

Prayer Worksheet #1

Monday: When we pray, Jesus Christ is our Mediator.

Hebrews 4:14-16, *"Seeing that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in our time of need."*

A mediator bridges gaps between adversaries. Jesus as our mediator intercedes on our behalf before God. Jesus is not only God on the other side of the chasm of sin but the bridge back to God, his house, table and family across that chasm.

Thank Jesus for preparing the way for you to come into God's presence when you pray today.

How does the fact that Jesus was tempted in every way that you are yet without sin make you feel as you come to him?

Does it change how you pray?

Tuesday: Pray in Jesus name!

This is about qualification and access. When I was in college, I was able to fish in a restricted private lake. That happened because my good friend was the nephew of the owner of the estate, Gordon Hanes Jr., President of the Hanes Hosiery empire. Knowing Frank got me into the estate. Jesus taught his disciples that we must always pray in his name. (Read John 14:13-14; 15:16; 16:23-24) When we pray in Jesus name we recognize that the only approach to God is through Jesus himself. Paul says, "Through him (Christ) we both have access to the Father by the one Spirit."

When you pray today, rejoice in your access to God, the Father, through Jesus!

Because we are in Jesus, God focuses his attention and love on us. As you pray confess your unworthiness for that love and attention and give thanks that God loves you this much.

Wednesday: What we don't pray for...character change in me.

It is hard to pray for this because we are confident that God will answer this prayer but we are afraid of the consequences. If you pray for humility God will humble you. If you pray for patience God will bring difficult circumstances or suffering into your life. It is frightening to take this risk. So, we don't pray. What character change do you need to begin to pray for?

We also fail to pray for change in ourselves because we don't want to admit that we need to change. Let's say you pray, Lord, I am so irritable today: could you help me to be kind? To pray this, you need to stop being irritable long enough to confess your grumpiness both to yourself and God but also to those whom your irritability can hurt.

Remember, because of Jesus you can start any day over again, right now. Whatever you ask in Jesus' name opens the door to hope and real change!

Thursday: Prayer helps us to be intimate with God and honest with ourselves.

Humility: Have you looked down on anyone today? Have you been stung by the criticism of others? Pray over Jesus sacrifice for you until you sense your anger decreasing since you are a sinner too. Reflect on the grace that Jesus freely gave you, until your pain over criticism lessens, since you shouldn't value human approval over God's love.

Dedication: Have you avoided tasks or people that you know you should face? Have you been anxious or worried? Have you been impulsive? Consider God's love shown in Jesus Christ until there is no avoidance of hard things. Jesus faced pain, evil and even death for you out of love for you. Reflect on God's concern for you that is greater than the flowers of the field or the sparrows of the air, until there is no anxious or impulsive behavior since

Jesus death and resurrection proves that God cares, will watch over me and empower me to live new.

Sacrificial love: Have I spoken or thought unkindly of anyone? Have I been self-absorbed or inattentive to the people around me? Read John 3:16-17 until the knowledge and price of God's love removes any coldness or unkindness toward others, and any inattention or indifference toward them. Plug in **your name** for the words 'the world' to better bring this truth home to you.

Friday: What we don't prayer for: change in our culture!

We often don't pray for change in our culture because we think that it is too difficult. We also fail to pray because we know that when we pray things begin to change and part of that change happens in our hearts and minds. As we pray consistently for something our heart begins to be reshaped to reflect God's heart, mind and will. We are afraid that like Nehemiah praying for ruined Jerusalem, we might be the answer to our own prayer. Prayers for the issues before you will become a central part of your life, sometimes in ways that you never imagined.

I was concerned for congregations going through pastoral transitions. I began to work and pray with friends that God would provide a solution for this issue. In February of 2017, I attended and was part of the first EPC Transitional Pastor Training Event held of all places, at Tabernacle in Youngstown. Meanwhile God was at work and in May of 2018, I became a piece of the solution as I became their Transitional Pastor.

Saturday: What we don't pray for: change in others!

We rarely pray for those we love when it comes to their deeply rooted sins. We fail to pray because we believe it is either hopeless (change is hard) or it feels too controlling to us. The point of prayer is to shift the control from us to God. After all, God knows sin is the root issue expressed in the hurtful behavior of someone we love. It is a failure

to trust God's goodness and love. It is a rebellion against His authority. God has the power, wisdom and grace to handle the issue in a manner that heals and restores.

For someone else to believe the Gospel, you must become the Gospel. If someone we love is to become like Jesus, they may need to see Jesus in us. This requires that we be patiently sacrificial towards them as we pray for them. Who do you need to lift into your Father's loving, grace-filled presence, so that Christ-like change can begin to take place in both of you?

Sunday: Why Jesus needed to pray.

a. His identity was dependent upon it. Whenever Jesus talks about his relationship with his Father, he becomes dependent and child-like. "The Son can do nothing of his own accord." (John 5:19) So when he tells us to become like little children, he tells us to do what he does. He wants us to remember that alone we lack the resources for heavenly life. But as Ephesians 3:19-20 reminds us when we are connected to him we can do *"more than we can ask or imagine."*

b. Jesus has a one person focus. When he is with someone, that person is the only person in the room. This one person focus is how love works. Love concentrates on the beloved. In John 5, when Jesus goes to the pool of Bethesda he notices the masses but he **sees** the lame man.

c. Jesus' has been in relationship with God for all of eternity. So, he chooses to be away from people at times to be with his heavenly Father. He practices Matthew 6:6 and prays in private. There is a pattern to his life of prayer and work, prayer and study, prayer and teaching, and of prayer and daily life. He models for us what life was intended to look like as a disciple walks with God through life..