

A. PERSON OF PRAYER

- Paul learned value of prayer from intense study of Scripture. Those who knew God well and lived large for Him were people who leaned into prayer:
 - Moses: Ex 33:11-- The Lord spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend.
 - Nehemiah: Neh 1:6 NLT-- Let Your ear be attentive and Your eyes open, that You may hear the prayer of Your servant which I pray before You now, day and night
 - Daniel: Dan 6:10-- He knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days.
 - David: Ps 27:4 NLT-- The one thing I ask of the Lord— the thing I seek most— is to live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, delighting in the Lord’s perfections and meditating in his Temple.
- However, many of God’s people practice prayer out of imitation and duty. But, apart from the indwelling Spirit, their prayers are devoid of power: 2 Tim 3:5 AMP-- For [although] they hold a form of piety (true religion), they deny *and* reject *and* are strangers to the power of it [their conduct belies the genuineness of their profession].
- Acts records the first thing Paul does after meeting Jesus on the Damascus Road as he waited for his “Next Right Thing:” Acts 9:11 b KJV—Behold, he prayeth.
- Paul had a good foundation for a vital prayer life:
 - Desire to know Jesus more
 - Love for and grasp of the principles of God’s written word
 - Acquaintance with how God answers prayer in Scripture
 - Time for prayer was a priority and habit
 - Humility that displaces self-reliance
 - Awareness of his great need for God to “make (his) paths straight” (Pr 3:6)
- LISTENING EXERCISE:
Please point out which of these foundations for prayer are true of me:

Now I ask that You would highlight one of these foundations that, if developed, would best enable me to grow as a person of prayer:

- In the 3 years following his conversion, Paul devoted himself to prayer. Through that time in God’s presence he was transformed as he came to know the Lord intimately.
- He writes a prayer for believers that they might experience the same richness of life in Christ that he had found: Eph 1:17-20 AMP -- [For I always pray to] the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, that He may grant you a spirit of wisdom and revelation [of insight into mysteries and secrets] in the [deep and intimate] knowledge of Him, ¹⁸ By having the eyes of your heart flooded with light, so that you can know *and* understand the hope to which He has called you, and how rich is His glorious inheritance in the saints (His set-apart ones), ¹⁹ And [so that you can know and understand] what is the immeasurable *and* unlimited *and* surpassing greatness of His power in *and* for us who believe, as demonstrated in the working of His mighty strength, ²⁰ Which He exerted in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His [own] right hand in the heavenly [places],
- “The prayer of Ephesians 1:17-19 is essentially a request that the promises of Ephesians 1:3-14 be found as real” in the lives of his readers. (David Guzik)

- Insights:

B. PURPOSE OF PRAYER

- Paul's own life purpose is expressed in this prayer. He states and then restates his desire – that believers would have an intimate knowledge of God. (Phil 3:10, Eph 1:17-18)
- Prayer is where we get to know the Lord and where our relationship with Him grows. We learn to feel at home in His presence and develop a dialogue with Him there.
- Jesus knocks on the door of our hearts to fellowship with us. (Rev 3:20) He desires for us to do the same with Him: Mt 7:7--Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.
- “Prayer is one of the best tools we have for opening up our lives and letting (God) know He's welcome.” (Marissa Baker)
- The Lord already knows our details, desires, and needs without our prayers. But He wants us to ask in prayer that our relationship might flourish: Jn 16:24-- Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.
- When we turn our attention toward God's presence and pray we have the incredible, supernatural blessing of receiving His wisdom, insight and revelation!
- The Lord gives wisdom and revelation to enhance our walk with Him:
 - Wisdom—the God-given ability to apply the knowledge of God's will to life's situations and to perceive reality accurately; true insight into known facts (Strong's 4678)
 - Revelation—uncover or expose that which was previously not visible or known; imparting knowledge that was kept secret beforehand (Strong's 602)
- The Greek word for “knowledge” used by Paul is what is commonly called “heart knowledge” which comes by experiencing God vs. gaining information. (Strong's 1922)
- LISTENING EXERCISE:
Spirit please reveal how well I know you – a) know about You, b) know You as an acquaintance, c) growing in friendship with You, d) deep and intimate knowledge:

I pray for a desire to know You more, Lord. Please show me at least one practical way to pursue a deeper and more intimate relationship with You:

- We are able to communicate with God because of the Spirit within. We will grow in our ability to connect as we practice prayer and stay tuned into His presence.
- The Spirit of wisdom and revelation expresses God's thoughts to us using:
 - The Scriptures: Ps 19:7 NIV--The law of the Lord is perfect, refreshing the soul. The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple.

- Many creative means (e.g. people, nature, and inner peace): Pr 33:14-- For God may speak in one way, or in another, yet *man* does not perceive it.]
- God's communication with us will always be in keeping with biblical truth.
- Refer to the handout "Tools & Techniques: Listening to God" for biblical support and strategies that will assist you in honing your spiritual communication skills.
- Insights:

C. POWER OF PRAYER

- Paul uses light to describe the incredible power that the Spirit of wisdom and revelation makes available to us.
- Light conveys the very nature and character of God:
 - 1 Jn 1:5-- God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.
 - Ps 27:1 NLT-- The Lord is my light and my salvation— so why should I be afraid?
 - Ps 139:12 NLT-- Even in darkness I cannot hide from you. To you the night shines as bright as day. Darkness and light are the same to you.
 - 2 Cor 4:6 NAS-- For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.
- The Father demonstrates His power over darkness in His first act of creation. (Gen 1:2) The Son likewise displays His power by restoring sight to many blind people.
- Jesus, empowered by the Spirit, stated His intended plan to bring many out of physical and spiritual darkness: Lk 4:18-19 ERV-- The Spirit of the Lord is on me. He has chosen me to tell good news to the poor. He sent me to tell prisoners that they are free and to tell the blind that they can see again. He sent me to free those who have been treated badly and to announce that the time has come for the Lord to show his kindness.
- Paul himself experienced the Light and the way it overcame his pride and false hope. The Light opened his eyes to the true meaning of Scripture and its Author.
- He asks for Light to flood the eyes of our heart so that we might know that power:
 - Power to walk in light: Eph 5:8 JBP-- Live then as children of the light. The light produces in men...everything that is wholesome and good and true.
 - Power to see darkness hiding in our lives: Eph 5:13-14 NLT-- Evil intentions will be exposed when the light shines on them, for the light makes everything visible.
 - Power to understand spiritual truth: Ps 119:130 AMP-- The unfolding of Your [glorious] words give light; Their unfolding gives understanding to the simple (childlike).
 - Power to connect with God's plans for us: Ps 119:105 MSG-- By your words I can see where I'm going; they throw a beam of light on my dark path
 - Power to lean on when confused or weak: Ps 18:28-- You, Lord, keep my lamp burning; my God turns my darkness into light.
- Paul wants believers to know and apprehend all that is ours in Christ: Eph 1:18 JBP-- That you may receive that inner illumination of the Spirit which will make you realize how great is the hope to which he is calling you—the magnificence and splendor of the inheritance promised to Christians—and how tremendous is the power available to us who believe in God.
- This prayer in Ephesians 1 asks for what God has already stated is His will for us.

- Petitioning God to fulfill what He's promised serves as a model for our own prayers: 1 Jn 5:14-15 NAS-- This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us *in* whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.
- Jesus is the Light and He has promised to never leave us or forsake us. May we come to believe and know Him deeply as we learn to lean on Him in prayer.
- 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 stood out to you this week? Write it out below and take some time to review it often. Be still and expectant in God's presence, alert for new insights. Write it down.

- PRAYER

Take your One Thing and your verse and turn them into a prayer:

"Lord, where do You want to apply these truths to my particular life circumstances?" How?

- PRAISE

Praising God in song helps you engage your emotions, taking truth from head to heart.

PROCESSING THE TRUTH

Prayerfully consider these questions, asking the Spirit to guide you into a deeper understanding of the truth and to reveal His pathway for growth. Keep a written record.

Person of Prayer

- Think about the foundations for a vital prayer life:
 - Desire to know Jesus more
 - Love for and grasp of the principles of God's written word
 - Acquaintance with how God answers prayer in Scripture
 - Time for prayer was a priority and habit
 - Humility that displaces self-reliance
 - Awareness of his great need for God to "make (his) paths straight" (Pr 3:6)
- Reflect on the items on the list above. Instead of resolving to do better or try harder, pray! Ask the Lord to make these things true of your heart in ever increasing measure. Becoming a person of prayer takes time and practice. Thoughts:
 - Make room for relationship with Jesus through prayer by taking some practical, faith steps. Here are a few suggestions to prayerfully implement:
 - Choose a time of day to set aside for prayer. Start with short increments at first (10 -15 minutes). Try this time for a week or two. Change to a different time if necessary:
 - Choose a place to pray. Go for somewhere that is available and relatively undisturbed at your chosen time slot. Having a consistent environment reduces distractions and sets the tone for prayer.
 - Record and date your prayers. Leave room to note answers when they come. Seeing God respond to your prayers will bolster your confidence and faith.
 - Consider telling the members of your household about your set aside prayer time. Ask them to honor your privacy and also ask them how you can pray for them. 😊
 - Take a look at the "Listening to God" page. Take note of any of the principles or suggestions where you are uncertain or have questions. Address these in prayer and/or discuss them with your leader.

Purpose of Prayer

- Jesus wants to fellowship with you.
 - *Will you seek, ask and knock in prayer for the sake of knowing Him more?*

- *If you are hesitant to bring your needs and desire to Him, ask Him to search your heart and mind for the source of your hesitancy.*

- Take the answer to the previous question and be open and honest with the Lord about your insecurities surrounding prayer. This could be a place that would benefit from processing with our listening prayer steps (listed below).

Power of Prayer

- Scripture provides us with an endless supply of prayers. Turn any principle or promise into a prayer knowing that it's consistent with God's word and will: 1 Jn 5:14-15 NAS-- This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us *in* whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.
- Use the handout "Tools & Techniques: Spiritual Blessings" as a starting place for asking. The blessings listed are promises to stand on. Pray them back to God with expectancy.
- Practice Listening Prayer, following these 4 basic steps:
 1. *"Help me, Father, identify my most predominant feelings around this situation:"*
Get in touch with these emotions and be present to them as you come to God in prayer.
 2. *"Lord, please bring to my mind a time when I felt these same feelings."* It can be a:
 - Specific memory
 - Environment that you experienced over and over in the past
 - Symbolic mental picture
 - Persistent feelings with no memory attached
 3. *"Holy Spirit, I ask you to show me what is the message I came to believe at this time?"*
 4. *"Jesus, what is the truth here?"*
- Come back again and again to the truths you're learning. Continue in it until your triggers diminish in power and your heart grows more and more full of God's love and blessings.