

Get Growing - Session 2 - “Prayer”

- Good Evening, welcome to session 2 of our Get Growing Series
- I am so grateful that you are here or tuned in, or watching at some time later
- Let's pray
- We are learning how to grow as Christians, and we are using this wonderful diagram developed by Dawson Trotman back in the 1930's as an aide
- You have a copy in your hands I hope, Let's put the wheel diagram up
- This Diagram illustrates spiritual growth as a Christian
- It's simple, but every detail is intentionally meaningful
- It's a wheel - Spiritual growth is action, and it's continual action
- The hub of the wheel is Christ - Jesus is to be the center of your life
- The rim of the wheel represents obedience where the rubber meets the road - you are to be obedient to the commands of the Lord
- Now notice the four spokes - these are the 4 fundamental activities of spiritual growth
- These are the 4 Christian disciplines that you are to keep for your entire life as a Christian, this is how you will grow
- Vertical spokes - Your relationship with God
- Horizontal spokes - Your relationship with others
- Tonight we consider the discipline of prayer

I. Get Growing - Session 2 - Prayer

A. Prayer Basics

- Communication with God from a relationship with God
 - ▶ Now what is prayer?
 - ▶ It's direct communication with God, it's talking to God
 - ▶ As a Christian you have a personal relationship with God
 - ▶ You are a child in the family of God, God is your heavenly Father
 - ▶ As a child in the family of God, you have personal, direct access to God

- ▶ You can go directly to Him in prayer anytime you want
- ▶ You don't have to go through a pastor, you don't have to go through another Christian
- ▶ You don't have to go through a priest, you don't have to go through a saint, you don't have to go through Mary
- ▶ You have direct access to God
- ▶ And He always has time for you
- ▶ He's not out of the office, He never sleeps, He's never too busy helping other people out
- ▶ He is completely available to you, at any time
- ▶ My kids always have access to me, when they were little it didn't matter what I was doing, they had access to me
- ▶ You have access to the Living God
- ▶ Now that my friend is one of the greatest blessings of the Christian faith, you have access to the Living God, the Creator of the Universe, the All powerful, All Mighty Living God
- ▶ And Prayer is simply talking to Him, speaking to Him, having conversation with Him
- ▶ You do NOT have to have a special prayer voice, you do not have to use a special prayer vocabulary
- ▶ You can talk to Him just the way you talk, as you would talk to a best friend
- ▶ I love praying with brand new Christians
- ▶ I remember once hearing the prayer of a brand new Christian, "Dear God, I hope you are having a good day today"
- ▶ Just heart felt, honest, open, talking to God
- ▶ There is no special prayer posture required
- ▶ It does help to sort of bow your head and close your eyes and pray, helps to focus
- ▶ Sometimes it's good to actually get on you knees and pray
- ▶ You can pray standing up, you can pray with your arms raised, you can pray with your eyes open
- ▶ You can pray while jogging, while showering, while driving
- ▶ There is no set special prayer posture

- ▶ You go to the Lord and you pray, you talk to Him
- Content of Prayer
 - ▶ What is the content of our prayer? What do we pray about?
 - ▶ Everything! There is nothing outside the bounds of prayer
 - ▶ There is nothing too small for prayer, there is nothing too big for prayer, nothing is off limits when it comes to prayer

Philippians 4:6–7 (NKJV)

6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; 7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

- ▶ Pray about EVERYTHING
- ▶ Worship the Lord in prayer - tell the Lord how awesome He is
- ▶ Praise Songs - Prayers set to music
- ▶ Thanksgiving in prayer - Thank the Lord for all that He has done in your life, thank the Lord for all that He is doing in your life, thank the Lord for all that He will do in your life
- ▶ Remember to thank the Lord when He answers your prayers
- ▶ Supplications, make requests - personal needs, financial needs, health issues
- ▶ Where to go to school, where to work, whether or not to date someone
- ▶ Pray about how to deal with someone who is difficult to work with
- ▶ Tell the Lord your hurts, your pain, you struggle with loneliness
- ▶ Pour out your heart to the Lord
- ▶ Pray for your own spiritual health, ask the Lord to help you grow, to help you understand the word as you read it

- ▶ Confession - When you blow it ask the Lord to forgive you, ask the Lord to cleanse you
- ▶ Ask the Lord to help you in struggles that you are having, you can be detailed and intimate about these things with God, remember He already knows your heart
- ▶ Intercession - pray for others
- ▶ Pray for you spouse, pray for your children, pray for family members, pray for friends
- ▶ Pray for their physical and materialistic needs
- ▶ Pray for their spiritual needs, pray that unsaved family members would come to Christ
- ▶ Pray that family members who have fallen away from Christ would return
- ▶ Pray that family members would continue to grow in Christ
- ▶ Pray for the spiritual health of all the people in your life
- ▶ Pray for the folks you work with, pray for students in your class
- ▶ Pray for the church, the pastors, the leaders, the different ministries
- ▶ Pray for missionaries that are serving around the world
- ▶ Pray for folks in position of leaders: El Paso, Texas, the United States
- ▶ Pray for the nation
- ▶ Pray for the church world wide
- ▶ Pray that the gospel goes out world wide
- ▶ Share your life with the Lord in prayer, bring everything to Him in prayer

B. Different Prayer Formats

- Corporate Prayer
 - ▶ Ok now there are different prayer venues in our lives as Christians
 - ▶ We are to pray corporately, that is we are to pray with other Christians

- ▶ The early Christians in the early church prayed regularly together

Acts 1:14 (NKJV)

14 These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.

- ▶ We are commanded to pray for one another

James 5:16 (NKJV)

16 Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.

- ▶ Pray with your family
 - ▶ Pray with other Christians at church, prayer meetings
 - ▶ Corporate time of worship, worship songs are prayers set to music
 - ▶ Involved in a men's ministry, women's ministry, youth ministry, time to pray together
 - ▶ Grow in your prayer life that you will be able to pray out loud with other Christians
 - ▶ It's ok not to pray out loud, agree with the prayers that are being prayed out loud
 - ▶ Very important for Christians to pray together, corporately
- Personal Prayer - formal
 - ▶ But here is what I believe the most important venue for prayer is, the one that will cause great spiritual growth in your life
 - ▶ Personal Prayer in the prayer closet

Matthew 6:6 (NKJV)

6 But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.

- ▶ Personal Prayer in the prayer closet
- ▶ Daily times of personal prayer, where you intentionally pray
- ▶ The Quiet time: alone time with God, reading the Word and praying
- ▶ Discipline yourself to have daily meetings with God
- ▶ First thing in the morning is best, gets you ready for the day
- ▶ But I'm not going to be legalistic on that front at all
- ▶ Perhaps you can break away over lunch and spend time with the Lord
- ▶ Or maybe it's before you go to bed that works best for you
- ▶ Daily, regular, consistent prayer
- ▶ Make yourself a daily prayer journal
- ▶ Just a book filled with blank pages, pray and write out your prayers
- ▶ A prayer list
- ▶ Everyday - Closest family members
- ▶ Monday - folks at work
- ▶ Tuesday - folks in the neighborhood
- ▶ Make this journal yours
- ▶ Don't let the writing or the organization take away from what matters the most - prayer, spending time with the Lord in prayer
- ▶ You missed a morning, OH NO! Going to give up
- ▶ Just start the next day
- ▶ Don't make this a legalistic thing, enjoy the Lord, spend time with Him in prayer
- ▶ You will create a record of God answering your prayers
- ▶ I go back to journals from years ago and see amazing things happening
- ▶ There are also different models you can use as you pray
- ▶ ACTS
- ▶ The Lord's Prayer
- ▶ Something to just keep you focused
- ▶ You can also pray through Scripture as you read, something that I will give more detail about next week
- ▶ Now I am not at all wanting to make things complicated

- ▶ If you never started, perhaps it's just getting up and talking with God for 5 minutes
 - ▶ You will develop all this as you continue in it
 - ▶ You need that prayer time with the Lord
 - ▶ And then there's another very important venue for prayer
- Informal Prayer Continuously
 - ▶ I'm going to put up a verse that might freak you out a bit on first glance

1 Thessalonians 5:16–18 (NKJV)

16 Rejoice always, 17 pray without ceasing, 18 in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

- ▶ We are to pray without ceasing
- ▶ Really? Never stop praying? How am I supposed to study for school? How do I focus at work?
- ▶ What does this mean?
- ▶ Understand that you have and enjoy a relationship with God
- ▶ You have His Spirit within you
- ▶ He is always with you
- ▶ Live your life with an awareness of His presence and talk with Him throughout the day
- ▶ Live in the atmosphere of God, live in the atmosphere of prayer, relate everything back to God
- ▶ Studying for a test: under your breath, Lord please help me to understand this concept
- ▶ You are driving to work, an ambulance goes by: Lord, please help those in need right now and give those first responders wisdom and protection
- ▶ Somebody cuts you off, Lord please help me to be patient and gracious
- ▶ You see somebody hurting at work, a fellow employee: Lord, how can I minister that person right now

- ▶ Someone asks you a question about life: Lord, help to show your love and give good counsel
 - ▶ A temptation comes your way: Lord, help me to resist this temptation
 - ▶ Share life with the Lord, share the day with the Lord, include Him in your life, include Him in your day
 - ▶ Relate everything in life back to the Lord
 - ▶ You are walking through life with Him, include Him, your thoughts are always coming back to an awareness of His presence in your life
 - ▶ I often think of how awesome those disciples had it in the Gospels, they walked with Jesus for 3 and 1/2 years
 - ▶ Jesus walked with them through life, they ate together, they walked together, they ministered together, they did life together
 - ▶ Jesus is still wanting to walk with us through life
 - ▶ Morning prayer - formal time, make me sensitive to you all day today, kicks off the informal praying all day long
- Benefits of Prayer
 - ▶ There are so many benefits to prayer
 - ▶ Supernatural peace
 - ▶ Direction from the Lord, as you pray He will lead, He will give you the words to speak
 - ▶ Increases your dependence upon the Lord in all things
 - ▶ It will make you more sensitive to His presence with you
 - ▶ You will grow spiritually
 - ▶ You will get to know the Lord better and better and better
 - ▶ You will find Him to be the most faithful friend in your life
 - ▶ My test at NMSU
 - ▶ Driving Connor to Algood
 - ▶ The best part of prayer is spending time with the Lord, knowing Him, enjoying Him, loving Him

Conclusion

- Closing Prayer and Invitation