

**Prayer**  
Session 2 – Petitions  
January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2009

I. Why do we pray?

- It is a commandment from God
  - a. **Jeremiah 33:3** - 'Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.'
  - b. **Jeremiah 29:12-13** - Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. **13** And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.
  - c. **Matthew 26:41** – “Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed *is* willing, but the flesh *is* weak.”
  - d. **Philippians 4:6** - Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God
  - e. **1 Thessalonians 5:17** - pray without ceasing
- Jesus and the early church did it
  - a. **Mark 1:35** - Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed.
  - b. **Acts 1:14** - These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.
  - c. **Acts 2:42** - And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.
- To grow in our relationship with God and learn more about Him
  - a. **Zechariah 13:9** - I will bring the *one-third* through the fire, Will refine them as silver is refined, And test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, And I will answer them. I will say, 'This *is* My people'; And each one will say, 'The LORD *is* my God.'”
- We need help!
  - a. **Hebrews 4:16** - Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.
- To intercede for others
  - a. **1 Timothy 2:1** - Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, *and* giving of thanks be made for all men
- To worship God
  - a. **Psalm 95:1-2** - Oh come, let us sing to the LORD! Let us shout joyfully to the Rock of our salvation. **2** Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving; Let us shout joyfully to Him with psalms.
- Because we desire to!
  - a. **Psalm 42:1-2; Psalm 84:2**

## II. The Desire

- Do you honestly **desire** to pray? Do you ever think at any time during your day, “I can’t wait to go to my Father and talk to Him?”
- If you struggle with this, you are not alone! We **all** struggle with this. If you are a Christian, I am sure you can remember a time when you couldn’t wait to talk to God. But how easy it is to become legalistic!
- Do any of these sound familiar?
  - a. “Lately, a lot of my prayers sound the same”
  - b. “Another meal. I better pray and thank God for it”
  - c. “I don’t have much of a desire to pray right now, but I’ll try to pray anyway”
  - d. “I pray every night at 8pm and every morning at 6am”

So how can we get the **desire** back?

### **John 15:1-5** (read together)

- Every tree has branches. How do those branches bear fruit? Do they have to work at it? No. They just “hang in there.” They stay attached to the vine and they naturally bear fruit.
- The same goes for us. We cannot grow in our prayer life unless we abide in Jesus. Prayer comes naturally as long as we abide in the Lord.
- Without the Lord, we can do nothing!

What does it mean to “**abide**?”

- Dictionary definition: to remain; continue; stay. To have one’s abode; dwell; reside. To continue in a particular condition, attitude, relationship
- Greek definition: *meno* – to stay (in a given place, state, relation, or expectancy): Abide, continue, dwell, endure, be present, remain, stand, tarry
- Abiding means continuing in your faith in Jesus, proving that your faith is real. The true believer abides. The non-believer eventually will depart. We are not saved by abiding. Rather, by abiding, it *shows* that we are saved.
- Cling closely to the Lord Jesus and His Word! Stay attached to the vine! You will naturally desire to run to Him and pray to Him more and more! He will show you amazing things. He will give you new desires. You will want what He wants!

**John 15:7** – If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, **you will ask** what you desire, and it shall be done for you.

- Notice, he specifically says that if you abide in Him, you will ask! You will naturally pray and ask the Lord for things that enable you to do more.

But then there is the flip side:

**John 15:6** - If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw *them* into the fire, and they are burned.

- If you do not cling closely to Jesus, you will pray less and less. You will not bear fruit. Without Jesus, we are useless! We can do *nothing* without Jesus.

There is another important part to this:

**John 15:2** - Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every *branch* that bears fruit He **prunes**, that it may **bear more fruit**.

Jesus says something interesting here. What does he mean by “**prune?**”

- Dictionary definition: To cut off or remove dead or living parts or branches of (a plant, for example) to improve shape or growth. To remove or cut out as superfluous.
- Greek definition: *Kathairo* – to cleanse, that is, (specifically) to prune
- When we start producing fruit, God will start cutting away the “excess stuff” in our life in order that we bear even more fruit!
  - “But cutting away things will hurt!” Yes it will. But it is how the Lord grows us in prayer and thus in our relationship with Him and in our walk.
- Is there something in your life that the Lord has His hand on? Is he trying to “cut something away?” If so, let Him do it! He has your absolute **best** interest in mind! Cling to Him as He does it and watch how much more fruit He will produce in your life!

**John 15:5** - “I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, **bears much fruit**; for without Me you can do nothing.”

**John 15:8** - By this My Father is glorified, that you **bear much fruit**; so you will be My disciples.

- God wants us to bear more and more fruit. If we cling to those things in the world rather than Him, we will be hindered. We will stop growing and we will be less effective in prayer.

## II. Effective Petitioning

- As Christians, we are pretty good at asking God for things, but what makes our petitions effective?
  - Humility
    - **2 Chronicles 7:14** - if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.
  - Not “lip service”
    - **Matthew 6:7** - And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen *do*. For they think that they will be heard for their many words.
  - Trusting in the Lord
    - **Psalms 55:22** - Cast your burden on the LORD, And He shall sustain you; He shall never permit the righteous to be moved.
  - By the power of the Holy Spirit
    - **Romans 8:26** - Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.
  - Through Jesus Christ
    - **Hebrews 7:25** - Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.
    - **Hebrews 12:24** – to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than *that of* Abel.
    - **Colossians 2:13-14** – (read together)
  - By Faith – of course He will answer!
    - **Matthew 21:22** - And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive
    - **Hebrews 11:6** - But without faith *it is* impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and *that* He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.
    - **James 1:6-7** - But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. **7** For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord
    - **Jeremiah 33:3** - ‘Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.’
      - He will answer!
  - Obedience
    - **Psalms 27:8** - *When You said*, “Seek My face,” My heart said to You, “Your face, LORD, I will seek.”
    - **Isaiah 45:11** - “Ask Me of things to come concerning My sons; And concerning the work of My hands, you command Me.”

- Claiming God's promises
  - **Matthew 7:7** - "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you."
- Shared desire with God
  - **Philippians 2:13** - for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for *His* good pleasure.
- Persistence and earnestness
  - **Luke 18:1-8** (read together)
  - **Daniel 9:3** - Then I set my face toward the Lord God to make request by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes.
    - Daniel set his face toward the Lord – resolute, firm determination, earnest desire for what he is asking for
- Above all else, asking for God's will to be done
  - **Matthew 26:39** - He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You *will*."