

A. PRAYER

- The Living & Active Word of God and prayer are the foundational elements of our abiding relationship with Jesus: John 15:7-8 ESV -- If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸ By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.
- These verses describe the pathway for knowing all 3 members of the Godhead (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) by abiding, the Word and prayer.
- When we bring the truths of the Word to the Lord in prayer, we are engaging with the God Who inhabits the Scriptures, making it not only personal but powerful.
- As we pray, wait and watch the Lord faithfully fulfill His Word, we begin to experience the Living and Active Word as more than just principles and promises.
- Prayers that are based on the truths of the Bible help us discover that God will not let us down and is worthy of our trust: Ps 119:16 AMP -- Uphold me according to Your word [of promise], so that I may live; And do not let me be ashamed of my hope [in Your great goodness].
- The Bible mentions several types of prayer: praise, petition, contrition, consecration, intercession and thanksgiving.
- The primary purpose of every category of prayer is for us to know God more deeply and to be transformed in His presence: 2 Cor 3:18 AMP -- All of us, as with unveiled face, [because we] continued to behold [in the Word of God] as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are constantly being transfigured into His *very own* image in ever increasing splendor *and* from one degree of glory to another; [for this comes] from the Lord [Who is] the Spirit.
- LISTENING EXERCISE:
Lord, help me to see my gut response to the topic of growing my prayer life:

Give me the courage to take an honest look at why that is my response:

- Insights:

B. PRESENCE

- We have the amazing gift of being invited into the very presence of God: Eph 3:12 NLT -- Because of Christ and our faith in him, we can now come boldly and confidently into God's presence.
- We can be sure that Jesus is always there to meet with us. (Rev 3:20) His presence is our "Secret Place" where we find safety, love and truth every time.

- In His holy presence our failures and sins become more readily apparent. We only need to see and agree with God about them to be made clean and new: Acts 3:19 NIV -- Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord
- Abiding in God's presence allows us to "pray without ceasing." (1 Thes 5:16) In this place of connection we can continually bring our hearts and our life circumstances to Him.
- Let's bring to Him everything that is in us and "on" us: 1 Pt 5:7 -- Casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.
- Notice the word "all" in the previous verse. It tells us that every hurt, worry, doubt, or weakness that weighs us down can be lifted up to God and left with Him.
- Here we find clarity instead of chaos or confusion and a quiet retreat from all the noise and other voices competing with God's truth.
- As we abide in God's Word and His presence, we gain a higher, more accurate perspective of whatever it is we are facing: Ps 36:7-9 NLT -- How precious is your unfailing love, O God! All humanity finds shelter in the shadow of your wings. ⁸ You feed them from the abundance of your own house, letting them drink from your river of delights. ⁹ For you are the fountain of life, the light by which we see.
- Insights:

C. PRACTICES

- When Jesus was teaching on prayer, He gave some practical instructions on how to enter into it: Matt 6:6 MSG -- Here's what I want you to do: Find a quiet, secluded place so you won't be tempted to role-play before God. Just be there as simply and honestly as you can manage. The focus will shift from you to God, and you will begin to sense his grace.
- Location: A private and quiet spot is the perfect place to pray. It helps us to still our minds and allows us to be fully present to the Lord: Zech 2:13 -- Everyone, be silent! The LORD is present and moving in his holy place.
- As we practice abiding, we begin to cultivate a quiet place within our hearts and learn to pray wherever we are by shifting our focus onto Jesus: Heb 12:2a AMP -- Looking away [from all that will distract] to Jesus
- When we turn our attention to listen to Jesus, seeking help for the issue before us, He will impart truth to us by His Word and the Spirit: John 16:13-14 NAS -- But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. ¹⁴ He will glorify Me, for He will take from Mine and will disclose *it* to you.
- Caution: Jesus' teaching on prayer included cautions about 1) counting on vain repetition vs. praying in faith and 2) praying with wrong motives: Matt 6:5, 7 NLT -- When you pray, don't be like the hypocrites who love to pray publicly on street corners and in the synagogues where everyone can see them. I tell you the truth, that is all the reward they will ever get...⁷ "When you pray, don't babble on and on as the Gentiles do. They think their prayers are answered merely by repeating their words again and again

- Remember that it's faith that pleases Him. Praying God's Word back to Him bolsters our faith because we know that our request has its origins in His truth.
 - He warned us of the motive of praying to look good before others. However, this in no way should inhibit us from praying aloud in public: 1 Tim 2:8 NLT -- In every place of worship, I want men to pray with holy hands lifted up to God
 - Practicing prayer with likeminded people is encouraged in the Word. It is beneficial as a means of ministry and to grow us in vulnerability: James 5:16 NLT -- Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results.
 - Focus: When uncertain of what prayer to offer, find verses that show the different aspects of God's character. Pray to know Him more in your present circumstance: Phil 3:10 AMP -- [For my determined purpose is] that I may know Him [that I may progressively become more deeply and intimately acquainted with Him, perceiving and recognizing and understanding the wonders of His Person more strongly and more clearly], and that I may in that same way come to know the power outflowing from His resurrection [which it exerts over believers], and that I may so share His sufferings as to be continually transformed [in spirit into His likeness]
 - Examples of Scripture that we can pray to help us know God's nature include:
 - 1) Times God speaks of Himself (Ex: Exod 34:6-7)
 - 2) The way He interacts with people in the Bible (Ex: Gen 28:13-15)
 - 3) The names of God (See handout "Tools & Techniques: Calling on the Name of the Lord")
 - No matter how difficult, complicated or unique your situation might be, we can bring it to the Lord and ask Him to move on our behalf: Jonah 2:1-4, 8-10 NIV -- From inside the fish Jonah prayed to the LORD his God. He said: "In my distress I called to the LORD, and he answered me. From deep in the realm of the dead I called for help and you listened to my cry. You hurled me into the depths, into the very heart of the seas, and the currents swirled about me; all your waves and breakers swept over me. I said, 'I have been banished from your sight; yet I will look again toward your holy temple.'... When my life was ebbing away, I remembered you, LORD, and my prayer rose to you, to your holy temple. "Those who cling to worthless idols turn away from God's love for them. But I, with shouts of grateful praise, will sacrifice to you. What I have vowed I will make good. I will say, 'Salvation comes from the LORD.'" And the LORD commanded the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land.
 - LISTENING EXERCISE:
Oh Lord, you tell us that "we have not because we ask not." (James 4:2) *Show me what You'd have me to bring to you today to ask, watch and wait on You to intervene:*
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- Insights:

D. PERSONAL APPLICATION

- ONE THING

The One Thing that I'd like to take away from today's class and believe God to accomplish in my life is:

- PONDER THE TRUTH

Which verse or principle stood out to you this week? Write it below taking some time to review it often. Be still in God's presence, alert for new insights. Record them here.

- PROCESSING THE TRUTH

Prayerfully consider the Listening Exercises from this lesson. Ask the Spirit to guide you into a deeper understanding of the truth and to reveal any specific faith steps He is calling you to take. Write down your insights.