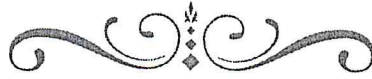


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MY PRAYER LIFE SURVEY

- 1) How much do I enjoy my prayer time? On a scale from 1 - 10 (be honest) _____
- 2) How often do I see my prayers answered?
Frequently _____ Occasionally _____ Seldom _____
- 3) Do I ever have prayers answered in an extraordinary way? Yes ____ No ____
- 4) When I pray, do I feel like I'm really connecting with God? Yes ____ No ____
- 5) On average, how much time per day do I set apart for prayer? _____
- 6) Do I ever fast? _____ How often? _____
- 7) Has my fasting seemed to be beneficial to me and has it seemed to help the situation about which I fasted? _____
- 8) How much of my prayer time, as a % of my total time, is spent praying for the following
 - a) My own needs _____ %
 - b) Needs of Family _____ %
 - c) Needs of Friends _____ %
 - d) Our leaders, church & civil _____ %
 - e) Praising, thanking & worshipping God _____ %
 - f) For the lost in my region _____ %
 - g) For the church in my region _____ % * Total should equal 100%
- 9) What would I most like to see improved about my prayer life? _____
- 10) Is corporate prayer meaningful to me, or would I rather just pray at home?
_____ Why? _____
- 11) Do I believe that if I ask God to help my prayer life become powerful, and I put forth the effort, that I could see radical improvement? Yes _____ No _____



Lesson 1

RELATIONSHIP IS PRIMARY ~ PROCUREMENT IS SECONDARY

When most of us think of prayer, we think of *asking*. We have a list of things we pray for, whether or not it is a written one, which normally includes our family, friends, and any special situations that have come up in our lives. But to mature beyond just asking, we must understand that prayer, at the most basic level, is about a *relationship with God*. Let's look at some scriptures.

Genesis 3:8

It's reasonable to suppose that God regularly visited the garden, and that although He enjoyed all that He had made, His contact with His man (Adam & Eve) was the high point of His visit. Presumably, they dialogued about things on God's mind, and things on their minds. I would say that this is the first account of prayer in the bible.

Psalm 5:1-3

David consistently took time to be with God. He spent time composing songs with which he praised the Lord, time just talking and listening to Him, and time crying out to Him for help. Out of this came the growth of his incredible relationship with God.

Maturing in Prayer

Psalm 116: 1-6

The psalmist knew that God loved him and that when he prayed, God listened, because of his relationship with God. God loves you too! We all like to spend time with persons who love us.

The Lord also wants you to be completely dependent upon Him, so that He can bless you and so that you don't have 'wandering eyes' and look to other gods to meet your needs.

Matthew 6: 8

God of course already knows our needs before we ask Him, so why must we even ask? The answer in a word is RELATIONSHIP.

Matthew 6: 9-13

Jesus' teaching on prayer here is not so much a prayer to be recited, but a prayer *outline*. It begins with the phrase "Our Father"...! He emphasizes relationship; a father/son relationship in which the Father's concerns and priorities are those of the sons. Thus we move beyond "me and mine" to "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done." We are then encouraged to look to Him not only for our own needs, but for the needs of others as well. Note the use of the plural pronouns "our" and "us."

John 15: 1-8

Jesus likened our relationship with Him to that between a vine and a branch. We are completely dependant upon Him for life. Relative to our prayer life, we learn that this abiding results in two things:

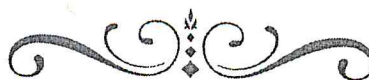
- 1) Discernment of the will of God so that we may pray according to it
- 2) The certainty that we will obtain what we are asking for!

Hebrews 4: 14-16

Through the mediation of Jesus Christ, we can approach the Father confidently in prayer. He is on His throne, but it is a throne of grace where we may find mercy, and obtain the help we need for ourselves and others.

PRAYER:

Lord, I want to know You, and I want my prayer life to flow out of our relationship. I ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.





Lesson 9

SPIRITUAL WARFARE ~ IRRESISTIBLE OFFENCE

Adam was given authority over the earth by God at creation (Genesis 1:28). He subsequently lost it at the fall when he succumbed to the devil's deception and rebelled against God. This would seem to be the topic of conversation in Luke 4:6. The devil laid claim to the earth and that claim was not contradicted by Jesus. That alone would not validate the devil's claim, but we also have the Apostle John's inspired testimony in 1 John 5:19, in which he states that the whole world (Greek; "*kosmos*") lies in the power of the evil one. Jesus regained that authority over the earth from the devil by His death and resurrection (Matthew 28:18) and He delegated it to believers (Luke 10:18-19, Matthew 16:19; note the phrase "on earth"). It is now incumbent upon them to work with the Holy Spirit in advancing the kingdom of God and dispossessing the devil from the earth in which he remains as a squatter. This process; now occurring primarily in the spirit, but manifesting in the visible realm, corresponds to what the children of Israel did in the Promised Land.

Critical to our perspective is an understanding that in this conflict we wage war from a posture of victory in Christ. Romans 8:37 tells us that we are *more* than conquerors. We are this because Jesus conquered, and then essentially handed the clean-up operation over to us. So we pray, we praise, we proclaim and we act to advance and administer His kingdom until He returns and brings everything into complete and total subjection to Himself.

Maturing in Prayer

Our Authority

Ephesians 2:4-6

We are seated with Christ in heavenly places, but not to be passive observers!

Luke 10:18-19

Jesus may be referring here to Satan's fall from heaven at the time of his rebellion against God. The suggestion then could be that he fell in defeat, and thus has been shown to be inferior in power to the Lord and His Christ, *or* that he has fallen from heaven *to earth*, or both (to earth and/or the second heaven immediately above the earth). See Isaiah 14:12-15; which possibly refers not just to the historical king of Babylon, but to the spirit of rebellion; the devil himself, who is god of this world's system which is sometimes referred to as Babylon (Revelation 18). But what is clear is that by the authority which the Lord has invested in us we are to proceed to establish the "new regime" which Jesus inaugurated by His advent.

Luke 11:14-23

Here Jesus explains some things relative to the expulsion of demons, and describes the unseen process by which the instructions He gave his disciples, recorded in Matthew 10:8, are executed.

2 Corinthians 10:4-5

The spiritual conflict described here by the apostle Paul seems to be that which is taking place at a higher level than the "ground skirmishes" in which individual demons are cast out. But the weapons given the church are sufficient in God to see the unseen powers behind major spiritual influences brought down and brought into submission to the Truth.

Romans 5:17

The believer reigns in life; and that has *now* begun!

Philippians 2:9-11

The exalted Christ, with whom and in whom we are, and in whom we have authority. The power behind His authority is irresistible.

Our Weapons

Philippians 2:9-11

Jesus' name, at which every knee must bow and every tongue confess His Lordship

Acts 3:16

Jesus name, and faith in it; brings reversal of the ravages of sin on a body

Mark 11:23-24

Faith-filled words. The language used here by our Lord is obviously meant to communicate that through faith we have tremendous power in Him, and that this power can be released by our words.

Proverbs 21:30

The wisdom of God

Romans 12:21

Love. Yes, love. See also Song of Solomon 8:6

2 Corinthians 10:4-5

Divine power, able to *demolish* the opposition.

1 John 5:4

Faith; by which we stand and by which our weapons are employed and deployed

Praise to God

Praise to God, and the spiritual dynamics associated with it, are themes too vast to deal with comprehensively in this context, but must be included in it. The ability to vocalize that which he thinks and wills is a primary way in which man reflects the image of his Maker. When we vocalize praise to God from the heart we are aligning ourselves with our created purpose in a most fundamental way. An outcome of it is that the qualities which we attribute to God by our praise come into fuller manifestation. Consider the fact that God, in whose image we are made, *spoke* creation into being. In the context of spiritual warfare, it is difficult to know whether to categorize praise to God as a weapon, or as a way of creating an atmosphere in which the manifestation of the will of God is somehow accelerated. It is probably best to view it as both.

Psalm 8:2 / Matthew 21:16

In Psalm 8 David declares that strength will come from the lips of children and babes to silence the Lord's enemies. In Matthew 21:16, the Lord Jesus quotes this verse, but substitutes the word "praise" for the word "strength", thus providing us further insight into the dynamic.

Maturing in Prayer

Psalm 149

Here, praise to God (faith-filled proclamation; in this instance corporate) is associated with a release of God's power against His enemies. This passage, perhaps more clearly than any other in scripture, illuminates for us this reality. God's people praise Him and exult before Him with music and dancing. They delightfully acknowledge His kingship. The Lord delights in his people, and responds to their humility (which they are exhibiting by acknowledging the blessedness of their relationship to Him) by crowning them with salvation. This manifests itself in the form of an empowerment to administer His righteous judgments in the earth, which involves subduing those opposed to that process (in both the seen and unseen realms) and bringing them into total submission to the will of God! It is an honor for the saints to participate in this process.

PRAYER:

Father, thank You for the great privilege of participating with You in re-establishing Your kingdom of righteousness, peace and joy in the earth. Thank You for providing me with irresistible weapons of offence, and the courage and wisdom to use them successfully until You return. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

