

Paradigm Discipleship

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The purpose of this resource is to provide some guidance for you as you encourage your disciple to develop a strong devotional relationship with God.

The following resource is a guide that provides some basic structure to developing a study on the concept of “Prayer”.

We encourage you to do your own study, using this resource as a guide, to develop a learning experience for you and your disciple that will help you both move deeper in your understanding and experience of interacting with a God who desires a deep, intimate relationship with you.

PRAYER

Opening question: What do you think most people are talking about when they refer to prayer or praying?

- *Affirm any answers that connect to the concept of relating to God.
- *Most answers will be along the lines of some kind of “cry for help in times of stress” object for prayer.
- *The aim of this study is to help your disciple truly believe that he or she can freely interact with God as a child would his mom or dad, and that through that interaction develop a meaningful, interactive and obedient relationship with God.

Follow up question: What do **YOU** think prayer is?

- *Be sure that a proper view of prayer is discussed.
 - *Possible good responses or views that you should bring up:
 - *Developing a relationship with God.
 - *Connecting with God.
 - *Talking **AND** listening; connecting to **His** will for your life; being present with God to the point of being willing to sit in silence with Him.
 - *Possible descriptions of prayer:
 - *Reverent
 - Ecclesiastes 5:1-3
 - *Communication as His Child/childlike faith in God
 - Romans 8:14-17; Matthew 18:3-4; Ephesians 1:5-6
- *A helpful acrostic for prayer – developed from Jesus’ model prayer in the gospels:
 - *(**A.C.T.S.**)
 - A**doration – worship/awe for who He is/delight in who He is
 - C**onfession – recognizing our sin/agreeing with God when conviction comes
 - T**hanksgiving – thanking God for His mercy/recognizing all things are from Him
 - S**upplication – asking God for our needs and the needs of others

Study Question: What should we ask for in prayer? Can we ask for anything?

- *This is a key concept for intercessory prayer. Some verses, like Matthew 21:22, seem to indicate that, as long as we truly believe it, we can get anything and everything we want.
 - *It would be a good idea to bring up Matthew 21:22
 - *If you do bring it up ask the following Study Question

Study Question: Does Matthew 21:22 mean that as long as we have the faith to believe, we can expect to receive anything we ask for?

- *Be sure to ask them to back up their answers with scripture
- *If they say “no”, which is very close to the correct answer, challenge them to give you evidence, because this verse seems to be pretty straight forward.

Look up John 15:7 & 1 John 5:14-15 together.

Study Question: According to these passages, what seems to be the criteria for being heard in prayer and receiving answers to prayer?

*Here we see a further developed concept of intercessory prayer: namely that we are to ask for things, for ourselves and others, that are according to God's will; things that come to heart and mind as we are living (abiding) in Jesus and according to His Word.

Revisit Matthew 21:22. Question: In light of the new evidence from John 15 and 1 John 5, how do you see this verse in Matthew?

*Hint: how can we truly "believe" that we will receive something unless we are confident that it is the Lord's will?

*If we really want a new car, and we are trying to generate the belief that God wants us to have it, then we will be sorely disappointed as we try to "pray in faith" for a new car.

*BUT, if we believe that we have heard from the LORD, through our intimate, devotional relationship with Him, that He is going to provide a new car for us, we can pray in faith that God has a plan for us that includes a new car. (Obviously a bit of a silly, extreme example.)

Habits to Develop a Strong Relationship with God

*Read this quote from A.W. Tozer's book The Pursuit of God:

"We have almost forgotten that God is a person and, as such, can be cultivated as any person can. It is inherent in personality to be able to know other personalities, but full knowledge of one personality by another cannot be achieved in one encounter. It is only after long and loving mental intercourse that the full possibilities of both can be explored."

*Habits:

*Pray **while** reading the Bible

*As you begin reading, ask for insight & to be drawn closer to Him.

*While you read, ask good questions of God and see if He doesn't reveal deeper truths.

*After you read, ask for courage and wisdom to obey the Word.

*As you go – pray

*Develop the habit of turning your internal dialog into conversations with God throughout your day.

*Instant obedience to promptings of Holy Spirit

*You will only go deeper in your relationship with God as you are willing to follow His direction in your life.

*Acknowledge God in daily needs

*Praying in thanks for food is a good example that can be neglected, but it can also be done legalistically; the key is the heart attitude in the practice.

*Fasting and other forms of focused attention on God.

*Spiritual Retreats – examples:

*Afternoon of focused prayer

*Hour (or other small increment of time) of silence on a regular basis

*Regular meditation on God and/or His Word

*Getting away for a whole day or several days to do multiple things (pray, read, meditate, etc)

*Daily time of secluding yourself with your Bible to focus on your relationship with God. (Some refer to this as a "Quiet Time")