

GROW

AN SMBS SERIES

Lesson 10 – The Right Means: Prayer



Many Christians struggle with *how* to pray and study their Bibles, but for fear of others never get help. The result is that they silently struggle, too proud to admit their need and get help. So I'll say it. Praying is hard work, and knowing how to pray well isn't always obvious. It's easy on one hand: just talk to God. It's hard on the other hand: my flesh hates going to God, and I don't know what to talk about, and sometimes I feel like I'm just talking to myself, or repeating the same words over and over, and I don't always see how prayer is making a difference. The disciples felt this way. They wanted to pray, but didn't know how. So when they heard Christ pray, they finally asked him "Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1). If Peter, James, and John needed Christ to teach them how to pray, how much more do we? Fortunately, Scripture contains much instruction on how and what to pray for.

THE _____ OF PRAYER

1. Prayer provides _____ to God (1 Peter 3:18)

Christ didn't just save us to save us, and God doesn't change us just to change us. Both our salvation and our sanctification have a goal in mind: a restored relationship with our Creator.

2. Prayer provides _____ (Hebrews 4:16).

God gives us the grace – strength – we need to avoid temptation, while also encourages us to avoid temptation at all costs (Matthew 5:13, 1 Corinthians 10:13).

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3. Prayer provides _____ (James 1:5-8).

Growth takes wisdom, as James shows by transition from the theme of growth to the theme of wisdom. Fortunately, God promises to give wisdom to those who ask in faith.

THE _____ OF PRAYER

1. **Pray _____** – pray should be more than just asking requests, it should praise our Creator.
2. **Pray _____** – while God invites intimacy, we must never forget that we are approaching our Creator before whom we should tremble (Ecclesiastes 5:2).
3. **Pray _____** – praying thoughtfully requires focus and effort, avoiding the trap of repeating words mindlessly (Matthew 6:7-8).

THE _____ OF PRAYER

1. **Pray _____** – following the patterns of Spirit-inspired examples of prayer will enrich your own personal prayer life.
2. **Pray _____** – set up a plan for regular and consistent time in God's Word and in prayer.
3. **Pray _____** – have a list of requests that you work through daily or weekly.

Perhaps one of the biggest takeaways from this lesson is the need to get better at praying. Prayer is a skill, and can and should be improved upon. Read Scripture about prayer, listen to preaching on prayer, and read good books on prayer. And pray. Pray quick prayers. Pray longer prayers. Pray through Scripture. Pray through lists. Thank God. Confess sin. Pray for yourself. Pray for others. Become a person of prayer and you will find that you are a person who grows.

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