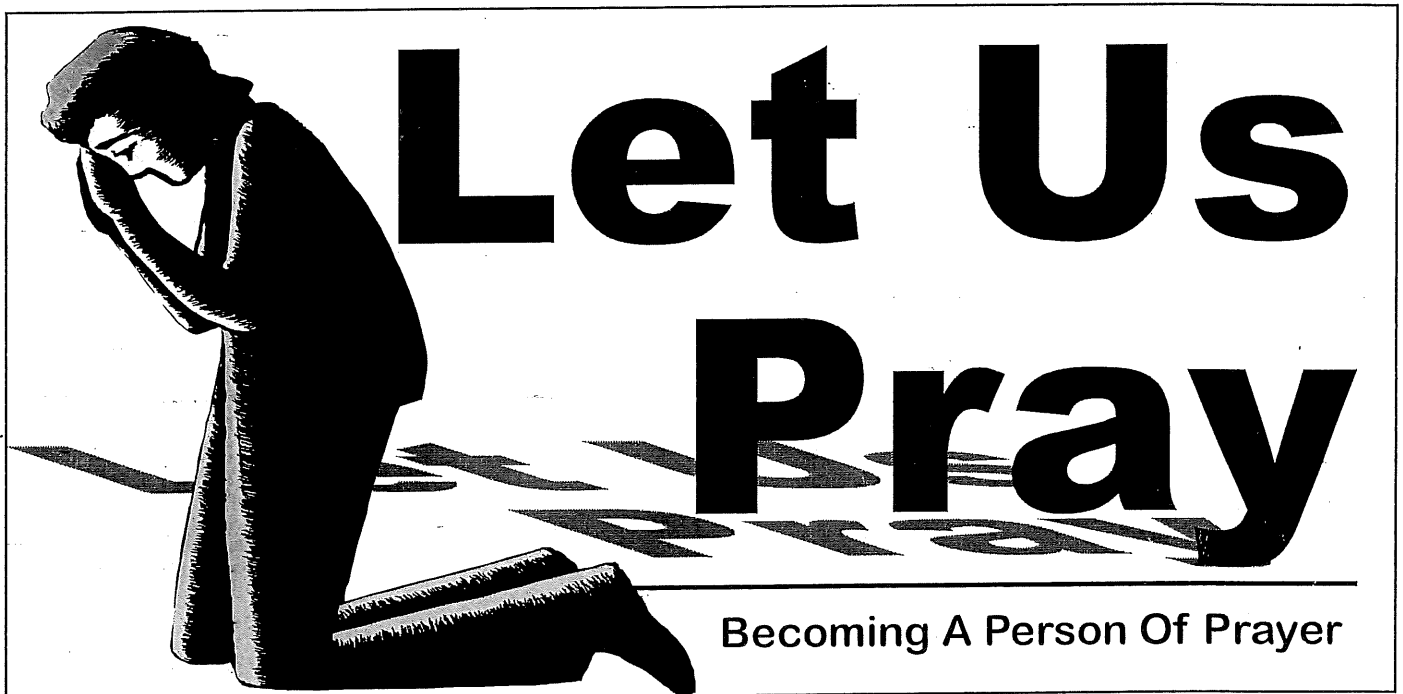


Annual Myrtle Beach Bible Study Retreat

January 23-25, 2003

Beach Colony Resort
Myrtle Beach, South Carolina



A Bible Study By:

Dr. Richard Wilson

Rev. Charles Wilson

Dr. Larry Scott

Dr. Ernie Hack

Rev. Ed Wilkes

Rev. Richard Sanders

Myrtle Beach Bible Study Retreat
January 23-25, 2003
Let Us Pray: Becoming A Person Of Prayer

Thursday Evening

6:30 PM

Welcome
Worship
Theme Interpretation- "Time For Prayer", Dr. Richard Wilson
Lesson 1- "A Lesson In How To Pray", Dr. Ernie Hack
Lesson 2- "Hindrances to Answered Prayer", Rev. Charles Wilson
Lesson 3- "Agreeing With God About Our Sin", Dr. Richard Wilson
Worship

Friday Morning

8:30 AM

Worship
Lesson 4- "Prayer of Thanksgiving", Rev. Ed Wilkes
Lesson 5- "Praying God's Word", Mrs. Kristi Wilson
Lesson 6- "Praying When Imprisoned", Dr. Ernie Hack
Lesson 7- "Praying for the Lost", Rev. Charles Wilson

Friday Evening

7:00 PM

Worship
Lesson 8- "The Sin of Prayerlessness Revealed", Rev. Richard Sanders
Lesson 9- "Getting to the Heart of the Matter", Dr. Larry Scott
Worship

Saturday Morning

8:15 AM

Worship
Lesson 10- "Prayer and Fasting", Rev. Charles Wilson
Lesson 11- "So Where Do I Go From Here?", Dr. Larry Scott
Lesson 12- "The All Day Prayer", Dr. Richard Wilson
Conclusion

Breaks will be offered at various times during the sessions.

Music will begin at the end of each break. When you hear the music, please return to your seats, worship and get ready for the next session.

Time For Prayer

Dr. Richard Wilson

Prayer- it is a vital subject. We know from our earliest days in church life it is important. We close our eyes. We sit up straight. We are very quiet. Then someone prays. It is a holy moment. We also learn that we are to pray. The Bible taught us that great people prayed. Moses and Joshua, Jesus and Peter- great people prayed! Throughout the history of the church, great men and women of God realized that prayer was essential.

"If I should neglect to pray but a single day, I should loose a great deal of the fire of faith."
-Martin Luther

"Prayer will make a man cease from sin, or sin will entice a man to cease from prayer."
-John Bunyan

"You can do more than pray, after you have prayed, but you cannot do more than pray until you have prayed."
-John Bunyan

"The moment you wake up each morning, all your wishes and hopes for that day rush at you like wild animals. And the first job of each morning consists of shoving it all back; in listening to that other voice, taking that other point of view, letting that other, larger, stronger, quieter life come flowing in."
-C.S. Lewis

One quote really stands out to me. This hits it on the head:

"The greatest thing anyone can do for God and for man is pray. It is not the only thing. But it is the chief thing. The great people of the earth today are people who pray. I do not mean those who talk about prayer; nor those who say they believe in prayer; nor those who can explain about prayer; but I mean those who take time and pray. **THEY HAVE NOT TIME. IT MUST BE TAKEN FROM SOMETHING ELSE.** This something else is important. Very important and pressing, but less important and less pressing than prayer."
-S.D. Gordan

Time- now really, who has any of it? Just for us to be here this weekend, it has taken weeks of preparation. We have had to adjust our schedules. We had to ask off weeks or months ago. Why? Because we are busier than ever. Our schedules are demanding. Every moment of our day seems to be spoken for.

Now we come to the subject of prayer. For most people, prayer is a time issue. We are busy and finding a time to pray is a struggle. Years ago, S. D. Gordan wrote that challenging quote. Even in his day, time was short. Today we live in a culture where

technology should help us have more time. In actuality, our technology allows for us to cram even more into a single day. When will we pray in our busy day? This is a question that Christians have struggled with for a long time. S. D. Gordan said it best when he spoke of the great people who prayed when he said, "They have not time. It must be taken from something else." These people did not have time but they took it from other things.

Point: You will never have time for prayer. If time is your number one reason for not praying, Satan will find things to fill up your time. You will never be able to find enough time in a full day. The only way for you to have time to pray is to take it from something else.

We all have the same amount of time but how we use our time differs. We can choose to stop one thing to do something else. We can take time from things we do for the purpose of prayer.

Our President, George W. Bush is known for the time that he spends with God each day. Bush received Christ on April 3, 1984. As part of daily regimen, he spends time alone with God. If the busiest man in the world can find time to pray, we can too!

Jesus Took Time To Pray

Jesus took time to pray. We know that Jesus came for an unbelievable task. He carried the weight of the world upon his shoulders. People pressed Jesus every day for his time and touch. Just his presence in a town would draw hundreds into the streets. Jesus once walked up a hillside and more than 5,000 people followed him. This is why we find Jesus *taking time* to pray.

He took time from important things to pray

Jesus had to take time to pray.

- One example we see in scripture is when Jesus took time from sleep to go and pray. (Luke 6:12)
- Another example is when Jesus took time from the crowds (his ministry) to go and pray. (Matthew 14:23)

He took time in even in difficulty

Jesus also took time in difficulty. Jesus was facing the purpose for which he had come. He squeezed in prayer between the most important meeting with his disciples ever and the beginning of the work of redemption. (Matthew 26:36)

LEARNING EXERCISE

Identify two times during your day where you could take time from something for prayer:

1. _____

2. _____

A Lesson in How To Pray

Focal Passage: "The Lord's Prayer" -- Matthew 6:9-15

The Twelve Disciples recognized the importance of prayer when they asked Jesus to teach them to pray (cf. Lk.11:1). They wanted to pray. He responded by teaching them the Lord's Prayer.

What is prayer? J.C. Ryle answers by stating that "prayer is the simplest act in all religion. It is simply speaking to God. It needs neither learning nor wisdom nor book knowledge to begin it. It needs nothing but **heart** and **will**. The weakest infant can cry when he is hungry. The poorest beggar can hold out his hand for alms, and does not wait to find words. The most ignorant man will find something to say if he has only a **mind**."

Notice the words which I have highlighted. When we yield our hearts and will to the Lord Jesus we will have a mind to pray. Hard-hearted people seldom, if ever, pray. Think of yourself when you are angry or bitter. Those are times when you don't feel like praying. But when we don't feel like praying, that is an exact time when we need to pray. Stephen Olford reminds us, "Pray when you feel like it; pray when you don't feel like it; pray until you do feel like it."

Prayerfulness is a clear barometer of our spirituality. It "shows our dependence upon God, our confidence in God, our obedience to God" (Monty Sholund). To the unspiritual person God appears remote. Heaven may seem far away. Yet "it is within speaking distance to those who belong there" (D.L. Moody). God is only a prayer away to those who seek Him.

It's when we have a heart for prayer that Jesus will teach us how to pray. As we study the Lord's Prayer we see that "effective prayer desires what God desires (George Sweeting). It is first and foremost sharing with Him what is on His heart and then sharing with Him what is on our hearts. Here is a compact way of analyzing what He has taught us about prayer in Matthew 6:9-15.

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| PURPOSE | | | | |
| FOUNDATIONS | | | | |

Every Christian needs to pray every day along the way (cf. 1 Thes. 5:17). George Muller describes how he made this practical. He said, "I live in the spirit of prayer. I pray as I walk about, when I lie down and when I rise up. And the answers are always coming." This happens when we put our minds to praying. Andrew Murray reminds us that "we have time for everything that really interests (us), but no time to practice fellowship with God and delight ourselves in Him! We find time for (others) who can be of service to us; but day after day, month after month passes and there is no time to spend one hour with God." By God's grace let's change this and start praying as Jesus taught us.

Hindrances to Answered Prayer

Charles M. Wilson

John 11:41-45

41 So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me.

42 I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, *that they may believe that you sent me.*"

43 When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!"

44 The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, "Take off the grave clothes and let him go."

45 Therefore many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary, and had seen what Jesus did, *put their faith in him.* (NIV)

I Kings 18:37-39

37 Answer me, O LORD, answer me, *so these people will know that you, O LORD, are God*, and that you are turning their hearts back again."

38 Then the fire of the LORD fell and burned up the sacrifice, the wood, the stones and the soil, and also licked up the water in the trench.

39 When all the people saw this, they fell prostrate and cried, "*The LORD-- he is God! The LORD-- he is God!*" (NIV)

Often our praying does not have the results we are seeking. It is not unusual, when our prayer has not been answered as we prayed, to say, "It must not have been the will of God!". But is it? Read on!

1 Chronicles 4:10

Jabez cried out to the God of Israel, "Oh, that you would bless me and enlarge my territory! Let your hand be with me, and keep me from harm so that I will be free from pain." *And God granted his request.* (NIV)

Jeremiah 33:3

'Call to me and *I will answer you* and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.' (NIV)

Psalm 91:15

He will call upon me, and *I will answer him*; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him. (NIV)

Matthew 7:7-11

7 "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.

8 *For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.*

9 "Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone?

10 Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake?

11 If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him! (NIV)

Matthew 7:7-11 is one of the greatest passages concerning answered prayer! We are instructed to "ask", "seek" and "knock." Jesus is saying, "Be specific!" He will not disappoint us by not answering; neither will He deny us by giving us something for which we did not ask, or by opening the wrong door at which we are knocking! If we ask for bread, He gives us bread! If we ask for fish, He gives us fish! Not something like bread, but bread itself! Not something like fish, but fish itself!

I have discovered through the book, E.M. Bounds On Prayer, that there are only three prayers in the Bible that God did not answer with "YES!"

2 Samuel 12:15-18

15 After Nathan had gone home, the LORD struck the child that Uriah's wife had borne to David, and he became ill.

16 *David pleaded with God for the child.* He fasted and went into his house and spent the nights lying on the ground.

17 The elders of his household stood beside him to get him up from the ground, but he refused, and he would not eat any food with them.

18 On the seventh day the child died. (NIV)

Matthew 26:39-44

39 Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, "*My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.*"

40 Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Could you men not keep watch with me for one hour?" he asked Peter.

41 "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak."

42 He went away a second time and prayed, "My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done."

43 When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy.

44 So he left them and went away once more and prayed the third time, saying the same thing. (NIV)

2 Corinthians 12:7-9

7 To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me.

8 *Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me.*

9 But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." (NIV)

So, what is the problem with our praying? We must admit that all too often we pray but the "YES!" answer does not come! What might be the problem?

Let's examine some hindrances to answered prayer.

I. Failure to know God's Word and to remain/abide in Christ.

John 15:7-8

7 If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you.

8 This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples. (NIV)

II. Unconfessed sin.

Psalms 66:18

If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened; (NIV)

III. Selfish and wrong motives.

James 4:3

When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures. (NIV)

IV. Pride.

Job 35:12-13

12 He does not answer when men cry out because of the arrogance of the wicked.

13 Indeed, God does not listen to their empty plea; the Almighty pays no attention to it. (NIV)

V. Lack of domestic harmony or peace with spouse.

1 Peter 3:7

Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers. (NIV)

VI. Lack of faith (unbelief in the promises of God).

James 1:6-7

6 But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind.

7 That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord;(NIV)

VII. Hypocrisy.

Matthew 6:5

"And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. (NIV)

VIII. Lack of earnest prayer.

Jeremiah 29:13

You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.
(NIV)

IX. Failure to ask according to God's will.

I John 5:14-15

14 This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.

15 And if we know that he hears us-- whatever we ask-- we know that we have what we asked of him. (NIV)

X. Pollution.

James 1:27

Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world. (NIV)

"Christianity needs today men and women who can in prayer put God to the test and prove His promises. These are the sort of men and women needed in this modern day in the church. It is not educated men who are needed for the times. It is not more money that is required. It is not more machinery, more organization, more ecclesiastical laws, but is it men and women who know how to pray, who can in prayer move God to take hold of earth's affairs mightily and put life and power into the church and into all it's machinery!"
E.M. Bounds on Prayer, page 252.

Practical cleansing exercise:

1. We are commanded to confess all sin in our lives.

Ezra 10:11

Now make confession to the LORD, the God of your fathers, and do his will. Separate yourselves from the peoples around you and from your foreign wives." (NIV)

Jeremiah 3:13

Only acknowledge your guilt-- you have rebelled against the LORD your God, you have scattered your favors to foreign gods under every spreading tree, and have not obeyed me," declares the LORD. (NIV)

2. Boldly ask God to reveal any unconfessed sin in your life. Do not trust your heart or feelings, trust the Holy Spirit to reveal sin.

Jeremiah 17:9-10

9 The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?

10 "I the LORD search the heart and examine the mind, to reward a man according to his conduct, according to what his deeds deserve." (NIV)

Psalms 139:23-24

23 Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts.

24 See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. (NIV)

3. Claim God's benefits.

Proverbs 28:13

He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy. (NIV)

1 John 1:9

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. (NIV)

4. A prayer of confession.

"Dear Lord,

I confess I have sinned by not allowing you to be the Lord of my life. Thank you for forgiving the sin I have confessed to you on this day. Thank you for cleansing me. Thank you for being my savior. As I have accepted your grace and mercy by faith, I receive your forgiveness and cleansing by faith. Fill me with your Holy Spirit. Use me for your glory. This I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen."

5. A lifestyle marked by repentance.

Acts 17:30

In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. (NIV)

Matt 4:17

17 From that time on Jesus began to preach, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near." (NIV)

Agreeing With God About Our Sin

Dr. Richard Wilson

Sin is a real part of every person's life. Before we were saved, we were slaves to sin. (See Romans 6:16) Now that we are saved we are still tempted and we still sin. The truth is that as long as we live on this side of eternity we will sin.

If sin is going to come into our lives, what do we need to do about it? The Bible teaches that confession is an essential part of the Christian's life.

- Sacrifices in the Old Testament were an acknowledgment of spiritual failure.
- David confessed his sin in Psalm 51.
- The prophet Isaiah confessed his own sin and the sins of his people when he was called by God in Isaiah 6.
- 1 John 1:9 reminds us to confess our sin to God and find forgiveness.

Let's think about the idea of confession. Why do we confess our sin? Do we confess sin to make God aware of our failure? Do we confess our sin because God does not know we have sinned? The answer to these questions is "no." God is already fully aware of our sin. God is never surprised by what we "confess" to Him. The Bible teaches that God knows about our sin and the fact that we confess our sin is evidence that God knows what we have done! ***When we confess our sin, we are simply agreeing with God about the presence of sin in our lives that He has already revealed to us.***

A key verse to understanding confession is 1 John 1:10, "If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us." This is an interesting verse. The Bible says that we make God out to be a liar when we say that we have not sinned. This verse gives us a key to understanding the work of God that leads to our confession.

Let's follow the process:

We sin.

Before there is conviction or confession there is sin.

God convicts us of sin through the work of the Holy Spirit.

When we sin, God is aware of our sin. He knows what we have done. He knows why we have sinned. He knows the immediate consequences of our sin and the possible long term consequences. When we sin, God sends His Holy Spirit to us to make us aware of our sin.

The Holy Spirit will come- not to make us feel guilty- but rather to make us aware of the sinful condition of our lives as seen by Holy God. If you know you have sinned, you are under the conviction of the Holy Spirit and God is at work in your life to bring you back to a right place with Him.

We choose to agree with God or we resist His conviction.

Now that we are under conviction we have two choices. First, we can agree with God that there is sin in our lives or secondly, we can resist the conviction of the Holy Spirit. This is a scary place to be. The Holy Spirit is telling us the truth about the condition of our lives. We make God out to be a liar when we refuse to confess, thereby, disputing His testimony about the true condition of our lives. God says, "You have a problem," but we respond, "No, I don't." Remember our key verse, "***If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.***"

God wants us to come in agreement with what He sees in our lives.

God wants us to come to a point of confession. The word confess in the New Testament means "concede, admit or agree with." God already knows our sin, He simply wants us to agree with Him. When we resist, we wander farther from God. When we agree with God, He cleans us up.

When you do sin, confess your sin!

We will sin. What is wonderful is that the Bible does not say, "Now that you have sinned stay away!" Rather, we are encouraged to come back to God in confession. 1 John 1:9 promises us, "***If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.***"

Even when we sin, we have the promise of 1 John 2:1-2, "***But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense- Jesus Christ, the Righteous One, He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.***"

Two verses for future reference:

He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper,
But he who confesses and forsakes them will find compassion.
(Proverbs 28:13)

I acknowledged my sin to You,
And my iniquity I did not hide;
I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD";
And You forgave the guilt of my sin.
(Psalm 35:5)

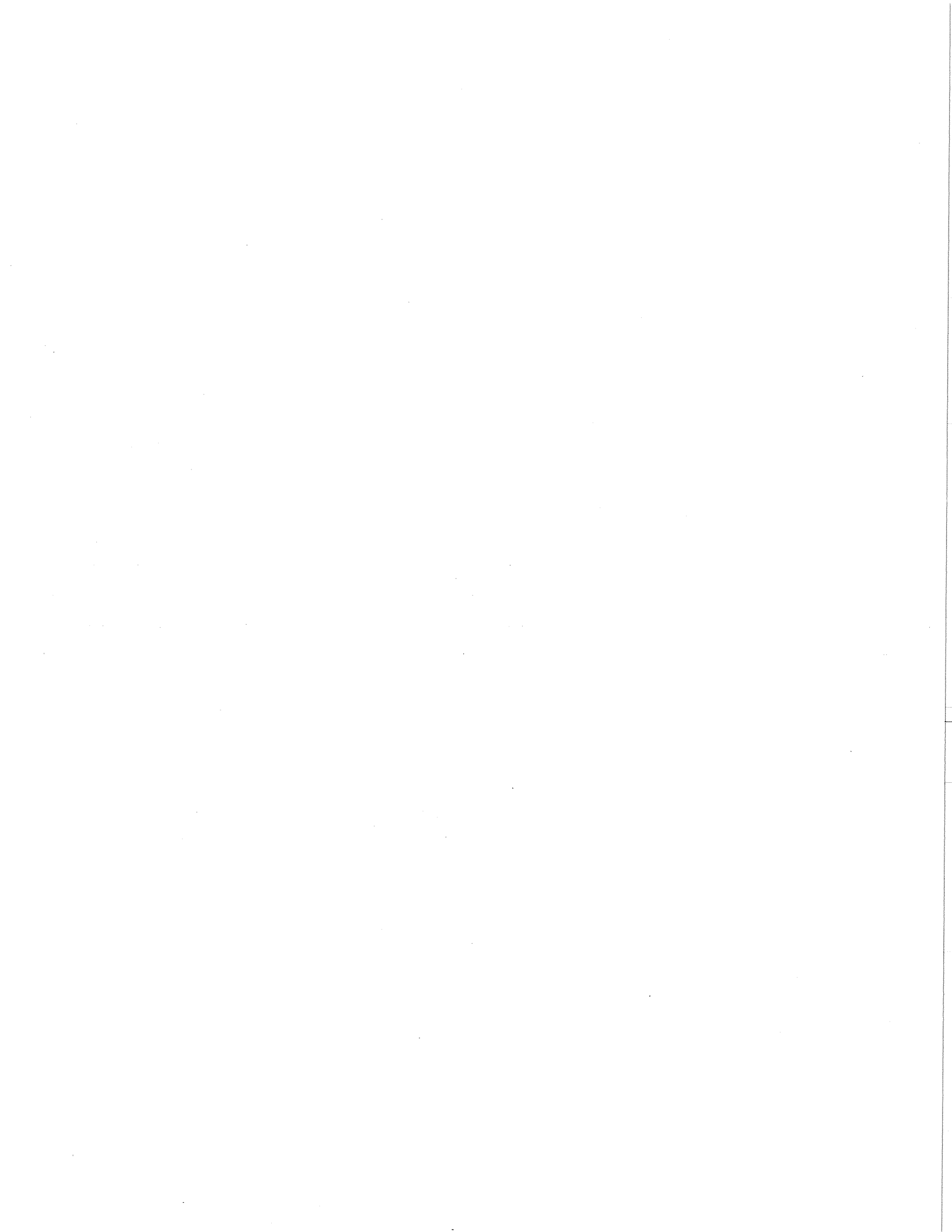
Thought:

What sin is God trying to show me that I refuse to acknowledge in my life? Am I making God out to be a liar in some area of my life?

CONFESSION EXERCISE

Credit: Bill Jones, Knowing God, Christian Publications, Camp Hill, PA, 2000. pp. 127-135

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| <p>1. Blessed are the poor in spirit. Matthew 5:3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you proud? • Do you draw attention to yourself or your accomplishments? • Do you put your desires above Christ's? | |
| <p>2. Blessed are those who mourn. Matthew 5:4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you have a lack of concern for people's needs? • Does the presence of sin in your life cause you to grieve? • Do you take the lost condition of your unsaved friends too casually? | |
| <p>3. Blessed are the gentle. Matthew 5:5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you been insensitive to the emotional needs of others? • Are you abrasive and uncaring? • Do you intentionally hurt people's feelings? | |
| <p>4. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. Matthew 5:6</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is happiness more important to you than holiness? • Do you yearn to be godly? • Are you unconcerned about walking in righteousness? | |
| <p>5. Blessed are the merciful. Matthew 5:7</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there anyone you know to whom you have not shown mercy? • Do you ever secretly rejoice when someone else suffers? • Have you failed to show more mercy to those who are less fortunate? | |
| <p>6. Blessed are the pure in heart. Matthew 5:8</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you driven by impure motives? • Do you tend to manipulate others? • Have you wanted to gain recognition from others? | |
| <p>7. Blessed are the peacemakers. Matthew 5:9</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you fuss and fight with family or friends? • Do you always try to have the last word? • Are you reluctant to say, "I'm sorry"? | |
| <p>8. Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness. . . Rejoice, and be glad. Matthew 5:10-12</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you feel ashamed of Christ when you are around others? • Have you avoided standing up for Christ? • Have you complained about persecution? | |



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| 9. | <p>Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works. Matthew 5:16</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you have friends who do not realize that you are a Christian? • Have you tried to be one of the crowd? • Have you failed to tell others that Christ is why you act as you do? | |
| 10 | <p>Whoever annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of God. Matthew 5:19</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you considered any of God's Word as unimportant? • Do you justify your actions, disregarding God's Word? • Have you lead others astray by your disobedience? | |
| 11. | <p>Everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court. Matthew 5:21-26</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you easily angered? • Are there people toward whom you feel anger or bitterness now? Why? | |
| 12. | <p>Everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. Matthew 5:27-32</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is lust a recurring problem for you? • Are you exposing yourself to people or media that tend to fuel lust? • Are you involved in any immoral relationship? | |
| 13. | <p>Let your statement be "Yes" or "No"; anything beyond these is of evil. Matthew 5:33-37</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is your word reliable? • Can you spot evidences of irresponsibility in your life? • Have you failed to follow through on your commitments? | |
| 14. | <p>Whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn to other to him also. Matthew 5:38-42</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you quick to get revenge? • When others sin against you, is it your tendency to get even? • Have you failed to give others a second chance? | |
| 15. | <p>Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you. Matthew 5:43-48</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you hate anyone? • Have you failed to pray for those who persecute or mistreat you? • Have you failed to do good to those who do bad to you? | |
| 16. | <p>Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them. Matthew 6:1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you try to impress people? • Do you have to be the center of attention? • Do you engage in "spiritual" things just so others will notice? | |

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| <p>17. When . . . you give to the poor. Matthew 6:2-4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you failed to tithe- that is, give ten percent of your income to God? • Do you give to God with a grudge? • Have you failed to give sacrificially? | |
| <p>18. When you pray. . . . Matthew 6:5-13</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When you pray publicly, do you think about the people who are listening in? • Are your prayers sincere? • When you say, " I will pray for you," do you follow through? | |
| <p>19. If you forgive men their transgressions your Father will also forgive you. Matthew 6:14-15</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there someone you haven't forgiven? • Are you holding any grudges? • Do you remind others of past offenses? | |
| <p>20. When you fast. . . . Matthew 6:16-17</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you failed to fast? • Do your appetites control you? • Do others know when you are fasting? | |
| <p>21. Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth. Matthew 6:19-21</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there things in your life which are more important than Christ? • Do you tend to idolize your possessions? • Have you failed to "store up. . .treasures in heaven"? | |
| <p>22. The eye is the lamp of the body; so then if your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light. Matthew 6:22-23</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you envious of anyone or covetous of anything? • Have you been exposing yourself to ungodly magazines or other media? • Have you been watching sensual or sexually impure programs or movies? | |
| <p>23. Do not be worried. . . . Matthew 6:25-32</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you worry more than you pray about things? • Do you complain often about your physical/material status? • When you trust God for His provision, how does it show? | |
| <p>24. Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness. Matthew 6:33-34</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has God slipped from first place in your life? • Do you give God your focused attention on a daily basis? • Have you let unconfessed sin to linger in your life? | |
| <p>25. Do not judge so that you will not be judged. Matthew 7:1-6</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you tend to judge others? • Do you look down on anybody? • Do you reveal a "holier than thou" attitude? | |

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| <p>26</p> | <p>Ask. . .Seek. . .Knock. Matthew 7:7-11</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you have a regular time to pray? • Do you pray for yourself more than others? • Have you overlooked thanking God for His answers? | |
| <p>27.</p> | <p>Treat people the same way you want them to treat you. Matthew 7:12</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are you actively serving others? • What evidences of a self-centered rather than an others-centered life do you see in yourself? • Are you choosy about whom you serve? | |
| <p>28.</p> | <p>Enter through the narrow gate. Matthew 7:13-14</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you refused to do what is right when it has been hard? • Do you spurn opportunities to stand up for Christ? • Do you give in when others coax you to do things that are wrong? | |
| <p>29.</p> | <p>Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Matthew 7:15-20</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do others see changes in your character as a result of your faith in Christ? • Do the following traits mark your life: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control? | |
| <p>30.</p> | <p>Not everyone who says to Me, "Lord, Lord," will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven will enter. Matthew 7:21-22</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there areas of your life in which you are deliberately disobeying God? • Are you afraid to give Christ total control of your life? • Are you the boss of your life? | |
| <p>31.</p> | <p>Everyone who hears these words of mine and acts on them is compared to one who built his house on the rock. Matthew 7:24-29</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you hear God's Word and fail to do it? • Do you act as if God's Word is unimportant? • Do you regularly read God's Word and expose yourself to sound Bible teaching? | |

A Prayer of Thanksgiving

Ed Wilkes

Thank / v. To acknowledge or express gratitude.

Gratitude / n. being thankful; readiness to show appreciation; thankfulness, thanksgiving.

Thanksgiving / n. the expression of gratitude, esp. as a prayer.

Prayer / n. a solemn request or thanksgiving to God.

Praise be! / v. & n. an exclamation of pious gratitude.

Introduction:

There are three kinds of **giving**: *grudge* giving, *duty* giving, and *thanksgiving*.

Grudge giving involves constraint. It says, "I hate to."

Duty giving involves a sense of obligation. It says, "I ought to."

But true *Thanksgiving* comes from a full heart. It says, "I want to."

Praise and Thanksgiving and Prayer all go together. We often use the acrostic A C T S (Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, and Supplication) when we pray. Most people today are also familiar with the letters WWW.COM. This session will discuss the WWW-WWW of a Prayer of Thanksgiving. It will help us to understand:

Who is to offer a Prayer of Thanksgiving? and to

Whom are they to offer a Prayer of Thanksgiving?

Why are they to offer a Prayer of Thanksgiving?

When are they to offer a Prayer of Thanksgiving?

Where are they to offer a Prayer of Thanksgiving? and

What are they to offer in a Prayer of Thanksgiving?

WHO

Question: Who should offer a Prayer of Thanksgiving?

Psalm 50:14-15 (You) Sacrifice **thank** offerings to God, fulfill **your** vows to the Most High, and (you) call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver **you**, and **you** will honor me."

Psalm 145:21 My mouth will speak in praise of the LORD. Let every creature praise his holy name for ever and ever.

Psalm 150:6 Let everything that has breath praise the LORD. Praise YE the LORD.

Answer: _____ who prays should offer a Prayer of Thanksgiving!

WHOM

Question: To whom should we offer a Prayer of Thanksgiving?

Psalm 136:26 Give *thanks* to the **God** of heaven.

1 Chronicles 16: 34 Give *thanks* to the **LORD**, for he is good;

Answer: We should offer a Prayer of Thanksgiving to our _____ and our _____ !

WHY

Question: Why should we offer a Prayer of Thanksgiving?

Because the Hebrews did:

The Hebrews encouraged each individual to express their thanks to Him in praises that recounted His works on their behalf. The focus was primarily on God, not on what He had done. They didn't just praise His acts, they praised Him!

Psalm 145:3-7 *Great is the LORD and most worthy of praise; his greatness no one can fathom. One generation will commend your works to another; they will tell of your mighty acts. They will speak of the glorious splendor of your majesty, and I will meditate on your wonderful works. They will tell of the power of your awesome works, and I will proclaim your great deeds. They will celebrate your abundant goodness and joyfully sing of your righteousness.*

Psalm 150:2 *Praise him for his acts of power; praise him for his surpassing greatness.*

Because David and Jonah did:

David was a man after God's own heart (Acts 13:22) and he wrote his psalms to praise God and Thank Him for His mercy and goodness. David directed the Levites to Praise and Thank the Lord. Jonah even considered a song of Thanksgiving to be his sacrifice to God.

1 Chronicles 16:4 *He appointed some of the Levites to minister before the ark of the LORD, to make petition, to give **thanks**, and to praise the LORD, the God of Israel.*

1 Chronicles 23:28-30 *The duty of the Levites was to...stand every morning to **thank** and praise the LORD. They were to do the same in the evening and whenever burnt offerings were presented to the LORD.*

Jonah 2:9 *But I, with a song of **thanksgiving**, will sacrifice to you.*

Because our gratitude demands it:

Gratitude describes an **inward** emotion that arises **involuntarily** while Thanksgiving is the **external, voluntary** expression of that internal gratitude. Gratitude is *secret, passive, and hidden within* until we express it **outwardly** in praise and thanksgiving. Thanksgiving is our **outward** expression of that **inward** feeling. It is our way of expressing in words and actions the gratitude we feel in our hearts and souls. It is a *positive, active, oral action* that involves our giving something to God in return for something He has given us. We can't just thank God **in** our hearts, we must express it **outwardly** in our Prayer of Thanksgiving.

Psalm 47:6 *Sing praises to God, sing praises; sing praises to our King, sing praises.*

Psalm 50:14 *Sacrifice **thank** offerings to God, fulfill your vows to the Most High,*

Psalm 68:19 *Praise be to the Lord, to God our Savior, who daily bears our burdens.*

Because of answered prayer:

Hebrew worship was characterized by thanksgiving. The Psalms are filled with songs of praise and thanksgiving which point back to the results of answered prayer. But our concept of gratitude and thanksgiving is that it dwells on the past. Our prayers usually deal with the things we desire from God in the future while we neglect the things He has done for us in the past. We forget to thank God for answering our prayer (unless it resulted in the answer WE desired.)

The Lord's Prayer begins with "Our Father" and ends with "Yours is the kingdom." Remember, "Our Father" is a King. He listens to our petitions like a father, but he acts on them like a king who knows what is best for us and His kingdom. Your body is a holy temple, let it also be a house of prayer that will not cease from praising and thanking Him with our prayers.

Isaiah 65:24 *Before they call I will answer; while they are still speaking I will hear.*

Mark 11:24 *Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.*

Because we want to:

Praise is our way of expressing delight in the God who has revealed Himself to us. We speak to God privately, with others in our homes, or assembled in congregations. We can join with all the believers through the ages who have expressed their love and gratitude to the Lord by praising Him and thanking Him for his great and wonderful acts and for Himself.

Because God's gift to us requires it:

The Magi presented the Christ Child with gifts to thank God for sending Him: (Matthew 2:11) Christ told us to confess our sins and through our supplications to ask the Holy Spirit to intercede for others, but sincere prayer should also include the giving of our gifts.

Our Worship Services usually include the presentation of our gifts and offering, but we also need to offer God the gift of our adoration and praise as a regular component of our prayer time. We need to express our thankfulness for God's forgiveness, for personal or national deliverance, and for God's faithfulness to His covenants. We can express our Gratitude to God for the gift of Jesus by offering ourselves and our thanks to Him.

Psalm 35:17b-18 *Rescue my life from their ravages, my precious life from these lions. I will give you **thanks** in the great assembly; among throngs of people I will praise you.*

Psalm 44:7-8 *You give us victory over our enemies, you put our adversaries to shame. In God we make our boast all day long, and we will praise your name forever.*

Hebrews 13:5b-6 *... God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." So we say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?"*

Answer: Just _____ ! God wants and deserves a Prayer of Thanksgiving!

WHEN

Question: When should we offer a Prayer of Thanksgiving?

Continually:

Praise and Thanksgiving are almost impossible to separate. We should begin our prayers by thanking God for what He has done and is doing in our lives. When we pray to ask God for something we should thank Him for the answer He is going to give to our petition. We should thank Him for the big things, for the little things, and for everything. We should pray without ceasing. We should live so close to Jesus that we can reach out and touch Him at any time day or night and we should thank Him for giving us that opportunity.

Psalm 63:4 *I will praise you **as long as I live**, and in your name I will lift up my hands.*

Psalm 71:8 *My mouth is filled with your praise, declaring your splendor **all day long**.*

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 *Be joyful **always**; pray **continually**; give **thanks** in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.*

Colossians 4:2 *Devote yourselves (**constantly**) to prayer, being watchful and **thankful**.*

Answer: We should offer a Prayer of Thanksgiving _____ .

WHERE

Question: Where should we (not) offer a Prayer of Thanksgiving?

INSIDE

2 Chronicles 31:2b ... give **thanks** and to sing praises **at the gates** of the LORD'S dwelling.

Psalm 100:4 Enter **his gates** with thanksgiving and **his courts** with praise; give **thanks** to him and praise his name.

Psalm 150:1 Praise the LORD. Praise God **in his sanctuary**; praise him **in his mighty heavens**.

Hebrews 2:12 **in the presence of the congregation** I will sing your praises.

OUTSIDE

Psalm 18:49 Therefore I will praise you **among the nations**, O LORD; I will sing praises to your name.

Psalm 138:1 I will praise you, O LORD, with all my heart; **before the "gods"** I will sing your praise.

Psalm 103:22 Praise the LORD, all his works **everywhere** in his dominion.

Answer: We should offer a Prayer of Thanksgiving wherever we are and wherever God is because it is there that praise and thanksgiving belong. God is everywhere so a Prayer of Thanksgiving can be offered _____ and should be offered _____ !

WHAT

Question: What should we offer in a Prayer of Thanksgiving?

Our Salvation:

We should thank God for our Salvation every time we pray!

1 Timothy 12-15 **I thank** Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength, that he considered me faithful, appointing me to his service. Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief. The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst.

God's Grace and Deliverance:

Early Christians expressed their thanks for God's gift of grace and salvation in Christ. Thanksgiving is a natural element of our worship and it should inhabit all of a Christian's prayer life.

Luke 17:16 *He threw himself at Jesus' feet and **thanked** him—and he was a Samaritan.*

Romans 6:17-18 *But **thanks** be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were entrusted. You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.*

2 Corinthians 9:14-15 *And in their prayers for you their hearts will go out to you, because of the surpassing grace God has given you. **Thanks** be to God for his indescribable gift!*

God's Word:

God reveals Himself and His will for our lives in the Bible. Be thankful we have four different Gospels to give us a far richer and deeper knowledge of who Jesus is. The Old Testament shows us where we came from and the New Testament shows us where we are going.

Colossians 3:16 *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with **gratitude** in your hearts to God.*

Matthew 4:4 *Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"*

Answered Prayer:

When you ask God for something and then praise Him for His answer to your request, even before He gives it, it confirms your faith in Him and His ability to answer (but not necessarily grant) your request. A petition says "please" while a praise says "thank you." Pray and believe and God will answer your prayer. Pray and doubt and you will do without. Singing is one method of praising and thanking God., but there are many ways to praise Him and show Him how thankful we are:

Psalms 150:3-5 *Praise him with the sounds of the trumpet, praise him with the harp and lyre, praise him with tambourine and dancing, praise him with the strings and flute, praise him with the clash of cymbals,*

Ephesians 5:19-20 *Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving **thanks** to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Unanswered Prayer:

If God doesn't seem to be answering your prayers, try praising Him and thanking Him for His answers, no matter what they are or when they come. Remembering all that Jesus has done for us and in us, we should begin every prayer with thanksgiving. Thanksgiving is to accompany our requests, not be triggered only by His answers to our prayers. We thank God because we know that God has not only heard our request, but He will give us what we need. Because our prayers have been answered even as we pray, thanks are appropriate.

Matthew 7:7-8 *Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.*

John 11:41b *Then Jesus looked up and said, "Father, I **thank** you that you have heard me."*

Food and Drink:

Jesus always thanked God for the food He had provided. Jesus thanked Him when He was eating with friends and when He was eating in public. Jesus was recognized by the way He thanked God for His food. We should also thank Him before we eat at home, at a friend's house, or in public. Saying grace before a meal is a way to witness to the world that we Thank God for providing for us.

Matthew 26:26-27 *While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave **thanks** and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body." Then he took the cup, gave **thanks** and offered it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you.*

Luke 9:16 *Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave **thanks** and broke them.*

Luke 24:30-31 *When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave **thanks**, broke it and began to give it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight.*

Healing Diseases and Relationships:

Acknowledge the truth that despite what seems to be taking place at that instant, God is still in control. Thank Him for providing the healing in His own special way. Thank God for who He is and for what He does and will do in our lives, for every blessing that He has bestowed on us and for everything that He will do for us and for others in the future!

James 5:16 *Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.*

1 Peter 2:24 *He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.*

Everything:

Ephesians 5:20 ... *always giving **thanks** to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Philippians 4:6-7 *Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, **with thanksgiving**, present your requests to God. And the **peace of God**, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

The phrase, “**with thanksgiving**,” is important. Thanksgiving is an expression of assurance, and a reminder, that God has heard and will answer our prayer. This “**peace of God**” is the inner peace that God gives us when we pray with thanksgiving.

Colossians 3:17 *And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving **thanks** to God the Father through him.*

Philippians 4:12-13 *I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content **in any and every situation**, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength.*

What is Paul’s secret of contentment “**in every and any situation?**” He has just shared it. It is to present his requests to God with thanksgiving—and then stop worrying about his circumstances.

Answer: Thank God for our Salvation, for His Grace and Deliverance, and for His Holy Word.
Thank God for Answered and Unanswered Prayer, and for Food, Drink, and Healing.
Thank God for Everything

- | | |
|--|---|
| Who should offer a Prayer of Thanksgiving? | Everyone! |
| To Whom should we offer a Prayer of Thanksgiving? | Our Lord and Our God! |
| Why should we offer a Prayer of Thanksgiving? | Because God wants and deserves it! |
| When should we offer a Prayer of Thanksgiving? | Continually! |
| Where should we offer a Prayer of Thanksgiving? | Everywhere! |
| What should we offer in a Prayer of Thanksgiving? | Thank God for Everything! |
| Every time you pray, pray a Prayer of Thanksgiving! | |

A Prayer of Thanksgiving Practical Exercise

Each of **you** pray a *Prayer of Thanksgiving* to **God**, because He loves you, right **now**, right **here**.
(Who) To (Whom) (Why) (When) (Where)

(What)

1. **Thank** God for your **Salvation** and for sending His Son, Jesus Christ, who suffered and died on the cross, who was buried, and who arose again on the third day to live forever at the right hand of God so that you might have eternal life in Christ.
2. **Thank** God for His **Grace** and **Deliverance** each day as He watches over you and protects you; forgives you; blesses you; and provides for your every need.
3. **Thank** God for His Holy **Word** that you can use to understand His desire and will for your life; that speaks to you and lifts you up when you are depressed; that comforts you when you are afraid; that reveals Christ's life which you can model; and that gives you examples you can follow as you praise and worship Him.
4. **Thank** God being willing and able to **Answer** this **Prayer** even before you prayed it.
5. **Thank** God those **Unanswered Prayers** that you have already prayed and that you are going to pray in the future that He is going to answer in the future if you will just place your trust in Him.
6. **Thank** God for providing the **Food** you will eat today and the beverages you are going to **Drink**; the clothes you are wearing; the transportation He provided to bring you to Myrtle Beach and that you will use to return to your home; the bed you will sleep in tonight; the table and chair you are using while you attend this Bible Study; the electricity He provides to illuminate the lights in this room; and the speakers who are helping you grow closer to God this weekend.
7. **Thank** God for giving Medical Doctors and Nurses and Medical Missionaries the knowledge and equipment they can use to **Heal Diseases**; and for the Psychiatrists, Social Workers, the Clergy, close friends and relatives who He uses to help us develop a forgiving heart that can **Heal** broken **Relationships**.
8. **Thank** God for **Everything** else that effects you such as: your family, friends, and neighbors; your home, church, and job; your community, country, and planet; your local, state, and national leaders; your Pastor, public service employees, and volunteers; your (grand)children's teachers, your former teachers, your Sunday School teachers; your freedom to worship and serve Him and others; your talents and spiritual gifts and opportunities to use them to further His Kingdom; and for anything or anyone else you want to **thank** God for having given you or done for you or to you in the past or that He is going to do with you in the future.

Praying God's Word

Mrs. Kristi Wilson

Do you want to have a powerful prayer life? Do you not know what to say when praying for a loved one?

Why use God's word instead of our word?

- **God's word is alive! (2 Timothy 3:16)**
- **Spiritual battles need God's power to be won. (2 Corinthians 10:3-5)**
- **We need to use the full armor of God, not part of it.**

Reasons to pray God's Word

- **To demolish strongholds**
- **To pray for a loved one**

Demolishing Strongholds

What is a stronghold? A stronghold is anything that _____ itself in our _____. A thought that continues to come back over and over again. Our minds are battlefields.

Do a mind check-

Do I have unforgiveness in my heart toward another person?

Is there anything (example-food, medicine, drink, person, tv program) that if I had to give up today, I wouldn't be able to?

Is there something that consumes most of my emotional and mental energy that I am kept from living the abundant life?

Scriptures to Use

Isaiah 26:3

Psalms 119:68

Isaiah 50:10-11

Psalms 119:137-138

Isaiah 25:9

Phil. 4:13

Psalms 4:7

Psalms 16:8

Romans 8:15-16

Psalms 73:23

Jeremiah 9:24

Isaiah 63:9

Psalms 91:14

Isaiah 30:15

Psalms 90:14

Praying for Loved Ones

Use scripture to put power into your praying! Think the thoughts of Christ toward your loved one as you pray.

Matthew 6:13

Romans 6:23

Proverbs 14:29

Philippians 2:3

2 Peter 3:9

Deuteronomy 30:6

Psalm 37:8

Psalm 101:3-5

Proverbs 30:8

Learning Exercise

Pick a scripture from each list and write a prayer back to God.

Praying When Imprisoned

Focal Passage: Acts 12:5

If everything was rosy and cosy in our lives it is likely that many of us would not pray very much. But when we, or someone we love, is imprisoned by difficult circumstances, we begin praying with greater seriousness. Prayer is our declaration of dependence upon the Lord, and it becomes a greater reality when we appreciate its importance in seeking His help. This was the case with Peter's church. See Acts 12:5 and note the four great principles of prayer found in it.

1. Peter's Church Prayed -- Likewise, We Should Pray _____

Local assemblies become more powerful when they assemble for prayer. The church in Jerusalem deliberately met to pray. We need to do more of this ourselves. "Without prayer, we are sitting ducks for the power of darkness" (Peter Wagner). Imagine how much more effective we would be if more of us would meet more often to pray. "It is nothing but the sin of prayerlessness which is the cause of the lack of a powerful spiritual life" (Andrew Murray). Yet, "God's line is still open to the church that remembers His number" (Moody Monthly).

2. Peter's Church Prayed Earnestly -- Likewise, We Should Pray _____

Many have prayed with great fervor only to feel that God has let them down -- that He deserted them. But remember that it is the prayer of a righteous person that is powerful and effective (James 5:16). Jesus makes us righteous, yes, but we must also seek His righteousness (Matt. 6:33). Throwing off sin and fixing our eyes on Jesus are crucial to becoming righteous (cf. Heb.12:1, 2, 11). Taking righteousness seriously is vital to praying earnestly. So is faith (James 5:15). Faith is not positive thinking, but expecting great things from God, and accepting the things allowed by God. It is then that we are ready to pray earnestly. "...it is the particular work of Christians who have the Spirit of God to be incessant and constant in their praying" (Martin Luther). When they do they will pray continually, even into the night against the evil that prevails.

3. Peter's Church Prayed to God -- Likewise, We Should Pray _____

Think of it, when we pray we enter the presence of God Almighty. Isaac Newton said, "I can take my telescope and look millions of miles into space; but I can go away to my room, and in prayer get nearer to God and heaven than I can when assisted by all the telescopes of earth." Monica Pfaff says, "Consider the magnitude of our privilege. We can come into the presence of a holy and sovereign God, uninvited and unannounced at any time we choose, dressed just as we are, and just where we are, (yet) we are always welcome...When we dial the heavenly number where big things happen, we never get an engaged signal, nor do we get an account at the end of the month...God alone answers our prayers and He answers them in the way He knows best."

4. Peter's Church Prayed for Him -- Likewise, We Should Pray _____

Watchman Nee wrote, "...I observe that the greatest problem in many prayer meetings lies in too many requests. We do not find such a situation in the Bible. What we do find there is praying for a specific matter. For example, the church prayed for Peter while he was in prison. It is easy to achieve agreement when there is only one topic." So let's focus our prayer efforts and find that "the quickest way to get back on our feet is to get down on our knees" (Vera McLellan).

Praying For The Lost

Charles M. Wilson

Romans 10:1

Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved. (NIV)

Do you remember when you were lost? Do you remember someone who cared for the condition of your soul? After you were saved, did they share with you their joy that you were now in the family of God?

Paul had a hunger to see his people saved. The word "desire" in Romans 10:1 means longing, willing, yearning, or craving. Paul craved and yearned to see the salvation of the Jews. If he saw their salvation, his desire would be fulfilled.

Without apology, Paul prayed "that they might be saved." It is important to remember that Paul put "feet" to his prayers. He preached and taught the atoning sacrifice of Jesus. He gave a verbal witness of his life-changing experience.

I. Let's examine God's will concerning the lost.

2 Peter 3:9

The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, *not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.* (NIV)

1 Timothy 2:1-4

1 I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone--

2 for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.

3 This is good, and pleases God our Savior,

4 *who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.* (NIV)

II. How then should we pray for the lost?

- A. You must develop a prayer list of those who are not saved.
1. This list does not have to be long.
 2. However, it will grow as your "heart's desire" becomes the salvation of others.
- B. Come to the point where you really believe that it is the will of God for all to be saved.
1. Memorize 2 Peter 3:9.
 2. Memorize 1 Timothy 2:1-4.
 3. Remember why Jesus came to the earth.

Luke 19:10

For the Son of Man came *to seek and to save what was lost.* (NIV)

- C. Ask the Father to become active in the lost person's life.

John 6:44

"No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me *draws him*, and I will raise him up at the last day. (NIV)

- D. Pray that the Holy Spirit will convict him of his sin.

John 16:8-11

8 When he comes, he will *convict the world of guilt in regard to sin* and righteousness and judgment:

9 in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me;

10 in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer;

11 and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned. (NIV)

- E. As in the life of the Philippian jailer, pray that the lost person will realize his need for Jesus and seek the Savior.

Acts 16:25-32

25 About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them.

26 Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everybody's chains came loose.

27 The jailer woke up, and when he saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped.

28 But Paul shouted, "Don't harm yourself! We are all here!"

29 The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas.

30 He then brought them out and asked, "***Sirs, what must I do to be saved?***"

31 They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved-- you and your household."

32 Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. (NIV)

- F. Pray that there will be repentance of sin and faith placed in the saving grace of the Lord Jesus.

Matthew 4:17

From that time on Jesus began to preach, "***Repent***, for the kingdom of heaven is near." (NIV)

Ephesians 2:8-9

8 ***For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--*** and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--

9 not by works, so that no one can boast. (NIV)

- G. Pray that the person will accept the forgiveness and cleansing offered by Jesus.

1 John 1:9

9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will *forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.* (NIV)

“When we pray for the lost in the name of Jesus, we claim what Jesus has already paid for with His blood. We may assure the conversion of those laid on our hearts by such praying. The prayer in Jesus’ name drives the enemy off the battlefield of man’s will and leaves him free to choose correctly.”
Don’t Just Stand There! Pray Something by Ron Dunn, page 127.

Practical exercise:

1. List the names of three people that you sense are lost:

2. Begin to pray that they will be saved, thanking God for the gift of salvation in your own life.
3. Ask the Father to draw them to Himself.
4. Pray that they will come under conviction of their sin.
5. Pray that they will realize that Jesus is the only answer for their sin.
6. Pray that they will turn from their sin (repent) and place their faith in the saving grace of Jesus.
7. Pray that they come to accept the forgiveness and cleansing of their sin!

The Sin of Prayerlessness Revealed

Rev. Richard Sanders

Introduction: 1898 two members of the Presbytery of New York (ministers) attended a Northfield Conference for the deepening of the spiritual life. After attending the conference, they went back wanting to bring revival to the entire board of leadership.

They held a meeting and asked for a show of hands of the men who spent half an hour in prayer for their work (ministry) and one hand went up. They then ask about fifteen minutes and not half the hands went up.

Finally they asked for all who spend five minutes and all hands went up. One man

came up afterwards and confessed that he wasn't sure if he spent even five minutes on prayer and said, "It is a terrible revelation of how little time I spend with God".

*"It is a terrible
revelation of how
little time I spend*

8. We can all say that it grieves our hearts when we really think about how much time we don't spend in prayer or how many times we have missed a quiet time with God, but have we thought about why this happens or why is it that we are grieved from this prayerlessness?
1. We are imitating an electrical contractor trying to figure out a problem of when the wrong lights start coming on and off when you flip a switch in the house. He would try to locate the problem first by ruling out problems that he guesses it might be. For instance, is it the power into the house? No because other appliances are working normally. Is it the bulb and so on. Once the guesses are proved to work okay, then he narrows down the problem. Eventually if he finds a problem in the wiring, there needs to be a change in the wiring and not just replace some old parts with new ones. The current being sent out must be directed in the correct way for the problem to be truly fixed.
8. ***The sin of prayerlessness develops out of a poor perspective on prayer!***
 - a. A wrong perspective begins with missed opportunities to have _____ with the God of this universe.
 - b. There is a _____ of thinking that prayer is just about a _____ - _____ experience in the morning. Leaves us feeling guilty and defeated.

How do I respond to not having enough prayer? Would you say, "I _____ to do more or I feel I _____ to do more"? Why

PROVISIONS:

- 1. Col 3:3
- 2. Rom 6:6a
- 3. I Cor 10:13
- 4. Col 2:15

Check which box you are in more often.

OBLIGATIONS:

- 1. Col 3:5
- 2. Rom 6:6c, 12
- 3. Eph 5:18
- 4. Jms 4:7

Make It Personal

1. How am I doing relating with God currently? _____

Check any that may apply and then pray that God would make you more aware of this problem and then confess it to God.

We might be lacking prayer in our lives if...

- We have more "world" in our thoughts.
- We feel farther away from God.
- We have less "God" talk in our conversations with others.
- Slowly an unwilling or rebellious spirit creeps into our personality.
- Sin doesn't sting as much, because it is less honestly confessed.
- We deal with sin as the world does, by hiding it!

Let Prayer change Your Life, Becky Tirabassi p21 (Oakwood Church library)

2. The sin of prayerlessness develops out of obeying the wrong Commanding Officer.

- a. The heart of the issue is what is causing us to have _____ and _____
- 2. Romans 7:21-25 "___" is used over 30x's in ch7 and "HS" 0x's and in contrast ch8 "___" used 2x's and "HS" almost ___x's.
- 3. E.G. Commanding Officer's authority over soldier _____ his life until greater authority _____ old CO.

"The whole difficulty is that we wish to pray in the Spirit and at the same time walk after the flesh. This is impossible."

The Believer's Prayer Life, Andrew Murray, p23 (CIU library)

Make it Personal:

1. What sin is the Holy Spirit revealing to me and how can I begin to hand it over to Christ and gain victory?

APPLICATION

- † Read Romans 8:1-17 and describe what life is like under the control of the sinful nature. Then read it again and write out all the statements that describe what life is like in the Spirit.
- † Where does your life fit currently and which would you rather live in, most of the time? What steps do you need to take to live life under the control of the Spirit?

Getting to the Heart of The Matter

A look at the priestly role of intercession

Dr. Larry Scott

Introduction: Which One are You?

1. Some of you pray like a Concorde Jet. You're smooth, sleek, and you create a sonic boom with the powerful words you use. The heavens are opened when you take off. Your prayers fly higher than most and can carry more weight. Your prayers are trans-continental. They reach around the world. Just like a Concorde, other people's prayer requests are waiting to be on your list to fly.

2. Some of you are simple crop-dusters. You're not flashy, you tend to fly low to the ground. In fact you tend to cover the same ground all the time. Some mornings it is tough enough just to get your engine warmed up. You're not much for distance flying. Some time your instrument panels fog up and you can't see where you're going. If the truth be known, you could use a tune up.

3. Some of you are Lear Jets. You look sharp on the outside, but inside there is only room for you and maybe a couple others and their baggage. You have great take off power, but burn a lot of fuel. You're not built for long journeys - but for speed. Hopping from one destination to another. You have to be careful not to be over loaded with baggage or passengers. But you are always gassed up and ready to go.

4. Some of you are like a hang glider. You work hard climbing to the high ground or the mountain peak - only to jump off. Once you take off - there is no power in you. You just sort of sail on the wind. There is not enough room for anyone else carrying your own weight is tough enough. You like the temporary view from being up high but it is short lived because you are slowly spiraling downward to earth. You ride on a current created by someone else so you can't stay airborne to long. Your landing is smooth enough until you look back up to the mountain peak and realize you've got to climb it all again.

If you are like me, you see some of yourself in each of these? Sometimes our prayer lives lack consistency. It is either a desert or an oasis. Sometimes we go days or weeks without consistent prayer, but then suddenly we are diving in. Other times our prayers lack sincerity. They are a bit hollow, memorized and rigid. We go through a liturgy of phrases and words, and though they are daily, they are dull!

When you pray for yourself or others, (intercede) do you struggle and wonder if your prayers are making a difference? If God is even interested in talking with you? Have you ever wondered how two people could be praying about a certain matter and seem to have two different directions impressed on their spirits. Have you ever prayed as best as you knew how, and still feel no leading or direction? If so, this retreat is for you! Before going anywhere else we must look where "Praying" begins ... THE

HEART! FOR OUT OF IT FLOW THE ISSUES OF LIFE.

Prayer Defined: Prayer is the *sincere expression of the heart*, that *links ourselves to the inexhaustible power of the Holy Spirit of God*, as we seek to *intercede* on the behalf of the weaknesses of humanity. *Praying in the Spirit* is borne out of *a Spirit filled life that results in the will of God being done* in our lives or the lives of others.

Let's look at the parts of this definition:

Sincere expression of the heart: Is that all it takes?

There are many who would read this definition and stop at this point. Their thinking is that as long as we are sincere when we pray - that prayer is effective and filled with power! The problem is that there are many prayers offered from sincere hearts that lack power and fail to move God's hand. We are left feeling rejected and confused by God's lack of answering and sense of His direction.

links ourselves to the inexhaustible power of The Holy Spirit:

The Holy Spirit is not only our teacher, comforter, instructor etc..., but the power of our praying and it's force is measured by the Spirit's power working in us. The power of God to do in us and through us is directly related to the amount of **Lordship** that we have allowed by the Holy Spirit in our lives. The secret of feeble praying everywhere is the lack, not of the Holy spirit's presence, (for we receive the H.S. at salvation) but is the lack of God's Spirit in his mightiness being lived out in righteousness in our lives daily. The ability of God to answer and work through our prayers is measured by the divine power that God has been allowed to put to work in us because we live righteously. That is why James says in chapter 5 "the *effectual* prayer of a *righteous man* availeth much"

We must link **RIGHTEOUS** living with the power of the Holy Spirit in order to have ANY hope of obtaining the power of praying "in the Spirit"

Seek to intercede:

The word *intercede* means to petition, pray or ask, on the behalf, and in favor of another. This is the role of the Christ (who makes intercession for us before the father) and it is the work of the Holy Spirit Rom. 8:26-28

"In the same way the Spirit also comes to help us weak as we are. For we do not know how we ought to pray; the Spirit himself pleads with God for us in groans that words cannot express. And God, who sees into our hearts knows what the thought of the spirit is, because the Spirit pleads with God on behalf of his people and in accordance with his will."

When we live yielded , righteous lives, this translates into perfect fellowship with the Holy Spirit (or as the scripture teaches - being "filled with the Spirit") when this fellowship is in tact - the Spirit comes along side of our spirit and groans and pleads to God on our behalf. The image from the text here is that He not only comes

along side us, but he suffers along with us, endures the burden with us For our High Priest is touched by our infirmities / weaknesses. (Heb. 4) Let me illustrate

Illustration:

Derek Redmond, a twenty -Six yr. Old Briton, was favored to win the four hundred meter race in the 1992 Olympics. Halfway into his final heat, a fiery pain ran through his right leg. He tumbled to the track with a torn hamstring. As the medical personnel approached, Redmond fought to his feet, pushing away the coaches in a crazed attempt to finish the race. When he reached the stretch, a big man pushed through the crowd wearing a T-shirt that read "have you hugged you kid today? And a hat that said "just do it." He was Derek Redmond's father. " You don't have to do this" he told his weeping son. "Yes I do!" " Well then, said his father, "we're going to finish this thing together." And they did!! Jim wrapped Derek's arm around his shoulder and helped him hobble to the finish line. Fighting off security men, the son's head sometimes buried in his father's shoulder from the pain. They stayed in Derek's lane to the end. The crowd clapped, then stood, then cheered, and then wept as father and son finished the race together. What made the father do it? Was it the strength of his child? NO!! It was his weakness and his pain. His son was hurt and fighting with everything he had to finish the race. So the father came to help him God does the same. Our prayers may be awkward. Our attempts may be feeble, But since the power of the prayer is in the one who groans on our behalf and not on the one who says it, our praying can make a difference.

If we are to truly intercede for one another we must come along side their pain and suffering. We must be willing to bear the heavy load with them, and sometimes carry them across the finish line of an answered prayer.

A Spirit filled life that results in the will of God being done:

Eph 5:18

18 Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be **filled with the Spirit.**

Q. Paul tells us to be filled with the Holy Spirit - what does that mean?

He answers in 1:17-18

- know Him better
- mind may be enlightened
- know the hope of your calling
- see your glorious inheritance
- know the great power within you

Eph 1:17-20

17 I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may **give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better.**

18 I pray also that **your mind may be enlightened** in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints,

19 and his incomparably **great power in us** who believe. **That power is the same as the working of his mighty strength,**
20 **which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead** and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms,
(NIV)

Q. What is the purpose of this power being at work within us? To transform us into His likeness in an ever greater degree of glory (2 Cor. 3:18)

**He accomplishes this one obedient act at a time - as we live obediently to his word, in thoughts, conduct, character, behavior, etc...(this is the inner being of vs 16)*

Eph 3:14-20

14 For this reason I kneel before the Father,
15 from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name.
16 I pray that out of his glorious riches **he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being,**
17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And **I pray that you,** being rooted and established in love,
18 **may have power,** together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ,
19 and to know this love that surpasses knowledge-- **that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.**
20 Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us,

Vs. 18 & 19 are incredible verses filled with promise for the believer. In 18 Paul is praying for us to have the power (which comes from the active flow of the H.S. through us) to not only understand the great vastness of the love of God but to **KNOW** it. This term translates to be embodied by it to our fullest capacity. To experience it through and through, much like a sponge is expanded and swollen with liquid to it's fullest capacity.

E.M. Bounds explains it this way "*The more we pray, the more He helps us to pray, and the larger the measure of Himself that flows through us... We are to pray for yet a larger and fuller bestowment of his power upon us. Continually asking for a larger, fuller portion that is ever increasing, ever fullness of capacity*"

Verse 19 is one of the most profound verses in all of scripture. Paul prays that we will be filled "with all the fullness of God." He is not praying that we become God. But that we might be able to continually expand our capacity to absorb all of Him that this side of heaven will allow.

The word "**filled**" literally means to "**cram full , stuff the container until it can hold no more.**"

In short Paul is saying I pray for your capacity to be “crammed full of God’s power”, to continually expand every day.

We are not called to have occasional moments of being filled to capacity by God’s fullness like may be experienced at a week-end retreat or bible conference Paul exhorts us to **LIVE DAILY IN A STATE OF CONSTANT FULLNESS OF CAPACITY**

SPONGE ILLUSTRATION

Praying in the Spirit:

when we are *sincere in our expressions from the heart*, and we *link ourselves to the inexhaustible power of the Holy Spirit* by righteous living. When we learn to *come along side others who are in pain* (as the H.S. does us). Then we *live daily in a constant state of fullness of capacity* (filled with the Holy Spirit) An amazing thing takes place:

****Our will is submitted to the Holy Spirit and we “Pray in the Spirit”**

1 Cor 2:10-16

10 but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God.

11 For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.

12 We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us.

13 This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words.

14 The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.

15 The spiritual man makes judgments about all things, but he himself is not subject to any man's judgment:

16 "For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ.

(NIV)

I Jn 5:14-15

14 This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.

15 And if we know that he hears us-- whatever we ask-- we know that we have what we asked of him.

Prayer and Fasting

Charles M. Wilson

Joel 2:12

'Even now,' declares the LORD, 'return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning.' (NIV)

One of the most overlooked aspects of prayer is fasting. There are some 35 fasts recorded in the Bible. Fasting means to voluntarily abstain from eating. It is also used in a believer's life to eliminate certain things for spiritual purposes.

Fasting was a part of Jewish worship under the Levitical Law.

Lev 16:29

29 "This is to be a lasting ordinance for you: On the tenth day of the seventh month you must deny yourselves and not do any work-- whether native-born or an alien living among you--
(NIV)

It was also a common practice during Jesus' day.

Matt 9:14-15

14 Then John's disciples came and asked him, "How is it that we and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?"

15 Jesus answered, "How can the guests of the bridegroom mourn while he is with them? The time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them; then they will fast.

(NIV)

Fasting was continued among believers in the early church.

Acts 13:1-3

1 In the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul.

2 While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."

3 So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.

(NIV)

I. Why do we need to fast?

A. We fast to prepare for spiritual warfare.

Matt 4:1-2

1 Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil.

2 After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry.

(NIV)

B. We fast to seek God's direction.

Acts 14:23

23 Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust.

(NIV)

C. We fast in connection with repentance.

Jonah 3:5

5 The Ninevites believed God. They declared a fast, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth.

(NIV)

D. We fast in response to concern for God's work.

Neh 1:4

4 When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven.

(NIV)

E. We fast to gain deliverance or protection.

2 Chr 20:2-3

2 Some men came and told Jehoshaphat, "A vast army is coming against you from Edom, from the other side of the Sea. It is already in Hazazon Tamar" (that is, En Gedi).

3 Alarmed, Jehoshaphat resolved to inquire of the LORD, and he proclaimed a fast for all Judah.

(NIV)

F. We fast to humble ourselves before God.

Ps 69:10-13

10 When I weep and fast, I must endure scorn;

11 when I put on sackcloth, people make sport of me.

12 Those who sit at the gate mock me, and I am the song of the drunkards.

13 But I pray to you, O LORD, in the time of your favor; in your great love, O God, answer me with your sure salvation.

(NIV)

G. We fast as an expression of worship.

Acts 13:2-3

2 While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."

3 So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.

(NIV)

No worship can be wholly pleasing until I am wholly pleasing to God!

H. We fast as a response to deep sorrow.

1 Sam 31:11-13

11 When the people of Jabesh Gilead heard of what the Philistines had done to Saul,

12 all their valiant men journeyed through the night to Beth Shan. They

took down the bodies of Saul and his sons from the wall of Beth Shan and went to Jabesh, where they burned them.

13 Then they took their bones and buried them under a tamarisk tree at Jabesh, and they fasted seven days.

(NIV)

II. Fasting releases God's power!

A. Bill Bright offers the following insights into the spiritual need for fasting:

1. It is a Biblical way to truly humble oneself in the sight of God.
2. It brings revelation by the Holy Spirit of a person's true spiritual condition, resulting in brokenness, repentance, and change.
3. It is a crucial means for personal revival because it brings the inner workings of the Holy Spirit into play in a most unusual and powerful way.
4. It helps us better understand the Word of God by making it more meaningful, vital and practical.
5. It transforms prayer into a richer and more personal experience.
6. It can result in dynamic personal revival - being filled with the Spirit and regaining a strong sense of spiritual determination.
7. It can restore the loss of one's first love for the Lord.

B. Fasting reduces the power of self so that the Holy Spirit can do a more intense work within us.

C. Fasting also helps in the following ways:

1. It brings a yieldedness, even a holy brokenness, resulting in inner calm and self-control.
2. It renews spiritual vision and faith.
3. It inspires determination to follow God's revealed plan for your life.

III. Fasting guidelines (adopted from Ronnie Floyd's book The Power of Prayer and Fasting)

A. Prayer and fasting are improper when one seeks...

1. to fulfill selfish desires and ambitions.
2. to attempt to manipulate God.
3. to elevate one's status or agenda.
4. to promote false piety, legalism, or religious duty.

B. Prayer and fasting are improper when they...

1. draw attention to personal glorification.
2. are attempted without sufficient seriousness and respect.
3. are conducted while intentionally continuing in sin.
4. are conducted while continuing to pursue selfish desires in pleasure and business.

IV. How to begin and conduct a fast.

A. Fast only when God leads. However, most people do not have a call to fast because they are not open to God's leadership or have not been taught the Biblical view of fasting.

- B. When God calls you to fast, determine the length and circumstances of the fast. Remember, God has specific reasons for you to fast,
- C. Identify, confess, and repent of all known sin before and during your fast.
- D. Be sensitive to the Holy Spirit's prompting in all areas of your life, since God will often require you to seek reconciliation or restoration in broken relationships.
- E. Pray! Pray often and with great fervor.
- F. Absorb large quantities of Scripture into your life. Ask God what He wants you to see and hear from His Word.
- G. Take time to be still before the Lord.
- H. Keep a journal of your purposes for the fast.
- I. Just skipping a meal, eliminating a certain food, or activity is not a Biblical fast. Pray and study the Word in place of that which you have eliminated.
- J. Consider praying aloud and in a kneeling position, maybe even on your face before God. This promotes an attitude of humility.
- K. Praise God aloud in song or word.
- L. Ask God to show you how to break your fast.

Practical exercise:

1. Reflect for a moment on this teaching. What has been revealed concerning prayer and fasting that you had not previously considered?

2. Is there an area of spiritual struggle in your life? If "Yes", write it below.

3. Have you followed the Biblical guidelines to pray and fast concerning this matter? Are you open to God's leadership here?

4. In this quiet moment, ask the Father what He would have you do. When you receive an answer, write it below.

5. If the Father is leading you to fast, consider the following:

Purpose of the fast _____
Length of the fast _____
Type of fast _____

6. Remember to identify and confess all known sin before you begin your fast.

7. Ask God to bless your time of prayer and fasting. Give Him the glory for the victory!

strength, he exchanges it for new strength. (HIS STRENGTH)

THEY WILL SOAR ON EAGLE'S WINGS - WHAT A BEAUTIFUL PICTURE OF THE ABILITY OF THE CHILD OF GOD TO RISE ABOVE THEIR CIRCUMSTANCES AND SOAR CLOSER TO GOD. THEY EXERT NO ENERGY OF THEIR OWN BECAUSE THEY RIDE ON CURRENTS OF AIR. OFTEN TIMES THESE BIRDS WILL SLEEP IN FLIGHT AS THEY SIMPLY REST ON THE AIR.

Walking and running is a reference to "life pace" ...

He says they will RUN - this means that when life gets hectic or difficult you will not grow weary (give out of strength -because our strength is HIS strength)

The reference to WALKING is dealing with the ordinary day to day grind. Sometimes it is the ordinary daily trials of living that wear us out. He says we will not faint. This means literally that they will not be over come by it. THIS IS OUR HOPE- TO WAIT ON HIM.

Let's look at 4 personalities from scripture and discover how they "waited on the Lord"

Joshua- Joshua 7: 4-7 - In this text we are told about the defeat of Israel against AI. Joshua tears his clothes, mourns and cries out to God. He begins by trying to blame God for their problems. (He's whining to God) Next, Joshua has a pity party- "Maybe we should have just stayed on the other side of the Jordan" What is he really saying here? Maybe we shouldn't have even tried... we were better off over there....this is too hard!! **Here is a man that is caught up in his circumstances. He feels overwhelmed and can't see the trees for the forest. (you ever been there?)**

But the real problem is that there is sin in the camp. Notice that the sin is on another, yet it affected the entire nation.

God's response to Joshua "What are you doing on your face ...Get up! In other words stop whining and having a pity party Joshua.

God tells him to consecrate the people (make them holy / clean)

God proceeds to narrow down the nation tribe by tribe , family by family, person by person. Then the guilty party AND HIS ENTIRE FAMILY AND ALL HIS POSSESSIONS ARE KILLED AND DESTROYED.

**** Sometimes God cannot move in our situation because of our attitude or because of sin that is hindering the way. It very well may not be your sin, but the sin of someone involved in the circumstances or situation. We must remove the sin and change the attitude to clear the way for God to move.**

David- 2 Samuel 12:15-24 In this text King David has committed adultery with Bathsheba, and the prophet Nathan has confronted him with the sin and has given him the judgement from the Lord. He and Bathsheba's son would die.

David wept and poured ashes on his head - he wouldn't eat nor sleep for 7 days he cried out to God in torment. But when the child had died, David's response was amazing

He got up, - took a bath, got dressed * The first thing he did past this was to go worship God. Only then, did he eat. After this he comforted Bathsheba and it says she conceived and bore a son. (Solomon)

***Sometimes God doesn't answer us in the "positive" way we think He should. David's response was "I have prayed and mourned and poured my heart out to Him and it was not in his will for my son to live So I've got to get back to living life." And that is what he did. He could have become bitter and angry with God as many of us do when our heart is broken. But David worshiped God, Not for God's sake, but for his own to remind him of who God was, and who he was. .**

So many of us who have sat by the side of one we love and prayed so hard for God to spare them... Yet He chooses not to, have felt the emptiness, and anger as well as a host of emotions that can rise up into our hearts. The way out of that black hole of despair is to GET BACK TO LIVING AGAIN!! Sometimes, to wait on God is to live again.

Daniel - Daniel 9-12 - In this text Daniel receives the vision from God concerning the 70 yr. Captivity of his people, as well as the vision that depicts the events that are to take place at the end of the age

9:2-3 Tells us that Daniel fell before God in prayer, petition, fasting, and sackcloth. He confessed the sins not only of himself, but of his people. Daniel was sorrowful for the sins and was despairing that his people would have to endure such a hardship as slavery.

9:20-23 tells us that while Daniel was still praying to God that Gabriel was sent as an answer to his prayer. Note that Gabriel did not come to give Daniel what he asked for, but that he came as an answer to his praying and sorrowful repentance. The angel begins to impart the vision of God's plan to Daniel. The angel reaffirmed that God's will is going to be done and Daniel needs to trust this fact.

10:2-5 Some time later Daniel, still praying for his people's repentance, fasts, does not bathe, nor does he drink. This time in response to Daniel's praying, Christ himself manifests to Daniel and reassures him. He gives Daniel another vision. But doesn't tell him that his request will be given him.

10:10-14, 19 This is a beautiful passage. Jesus tells him I have personally been sent to respond to your fervent praying. I am here to comfort you and give you peace and

strength but Jesus doesn't change the vision nor the plans of God for Daniel's sake.

12:8-9, 13 Up to this point Daniel is given the awesome vision for the future as God has ordained it to be. In 8-9 Daniel tells Jesus that he doesn't understand how all of this is going to happen. Christ's response to Daniel is pivotal.

In vs 13 Daniel is told to ...*go his way*... In short, "Daniel, I've come as an answer to your praying, but you don't need to know such things for now, go on and live your life, one day you will die, and will rise to receive your reward. Until then just know that God has established his will and it shall be done. So trust Him!!! If this isn't awesome enough, Daniel is satisfied to do just that.

Sometimes God's answer will never be understood by us. It is in those times that he tells us .. Not to worry about such things just understand that I have it all under control and Nothing is going to happen that is outside of my will. Is that enough for you?

Jesus -Matthew 26: 36-44 Let's finally take a look at Jesus prayer in the Garden. Jesus goes to pray and He asks the father "*if there is any other way*" Jesus prayed so passionately that blood like drops of sweat fell from his brow. It is important to see that Jesus did not simply ask one time for God to find another way. He went a 2nd time and a 3rd time asking the same prayer. Each time Jesus firmly states Let me do your will. This is the last time that Jesus was tempted on earth. The passage clearly teaches that this was a deep struggle for Jesus... for he was *overwhelmed to the point of death.... sorrowful and body weak with exhaustion... he was deeply troubled* This was perhaps the greatest, most difficult test for Jesus because He had to bring his own will into submission to the father's will even though the father would not give him another way.

It is unspoken, but understood in the text that it was the Father's will that Jesus suffer the cross and it's cruelty. Jesus had to submit to that purpose and plan. He could have chosen to disobey... much like the wilderness temptation where he had the same type of test.

Sometimes when we pray, we may pray and petition with great sorrow and deep troubled spirits... but God's will is that we endure the burden and it is not taken away from us. At that point we have a choice (like Christ) We could rebel and choose disobedience or we could submit and trust God for the strength to endure and to do his will. It is interesting to note that once Jesus leaves this place of intense prayer. The scripture says "He set his face toward Jerusalem". In other words he was determined to see it through. From that point forward he never asked God to take this cup away again. He was resolved to see the Father's will done EVEN UNTO DEATH!!

To wait on the Lord is to live Proverbs 3:5-6

The "All Day Prayer"

Dr. Richard Wilson

"Pray without ceasing."

1 Thessalonians 5:17

There are quite a few commands in scripture. All are designed to keep us on track in our spiritual lives. The command of 1 Thessalonians 5:17 stands out to me. We are told to pray without ceasing. We have all heard a prayer or two that we thought would never end. What exactly is this verse commanding us to do. Are we being commanded to pray and never stop? Are we being commanded to pray all day and all night? Are we being commanded to stop everything else and just pray?

It is obvious that we are not to stop everything and just pray all the time. Even Jesus did not spend every moment of every day on his knees in prayer. When we examine the idea of "without ceasing" the Greek does not help us much. The Greek says that our prayer should be "permanent, continually, without intermission." Wow- maybe we are to pray more than we thought.

I believe that the idea taught in 1 Thessalonians 5:17 is that we should be in a continual attitude of prayer. Prayer should never be far from our lips. Prayer should be more than something that bookends our day. Prayer should be an ongoing part of our thoughts each day. I believe this is how Jesus lived each day. He was sensitive to what his Father was leading him to do. How was he so sensitive to his Father's leading? Because he was in a continual state of prayer. His heart and mind were always spiritually active.

We tend to be spiritually active in flashes. We pray early and late in the day because we know the need to begin and end our days in prayer. We pray at times throughout our day, but do we live in a continual spirit of prayer. The moments and situations of life should bring us over and over again to prayer.

This is a challenge to try an "all day prayer." This is a challenge accepted by many people through the years. Some years ago a man by the name of Brother Lawrence was interviewed about his life. He was a monk in a monastery. He lived his life in constant communion with God. He made the point that he could tell no difference between the times of formal prayer and his time in the kitchen washing dishes. He was always aware of the presence of God and he was always in a spirit of prayer.

Can we do the same? The best way is to try an "all day prayer." How do you do it? Let's think our way through a day.

Pray when your eyes open. Commit yourself and your day to the Lord
As you think of your busy day, pray about it
Pray often for guidance
Pray for safety as you travel throughout the day

Pray for your family members as you come in contact with them
Pray for wisdom as you interact with your family members
Pray for your children as you drop them off for school or send them out to the bus stop
Pray for your witness as you go to work, stores, etc.
Pray for your coworkers as you encounter them- pray especially for those who may be lost
Pray when you find yourself in difficult situations
Pray when you are confused
Pray when you are frustrated
Pray before you speak- especially in volatile situations
Pray for opportunities to show the love of Christ
Pray that you might be used to encourage someone
When you tell someone you will pray for them, do it right then
Offer prayers of praise as you see God's hand at work during the day
When you become aware of a sin, confess it at that moment
When you are under temptation, pray that Christ will deliver you from evil
When you are rushed, pray for help with your time
Pray whenever you open the Word of God during the day
Ask God, "What are you trying to teach me today?"
Pray for an opportunity to witness
Pray for the hurting you see during the day
Pray for churches you pass as you drive that they might be effective
If you pass a liquor store or adult club, pray for those in bondage to those sins
Remember your family members at key times during the day
Pray for your church family, staff and leaders
If you pass a hospital or nursing home, pray for those in need and their families
If you pass a funeral home, pray for those who have lost family members
Pray about a need that comes up in your life
Pray a prayer of thanksgiving at each meal
Pray, seeking God's will when you are making a decision even if it seems minor

As you come to the close of your day. . . .

Ask God to search you and know you- to reveal sin in your life
Confess your sins to God and thank Him for His forgiveness
Specifically acknowledge the ways God worked in, through and around your life
Praise God for His provision
Pray for and even with your family members
Pray specifically about the needs in your family
If you find that you are burdened and cannot sleep, pray about your burden
Ask God to give you peace and rest for the night

Close your eyes and rest in the loving arms of God- Your Friend- The One you walked with throughout the day. Give it a try- see what happens when you pray the "all day prayer."

With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints. Ephesians 6:18