended back to Heaven He went to the right hand of God the Father and entered another work on our behalf.
 - c. Read Hebrews 7:25 – “He ever lives to make intercession for them.”
 - d. This verse tells us that Jesus lives to do this! The main thing that Jesus is doing today is praying!
 - e. What does this mean for you and me? If we want to spend time with Jesus we must spend time in prayer.
- 7. Prayer is God’s means for us to receive mercy and grace (Hebrews 4:14-16).
 - a. How many of us need God’s mercy and grace? Without God’s grace and mercy all of our life will end in complete failure. These verses tell us where to find it!
 - b. God has appointed a way for us to find what we are looking for – prayer. Not just any kind of prayer, but bold, confident prayer.
 - c. When we pray we have a High Priest, Jesus Christ, who meets us there and sympathizes with us.
 - d. There’s another promise hidden in this verse. We will receive grace and mercy when we ask in prayer *in our time of need*. The idea is that we will receive it at the exact moment you need it.

- e. There are days and times we need more than at other times. God says when those times come, we have instant access to Him.
- 8. Prayer is the means for obtaining freedom from anxiety (Philippians 4:6-7).
 - a. This verse gives us the secret to experiencing the perfect peace of God – it's found in prayer. Notice the command that we are not to worry about anything.
 - b. Do you find that difficult to do? How can God ask us not to worry, especially when He knows everything we are facing?
 - c. When we analyze this passage we also have to conclude that to worry is a sin. After all, this is a clear command and not a suggestion. Why would our worry be offensive to God? Because it questions His sovereignty.
 - d. That's a tough teaching, but in this passage, we see God's grace. God knows how easily it is for us to be tempted to worry, so He gives us a strategy to overcome it.
 - e. He tells us to pray. He tells us to bring every worry before Him in prayer. In exchange He offers His peace. What a blessing!
- 9. Prayer is the method for obtaining the Holy Spirit (Luke 11:13).
 - a. Could this text be clearer?
 - b. This text doesn't need much explanation.
 - c. This text needs more application!
 - d. If only we would spend more time in prayer there would be more fullness of the Spirit's power in our work.
- 10. Prayer is a means of protecting our hearts from the control of sin (Luke 21:34-36).
 - a. This is a fascinating passage! According to this passage, there is only one way in which we can be prepared for the coming of the Lord when He appears: through much prayer.
 - b. It's one thing to talk about the Lord's return; it's another to be prepared for it.
 - c. We are told over and over in the New Testament to "watch" for the Lord's return. But the world has a way of drawing our attention more and more to this life and not the life to come.
 - d. The person who spends little time in prayer will not be ready for the Lord when He comes.

AND THERE'S MORE! The hardest part of putting this lesson together is choosing what NOT to include!

- ⇒ Our goal over the next several weeks is to learn everything we can about prayer.
- ⇒ But we don't want to just learn about prayer – we want to learn to pray, and then begin to do so!
- ⇒ In the coming weeks, we will attempt to get very practical as we learn to organize and prioritize our prayer lives. This has the potential to change your life!