

Prayer and Personal Bible Study

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Teacher's Manual

Prayer and Personal Bible Study Contents

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Lesson 1

The Importance of Prayer

I. Everyone agrees that prayer is important to the spiritual life of the believer.

A. Some of the things that have been said about prayer.

God does nothing on earth save in answer to believing prayer. –John Wesley

We are living in dangerous times and if there was ever a time when we need to pray, it is now. More can be done by prayer than anything else, prayer is our greatest weapon. –Billy Graham

Prayer is invading the impossible. It is essentially a partnership of the redeemed child of God working hand in hand with God toward the realization of His redemptive purposes on earth. –Jack Hayford

If I could impress my heart on every syllable and baptize every word with my tears, I could not too earnestly entreat you to be above all things earnest in prayer.
–Charles H. Spurgeon

All the Christian virtues are locked up in the word “prayer.” –Charles H. Spurgeon

Your growth and mine into the likeness of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be in exact proportion to the time and to the heart we put into prayer. –R.A. Torrey

Those who have left the deepest impression on this sin-cursed earth have been men and women of prayer. You will find that prayer has been the mighty power that had moved not only God, but man. –Dwight L. Moody

When the Church shuts herself up to the power of the inner chamber, and the soldiers of the Lord have received on their knees “power from on high,” then the powers of darkness will be shaken and souls will be delivered. –Andrew Murray

Prayer does not fit us for the greater works; prayer is the greater work.
–Oswald Chambers

I am so busy now that if I did not spend two or three hours each day in prayer, I would not get through the day. –Martin Luther

I have been driven many times to my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go. My own wisdom, and that of all about me, seemed insufficient for the day. –Abraham Lincoln

Neglect of prayer is a guarantee that we will not be victors. –Richard Roberts

Prayer is weakness leaning on omnipotence. –W.S. Bowden

For My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations. –God, Isaiah 56:7c

Men always ought to pray and not lose heart. –Jesus, Luke 18:1b

Someone has said that prayer is the most preached and least practiced doctrine in the Bible.

B. Prayer Defined

Ask Class to give a short sentence definition of prayer.

- Prayer is trusting God.
- Prayer is going for a walk with God in the woods.
- Prayer is sharing your needs with God.
- Prayer is opening yourself up to God.
- Prayer is opening your eyes to all that you are and depending on God.
- Prayer is washing yourself of the world and immersing yourself in God.
- Prayer is agreement with others that God is able.
- Prayer is calling out to one who cares.
- Prayer is listening.
- Prayer is not just listening, but hearing.
- Prayer is the linking of two spirits about things that count.
- Prayer is reaching out your hand.
- Prayer is the finite calling upon the infinite.
- Prayer is a tiny hand placed in a great hand.
- Prayer is communion with the ruler of the universe.
- Prayer is calling into action all of the forces of the universe.

--Excerpted from an unpublished document by Dick Andrew

C. Prayerlessness Defined

- Prayerlessness is saying I'm too busy for God.
- Prayerlessness is walking in the dark blindfolded.
- Prayerlessness is the fool saying in his heart there is no God.
- Prayerlessness is wasting time you think you are saving.
- Prayerlessness is seeing only with the natural eyes.
- Prayerlessness is presuming upon God's grace and mercy.
- Prayerlessness is a car with no petrol.
- Prayerlessness is trusting in your own strength.
- Prayerlessness is the pride of life.
- Prayerlessness is counting on someone else to do the praying.

- Prayerlessness is going into battle without armor or weapons.
- Prayerlessness is laziness.
- Prayerlessness is giving into self.

--Excerpted from an unpublished document by Dave Newquest

II. God promises to respond to the prayers of His people.

Note some of the key verses in the Bible relative to prayer:

If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land. II Chronicles 7:14

The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their cry.

Psalm 34:15

Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore I will deliver him; I will set him on high, because he has known My name. He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him and honor him. With long life I will satisfy him, and show him My salvation. Psalm 91:14-16

The LORD is near to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth.

Psalm 145:18

The LORD is far from the wicked, but He hears the prayer of the righteous.

Proverbs 15:29

It shall come to pass that before they call, I will answer; and while they are still speaking, I will hear. Isaiah 65:24

Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. Jeremiah 29:12-13

Thus says the LORD who made it, the LORD who formed it to establish it (the LORD is His name): "Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know." Jeremiah 33:2-3

Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. 9 Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? 11 If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him! Matthew 7:7-11

Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them. Mark 11:24

Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father. And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it. John 14:12-14

If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you. John 15:7

And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you. Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full. John 16:23-24

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. 6 But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. 7 For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; 8 he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways. James 1:5-8

The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. James 5:16b

And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight. I John 3:22

Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him. I John 5:14-15

III. Jesus gave us an example of prayer and dependence on the Father.

A. Jesus often withdrew from the multitudes to spend time alone with the Father (Mt. 14:23; 6:46; Luke 5:16).

However, the report went around concerning Him all the more; and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by Him of their infirmities. So He Himself often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed. Luke 5:15-16

B. Jesus liked to pray early in the morning (Mark 1:35).

Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed.

- C. At times Jesus spent all night in prayer especially when He had important decisions to make (Luke 6:12-13).

Now it came to pass in those days that He went out to the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day, He called His disciples to Himself; and from them He chose twelve whom He also named apostles.

- D. Jesus' prayer life aroused the desire for prayer among the disciples (Luke 11:1).
Could we say that our personal prayer life is stirring others up to pray?

Now it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, that one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples."

- E. Jesus included others in key times of prayer (Luke 9:28-29).

Now it came to pass, about eight days after these sayings, that He took Peter, John, and James and went up on the mountain to pray. As He prayed, the appearance of His face was altered, and His robe became white and glistening.

- F. Jesus prayed on key occasions.

1. In the context of His baptism (Luke 3:21).
2. On the mount of transfiguration (Luke 9:28).
3. Prior to his leaving the earth (John 17)
4. In the garden of Gethsemane (Mt. 26:36-46).
5. On the cross (Mt. 27:46; Luke 23:46).

- G. Jesus entire earthly walk (the days of His flesh) was marked by prayer (Heb. 5:7-8).

...who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear, though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.

IV. Prayer was a vital part of the Early Church and its success.

The Apostles in the Book of Acts demonstrated an absolute dependence on God which is evidenced by their continual watchfulness in prayer.

Someone has once said that you can measure your dependence on God by the amount of time that you spend in prayer.

- A. The Early Church continued steadfastly in prayer (Acts 2:42).

And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.

1. To continue steadfastly is “to persevere; to give constant attention to a thing; to adhere to; be devoted to; not to faint; to show oneself courageous; to be in constant readiness for; to wait on continually.”
2. The apostles knew that they had a responsibility before God to fulfill their primary call and give themselves to prayer (Acts 6:4).

...but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.

B. They prayed on a regular basis (Acts 2:42; 3:1; 6:4; 10:2, 4; 12:5; 16:13).

C. They prayed in specific situations.

1. In selecting leadership (Acts 1:24)
2. In setting in leaders (Acts 6:6)
3. In sending out ministries (Acts 13:3)
4. In ordaining elders (Acts 14:23)
5. In departing from friends (Acts 20:26; 21:15)

D. They prayed for special requests and needs.

1. For boldness (Acts 4:31)
2. To receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:15)
3. To raise the dead (Acts 9:40)
4. Peter's release (Acts 12:12)
5. The mind of the Lord (Acts 16:16)
6. Deliverance (Acts 16:25)
7. Healing (Acts 28:8)

Note just one example in Acts 4:23-31.

And being let go, they went to their own companions and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said to them. 24 So when they heard that, they raised their voice to God with one accord and said: “Lord, You are God, who made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them, who by the mouth of Your servant David have said: ‘Why did the nations rage, and the people plot vain things? 26 The kings of the earth took their stand, and the rulers were gathered together against the LORD and against His Christ.’ 27 For truly against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You

anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together 28 to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done. 29 Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word, 30 by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus.” 31 And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.

E. The Church in the New Testament was born in prayer (Acts 1:14).

1. From then on, prayer was a vital key.

The Christians in the Book of Acts breathed the atmosphere of prayer; believed in the power of prayer; began, continued and ended all their work with prayer.

2. At least 17 out of the 28 chapters in the Book of Acts have a reference to prayer.

3. Prayer is the link of the saints with the Lord of heaven. Prayer was the channel of the supply of the Spirit.

V. If we want similar success to that of Jesus and the Early Church we must be a people of prayer and follow the instructions of Hosea.

Break up your fallow ground, for it is time to seek the LORD, till He comes and rains righteousness on you. Hosea 10:12

A. *“Break up”*

We must take personal responsibility for making a change in our present situation.

B. *“Your fallow ground”*

We must deal with the issue of our own hard hearts and the other hindrances to prayer. Is there ground that is untilled in our lives? Is the ground of our heart filled with weeds?

C. *“For it is time”*

There is no better time than now. It is always time to seek the Lord.

D. *“To seek the Lord”*

Our primary goal in prayer is not to seek things, but to seek the Lord and develop our relationship with Him.

E. *“Until”*

We are to be persistent in prayer continuing until we see the result of those prayers.

F. *“He comes and rains righteousness”*

Prayer will always lead to the fruit of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

Lesson 2

How to Pray

Deep in the heart of every believer is the conviction that prayer is important. Most believers know that there is, perhaps, no activity that is more important to the development of the human spirit and the character of Jesus than that of prayer. We know that our pray life will affect our fellowship with God, the power of our Christian witness, the holiness of our character and our ability to be continually led and guided by the Holy Spirit.

In spite of this general knowledge, most believers live in a chronic state of apology and regret that they pray so little. Most believers have recommended prayer to someone else as an answer to their need. While they were making the recommendation, the Holy Spirit most likely said to them, "That is good advice. It would be good for you as well!"

So if prayer is so important, why do so many believers neglect it?

I. There are many reasons why people do not pray as they know they should.

A. There may be a lot of reasons why people neglect prayer based on spiritual issues in their lives. These reasons include:

1. Lukewarmness in their relationship to the Lord (apathy).
2. Lack of forgiveness toward others.
3. A disobedient lifestyle that hides from God.
4. Over confidence in self.

The way that we deal with these spiritual problems is through repentance and change.

B. There are primarily two structural problems that we all face when seeking to bring order to our prayer life.

1. We struggle with issues related to the pitch and tempo of modern life.

Those who lived in previous centuries operated by the calendar and the sun dial. We live in a time when things are measured in nanoseconds. This creates two problems for us.

- a. We have difficulty in finding a daily period of time that is immune to interruption.
- b. We have difficulty quieting our minds that are so full of all of the pressures and demands that are placed upon us and the hurried pace with which we live our lives.

2. We struggle with the issue that the disciples had of “how to pray.”

Jesus said to His disciples, “Could you not watch with Me for one hour?” (Mt. 26:40). The truth is that many believers have difficulty filling 15 minutes with prayer. How do you prayer for an hour?

II. There are ways to deal with the pitch and tempo of life.

Before we can deal with any of these issues we need to stop and ask ourselves some questions.

- What are the most important things in this life?
- What really comes first in my life?
- Am I more interested in religious service or getting to know God in a personal way?
- What counts the most to me, what I do or who I am?
- What means more to Christ, my work for Him or my relationship to Him?
- What is most important, ability and activity or coming to the image of Christ?

If your answer is the same as mine, you will soon realize that all of the things that are most important in our relationship to God are cultivated through and dependent upon prayer.

The only conclusion that you can come to is that regular prayer is, perhaps, the most important thing that you can do.

Jesus was the busiest man on the face of the earth and yet, even at His busiest times, He knew that He had to withdraw Himself for prayer.

Three things are necessary in dealing with the pitch and tempo of life.

A. A Quiet Place

1. For Jesus it was the wilderness (Luke 5:15-16), a mountain (Luke 6:12-13) or any solitary place (Mark 1:35).

Now it came to pass in those days that He went out to the mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day, He called His disciples to Himself; and from them He chose twelve whom He also named apostles. Luke 6:12-13

2. For the men of old it was a personal altar.

The word altar simply means “a place of slaughter or sacrifice.” For holy men and women of old, it was that personal place of sacrifice that became their own personal sanctuary or “holy place.”

- a. Noah had his altar (Gen. 8:20).
 - b. Abraham had his altar (Gen. 22:9-14).
 - c. Jacob had his altars (Gen. 28:16-19; 33:20; 35:7).
 - d. Moses had his altar (Ex. 17:15).
 - e. Joshua had his altar (Josh. 8:30).
 - f. Gideon had his altar (Judg. 6:24).
 - g. Samuel had his altar (I Sam. 7:12).
 - h. David had his altar (II Sam. 24:24-25).
 - i. Solomon had his altar (II Chr. 6:13).
 - j. Elijah had his altar on Mount Carmel (I Kgs. 18:30-40).
3. As believers who have a passion for prayer and communion with the Lord we need to have our secret place of communion (Mt. 6:6).

But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.

An attic, garage, closet, car, under a tree, apron over head (?)

B. A Quiet Time

The most common time in the Bible for prayer is the first part of the day. Someone has once said, “Hem in both ends of your day with prayer and it won’t be so likely to unravel.”

1. Jesus prayed early in the morning (Mark 1:35).

Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed.

2. The Psalmist encouraged an early morning encounter with God (Ps. 5: 3; 55:17; 88:13; 119:147).

Give ear to my words, O LORD, consider my meditation. Give heed to the voice of my cry, My King and my God, for to You I will pray. My voice You shall hear in the morning, O LORD; in the morning I will direct it to You, and I will look up.

Psalm 5:1-3

But to You I have cried out, O LORD, and in the morning my prayer comes before You. Psalm 88:13

I rise before the dawning of the morning, and cry for help. Psalm 119:147

3. The important thing is to develop a daily routine of prayer.

There is a price to pay for this. The more you can build a habit, the harder it will be for you to miss the time. This time should be seen as your “appointment with God.”

C. A Quiet Mind (Psalm 131)

LORD, my heart is not haughty, nor my eyes lofty. Neither do I concern myself with great matters, nor with things too profound for me. 2 Surely I have calmed and quieted my soul, like a weaned child with his mother; like a weaned child is my soul within me. 3 O Israel, hope in the LORD from this time forth and forever.

This will involve a certain amount of thought control. If we are going to hear from God we must shut out the other voices that are clamoring for our attention.

III. There are four things that can help us learn how to pray.

The four things are understanding what prayer is not, understanding what prayer is, understanding the key components of prayer and understanding the various models for prayer.

A. Understanding what prayer is not.

1. Prayer is not a magic formula (Acts 19:13-16).

Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists took it upon themselves to call the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, “We exorcise you by the Jesus whom Paul preaches.” 14 Also there were seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, who did so. 15 And the evil spirit answered and said, “Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?” 16 Then the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, overpowered them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.

Prayer works because it is based on relationship, not a certain way of saying the prayer or the words used. Sometimes prayers from prayer books can be such a formula. The prayer was the genuine cry of someone’s heart to the Lord, but it is not your cry or your words. God would rather have a stumbling prayer from our hearts than an eloquent prayer read out of a book.

2. Prayer is not vain or empty repetitions (Mt. 6:7).

And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words.

Even what is commonly referred to as the Lord's Prayer can be said in this fashion. We can say it without even thinking. Many grace prayers said before meals are nothing more than vain repetitions.

Martin Luther once challenged a man that he could not say the Lord's Prayer and concentrate on what he was saying for the whole prayer. He said, "If you can do this I will give you this horse." The man accepted the challenge. As soon as he said the "Amen" to his prayer he said to Luther, "Does the bridle come with it?" Obviously he was thinking about the horse and not the prayer.

3. Prayer is not wearing God down with long speaking (Mt. 6:7; 23:14).

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. Matthew 23:14

4. Prayer is not a superficial routine.

It involves sincere asking, continued seeking, and persistent knocking (Luke 11:9-13).

So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 10 For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. 11 If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? 12 Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? 13 If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!

5. Prayer is not a religious form or show (Luke 18:9-14).

It is not about how you hold your head or if you fold your hands; it is about the posture of your heart. It is not cultivating a religious sounding voice; it is the cry of your heart. It is not something that is done to impress men; it is something done to touch the heart of God.

Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: 10 "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. 11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank You that I am not like other men--extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. 12 I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.' 13 And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a

sinner!’ 14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

6. Prayer is not dictating to or making demands of God but submitting oneself to His will and purpose (Heb. 5:7).

During the days of Jesus’ life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. –NIV

B. Understanding what prayer actually is.

1. Prayer is talking with God.

As such prayer is communicating with God in much the same way that you would communicate to a person. Can you imagine using “prayer formulas” when talking to a friend or relative?

When you communicate or fellowship with another person there are certain areas that are commonly covered.

- a. You tell them what you appreciate about them.
 - b. You acknowledge their contribution to your life.
 - c. You make them aware of your personal needs and the needs of those close to you.
 - d. You make sure that you settle any offenses that may affect your relationship with them.
 - e. You share your personal plans and goals with them and seek their input.
 - f. You listen to what they may want to say to you.
2. Prayer is listening to God (Is. 55:3a).

Incline your ear, and come to Me. Hear, and your soul shall live...

Come to me with your ears wide open. Listen, for the life of your soul is at stake.

–NLT

When you communicate with others it is meant to be a two-way experience. When you communicate with others you do not simply talk at them, you let them talk to you as well. When you spend time with the Lord, some of that time should be spent in listening to His communication to you and simply waiting on Him basking in His presence. (Note: We will be going into more detail on this aspect of prayer later in the course.)

C. Understanding the key components of prayer.

Based on the above understanding of communication, it is easy to see the most common components of prayer. There are five principle components of prayer.

1. Praising God for Who He is.

This is where we rehearse back to God His awesome attributes—His excellent greatness (Ps. 150:2; Ps. 145:1-3).

I will extol You, my God, O King; and I will bless Your name forever and ever. Every day I will bless You, and I will praise Your name forever and ever. Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; and His greatness is unsearchable.

Psalm 145:1-3

2. Thanking God for what He has done.

This is where we acknowledge the fact that everything we have comes from God and show appreciation even for the seemingly small things (I Th. 5:18; Ps. 100:4-5).

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. I Thessalonians 5:16-18

Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name. For the LORD is good; His mercy is everlasting, and His truth endures to all generations. Psalm 100:4-5

3. Asking God for things that we need.

This is when we petition God to come to our aid and give us those things that are consistent with His promises and His will for our lives (Phil. 4:6).

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God...

4. Confessing our sins to God and asking for His mercy.

This is where we acknowledge our shortcomings and failures before the God that we have offended (Ps. 32:5-6; I John 1:9). It also involves reinforcing our desire to live a life that is pleasing to the Lord.

I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD," and You forgave the iniquity of my sin. 6 For this cause everyone who is godly shall pray to You in a time when You may

be found; surely in a flood of great waters they shall not come near him.

Psalm 32:5-6

5. Sharing our heart with God concerning our destiny and our innermost desires.

This is where we share our dreams, our visions, our desires, our longings, our goals, our plans and lay them all before the Lord (Ps. 27:4).

One thing I have desired of the LORD, that will I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in His temple.

D. Understanding various models of prayer.

In the next couple of sessions we will look at some models of prayer that will help guide us in our prayer times.

Lesson 3-4 Prayer Models

Part of learning how to pray is understanding how to incorporate various models for prayer into our personal prayer life. When Jesus responded to the request of His disciples to teach them to pray, He gave them a prayer model or prayer outline to assist them. He gave them a prayer track on which to run.

I. There are several biblical models for prayer.

A. Praying the Lord's Prayer (Mt. 6:9-13; Luke 11:1-4).

When Jesus' disciples asked Him to teach them how to pray, He gave them what is referred to as the "Lord's Prayer." This pattern for daily prayer was not meant to be a magic formula or a religious chant, but rather a model for how to pray every day. Most likely this prayer should be seen as an outline to our prayer and not the actual words of our prayer.

In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen. Matthew 6:9-13

The implication from Luke 11:1 is that this was the way in which Jesus prayed.

Now it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, that one of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples." So He said to them, "When you pray, say: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us day by day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one." Luke 11:1-4

1. In His discussion on prayer, Jesus taught several important aspects of prayer.

- a. He taught that our prayers should be addressed to our Father in heaven (Mt. 6:9; Luke 11:2).

Jesus is the One Who opened a way unto the Father. Now we have free access to come to the Father as His dear children. (John 14:6; Eph. 2:18; Heb. 10:19-22).

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." John 14:6

For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.

Ephesians 2:18

- b. He taught that our prayers should be a daily routine (Mt. 6:11; Luke 11:3).
- c. He taught that our prayers should be audible or spoken (Luke 11:2).

When you pray, say...

Jesus prayer life was not one of meditation and introspection (although there is some place for that). His prayer was communication with His Heavenly Father. He put His prayer into words and spoke them to the Father. He encouraged us to do the same. (Note: We will be looking at this thought more fully in Lesson 7, The Voice of Prayer.)

- 2. In this prayer Jesus taught the basic ingredients of prayer.
 - a. Our Approach: *“Our Father in heaven...”*

When we come to God we come to Him as our Heavenly Father. We come to Him as our source, our provider, our protector and our friend. We come to Him with the understanding that we have the privilege and the right to do so based on the fact that we have been adopted into God’s family through faith in Jesus Christ and that God the Father sees us as valuable as the price paid for our redemption. Therefore, we can come boldly before Him without fear or intimidation.

A major focus of this prayer should a spirit of thankfulness for what has been accomplished for us in Christ and the position that we have before God that was made possible by His redemptive work.

- b. Our Praise: *“Hallowed be Your name”*

When we pray this prayer we are acknowledging the attributes of God as our father. He is holy, He is all-powerful, He is everywhere present, He is all wise, He has all knowledge, He is love, He is merciful, He is faithful, He is true, He is righteous and just in all that He does. This is a time for us to thank Him for all that He is to us as represented in these divine qualities. A major focus of this prayer should be thanksgiving for all that God is for us.

(Note: This is a great time to insert prayer relative to the Jehovah names of God. See the next section for guidance in this area.)

- c. Our Perspective: *“Your kingdom come”*

The LORD has established His throne in heaven, and His kingdom rules over all. Psalm 103:19

Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and Your dominion endures throughout all generations. Psalm 145:13

When we pray this prayer we are acknowledging that our Father is above all, His kingdom rules over all (Ps. 103:19) and His kingdom extends from everlasting to everlasting (Ps. 145:13). We are also acknowledging that He is the king or ruler over our individual lives. We are bringing ourselves in placement before God as subjects of the king and His kingdom. We are acknowledging Him as the Lord of our lives, the lives of our family and every other aspect of our lives including our job, our relationships, our lifestyle and our schedule.

When we pray this prayer we are inviting God's rule in our lives. We are giving Him permission to establish His kingdom first and foremost in us—"in this earth." We are saying to God that His purpose and the extension of His kingdom on earth take precedent over every thing else. We are also saying that our lives have significance only in so far as they contribute to God's purpose and the extension of His kingdom.

We are also acknowledging the realms of God's authority in our lives. We freshly place ourselves in right relationship to parents, employers, civil authorities, spouses and church leaders. We realize afresh that these human authorities are extensions of God's authority and that God will use them in our lives for His purposes. For this reason we pray for kings and all those who are in authority (I Tim. 2:2).

Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. I Timothy 2:1-4

d. Our Alignment: *"Your will be done"*

When we pray this prayer we are making God's lordship very personal. We are aligning ourselves personally and posturing ourselves in a place of personal submission to God's plan for our individual lives. We are declaring to God that we prefer His will over our will, the will of others and the will of Satan's for our lives.

Part of this prayer includes a desire to discover, enter into and accomplish our personal purpose and destiny. Part of this prayer is acknowledging that God is

also committed to this and that He is giving us the very best even though we do not always fully understand our present circumstance.

e. Our Provision: *“Give us our daily bread”*

When we pray this prayer we are acknowledging our absolute dependency upon God. We need natural provision, but more than that we need spiritual provision. We need food for our souls. We need daily “manna from heaven.” We need sustenance from the source of our strength. We are asking for God to speak to us and give us “meat in due season.” We are asking for something fresh for our souls. We are asking for a fresh filling of the Holy Spirit which is the fuel that keeps our spiritual motor running (Eph. 5:18).

f. Our Relationships: *“Forgive us...as we forgive others”*

Here we acknowledge that even though we are God’s children, we still sin and are in need of continual forgiveness and reconciliation not only in our relationship to God, but also in our relationships with other people. We are confessing to God that we are concerned about the sin issue because we know that it separates us from both God and man. We are asking for God’s grace so that we can to extend the same forgiveness to others that He has so graciously extended to us. We are asking for God’s help in being more understanding of and patient with others who are sinners just like us. Every day will present opportunities for us to be offended. As we pray this prayer we are asking for His grace for this day to face all of the relational challenges that may arise.

g. Our Warfare: *“Lead us not into temptation”*

As we pray this prayer we are acknowledging that we are all prone to wander and stray from God’s pathway. We are admitting that we have a human nature to deal with including lusts of the flesh which war against our spirit man. We are confessing that we are vulnerable and we need God’s help in overcoming the flesh. At this point it is good to put on the armor that God has provided for His people (Eph. 6:13-18). You do not put your armor on after the arrows are flying, you put it on *before* you go into battle. This is why prayer in the morning is so important.

- The Belt of Truth...Pray, “Lord I covenant to walk in your truth.”
- The Breastplate of Righteousness...Pray, “Lord I commit myself to the way of righteousness and will guard my heart.”
- The Shoes of the Gospel of Peace...Pray, “Lord, I am ready to be an ambassador of your peace and a minister of reconciliation to the world.”

- The Shield of Faith...Pray, “Lord, I will do battle today to defend myself against every dart that the enemy throws my way.”
- The Helmet of Salvation...Pray, “Lord, I will guard my mind and I dedicate my thought life to you today.”
- The Sword of the Spirit...Pray, “Lord, I will hide your word in my heart and use it as a sword to defeat the works of darkness.”

h. Our Protection: *“Deliver us from evil”*

Here we acknowledge that we have a powerful enemy—the evil one. We desperately need God’s assistance to defeat him. As we pray, we are reminding ourselves that we also need to do our part by fleeing from sin, resisting the devil, being sober, being vigilant and fighting the good fight of faith. In addition, we are realizing the importance of staying in the place of God’s promised protection (Ps. 91).

He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, “He is my refuge and my fortress; My God, in Him I will trust.” Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the perilous pestilence. He shall cover you with His feathers, and under His wings you shall take refuge; His truth shall be your shield and buckler. Psalm 91:1-4

Because you have made the LORD, who is my refuge, even the Most High, your dwelling place, no evil shall befall you, nor shall any plague come near your dwelling; for He shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways. In their hands they shall bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone. You shall tread upon the lion and the cobra, the young lion and the serpent you shall trample underfoot. Psalm 91:9-13

i. Our Profession: *“Yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever.”*

In this prayer we remind ourselves that our life is all about God’s purpose and the extension of His kingdom. We remind ourselves that He alone is the one who has the power to accomplish His purpose and in the end all of the glory will go to Him alone. It is His kingdom, not our kingdom. It is His power, not our power that makes these things possible. It is for His glory, not our glory. And that is the way it is going to be forever!

j. Our Affirmation: *“Amen!”*

The final word of this prayer is “Amen!” This word means “let it be” or “so be it.” It is a final affirmation of all that we have prayed. Now we are ready for the day!

3. Not everyone can pray this prayer.

The following is taken from *Praying the Lord's Prayer for Spiritual Breakthrough* by Elmer Towns, page 141.

Those Who Can't Pray the Lord's Prayer

If you don't know Christ...you can't pray, "Our Father."

If you glorify yourself...you can't pray, "Hallowed by Thy name."

If you reject His rules...you can't pray, "Thy kingdom come."

If you won't submit...you can't pray, "Thy will be done."

If your life is for the here and now...you can't pray, "On earth as it is in heaven."

If you are self-sufficient...you can't pray, "Give us our daily bread."

If you won't forgive...you can't pray, "Forgive us our debts."

If you seek sin...you can't pray, "Lead us not into temptation."

If you are a friend of evil...you can't pray, "Deliver us from evil."

If you build your own kingdom...you can't pray, "Thine is the kingdom."

If you want power...you can't pray, "Thine is the power."

If you always take credit...you can't pray, "Thine is the glory."

B. Praying the Names of God

Another prayer model is praying the names of God. The names of God tell us so much about God and His relationship to us. These prayers can be incorporated into the praying of the Lord's Prayer or they can stand on their own. When these names are prayed on their own, the focus is especially on the praise, worship and adoration of God for Who He is.

1. The Jehovah names of God

It is most common for people to pray the Jehovah names of God. Most lists include these nine names.

- a. Jehovah Jireh (Gen. 22:13-14) – The Lord my Provider
- b. Jehovah Rapha (Ex. 16:26) – The Lord my Healer
- c. Jehovah Nissi (Ex. 17:15) – The Lord my Banner
- d. Jehovah M’Kaddesh (Ex. 31:13) – The Lord my Sanctifier
- e. Jehovah Shalom (Judg. 6:24) – The Lord my Peace
- f. Jehovah Rohi (Ps. 23:1) – The Lord my Shepherd
- g. Jehovah Sabaoth (Is. 6:3) – The Lord of Hosts or Armies (My Defense)
- h. Jehovah Tsidkenu (Jer. 23:6) – The Lord my Righteousness
- i. Jehovah Shammah (Ezek. 48:35) – The Lord Who is Ever Present

2. Other names and titles of God

Of course there are many other names and titles of God that are found in the Bible. Each one of them unfolds more of the wonder and majesty of God. Praying over the following list with a spirit of thanksgiving will magnify God or cause Him to loom large in our eyes. When we see God as He really is; when we see Him high and lifted up, our problems look pretty small.

The following list is taken from unpublished notes by Wendell Smith, The City Church, Seattle, Washington, USA

- Elohim (God) – Genesis 1:1
- El Elohe Israel – God the God of Israel – Genesis 33:18 –20
- El Elyon – Most High God – Genesis 14:17 –20
- El Olam – Everlasting God – Isaiah 40:28 –31
- El Roi – The One who sees – Genesis 16:12
- El Shaddai – God Almighty, the All sufficient One – Genesis 17:1
- Abba Father – Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:6
- Adonai (Lord) – Malachi 1:6
- Advocate – I John 2:1
- Almighty – Revelation 1:8
- Alpha and Omega – Revelation 1:8
- Amen – Revelation 3:14
- Ancient of Days – Daniel 7:13
- Author and Finisher of our Faith – Hebrews 12:2
- Balm of Gilead – Jeremiah 8:22
- Beginning and the End – Revelation 1:8
- Bishop of our souls I Peter 2:25

- Bright and Morning Star – Revelation 22:16
- Captain of our Salvation – Hebrews 2:10
- Chief Cornerstone – Matthew 21:42
- Comforter – Isaiah 9:6; John 14
- Commander of the Lord’s Hosts – Joshua 5:14
- Creator of the ends of the earth – Isaiah 40:28
- Day Star – II Peter 1:19
- Dayspring from on high – Luke 1:78
- Defender of widows – Psalm 68:5
- Deliverer – Romans 11:26
- Desire of all nations – Haggai 2:7
- Emmanuel – God with us – Isaiah 9:6
- Everlasting Father – Isaiah 9:6
- Father of Mercies – II Corinthians 1:3
- Father of the fatherless – Psalm 68:5
- Finisher of our Faith – Hebrews 12:2
- First and the Last – Revelation 1:11, 22:13
- Firstborn among many brethren – Romans 8:29
- Forerunner Hebrews 6:20
- Fountain of Living waters – Jeremiah 2:13; 17:13
- Friend of Sinners – Matthew 11:19
- God of Recompense – Jeremiah 51:56
- Good Shepherd – John 10:11, 14
- Governor – Matthew 2:6
- Great King above all gods – Psalm 95:3
- Great King over all the earth. – Psalm 47:2
- Great Shepherd – Hebrews 13:20
- Habitation of Justice – Jeremiah 50:7
- Head of the Church – Colossians 1:18
- Heavenly Father – Matthew 7:11
- Heir of all things – Hebrews 1:2
- Helper – Hebrews 13:6
- High Priest – Hebrews 3:1; 7:1
- Holy One of Israel – Isaiah 41:14; 54:5
- Hope of Israel – Jeremiah 14:8
- Horn of my salvation – Psalm 18:2
- Judge of the Earth – Psalm 94:2
- Just One – Acts 7:52; 22:14
- Keeper – Psalm 121:4 –5
- King of all the Earth – Psalm 47:7
- King of Glory – Psalm 24:8,10
- King of Kings – Revelation 19:16
- Lamb of God – John 1:29, 36
- Life Giving Spirit – I Corinthians 15:45

- Light of the world – John 9:5
- Lily of the Valleys – Song of Solomon 2:1
- Lion of the Tribe of Judah – Revelation 5:5
- Lord of Lords – Revelation 19:16
- Lord of the Harvest – Matthew 9:38
- Lord of the Sabbath – Luke 6:5; Matthew 12:8
- Lord of the whole earth – Psalm 97:5
- Lord on High – Psalm 93:4
- Lord our God – Psalm 123:2
- LORD our Maker – Psalm 95:3 –7
- LORD who created you – Isaiah 43:1
- LORD who dwells between the cherubim – I Chronicles 13:6
- LORD who has mercy on you – Isaiah 54:10
- LORD who is faithful – Isaiah 49:7
- LORD who made heaven and earth – Psalm 134:3
- LORD who makes a way in the sea – Isaiah 43:16
- LORD who makes all things – Isaiah 44:24
- LORD who sanctifies – Exodus 31:13; Leviticus 20:8; 22:32
- LORD who strikes – Ezekiel 7:9
- Man of War – Exodus 15:3
- Master – Matthew 8:19; 10:24; 23:8; Luke 5:5
- Mediator – I Timothy 2:5
- Messiah – Daniel 9:25; John 1:41; John 4:25
- Mighty Awesome One – Jeremiah 20:11
- Mighty God – Isaiah 9:6; 63:1
- Most High over all the earth – Psalm 83:18
- My Defense – Psalm 59:17
- My Deliverer – Psalm 18:2
- My Fortress – Psalm 18:2
- My Glory and the Lifter of my head – Psalm 3:3
- My God of mercy – Psalm 59:10,17
- My hiding place – Psalm 119:114
- My Light and my Salvation – Psalm 27:1
- My Portion forever – Psalm 73:26
- My Redeemer – Psalm 19:15
- My Refuge – Psalm 62:7
- My Shield – Psalm 119:114; Psalm 18:2
- My strength – Psalm 18:2
- My stronghold – Psalm 18:2
- My Trust from my youth – Psalm 71:5
- My Well-beloved – Isaiah 5:1
- Potter – Psalm 64:8
- Prince of Peace – Isaiah 9:6
- Promise of the Father – Acts 1:4

- Purifier – Malachi 3:3
- Reaper – Revelation 14:15
- Redeemer – Isaiah 59:20; 60:16
- Rewarder – Hebrews 11:6
- Righteous Judge – II Timothy 4:8
- Rock of my strength – Psalm 62:7
- Root and Offspring of David – Revelation 22:16
- Rose of Sharon – Song of Solomon 2:1
- Savior in time of trouble – Jeremiah 14:8
- Savior of the World – John 4:42
- Scepter – Numbers 24:17
- Seed of Abraham – Galatians 3:16, 19
- Shade at your right hand – Psalm 121:4 –5
- Shepherd of Israel – Psalm 80:1
- Son of Abraham – Matthew 1:1
- Son of David – Matthew 15:22; 20:30; 21:9; 9:27
- Son of God – Luke 1:35; Matthew 16:16
- Son of Man – Matthew 18:11; Mark 10:33
- Son of the Father – II John 1:3
- Son of the Highest – Luke 1:32
- Spirit of Revelation – Ephesians 1:17
- Spirit of the living God – II Corinthians 3:3
- Spirit of Truth – John 14:17
- Spirit of wisdom and understanding – Isaiah 11:2
- Stone which the Builders rejected – I Peter 2:6 –7
- Strength of my heart – Psalm 73:26
- Sun and Shield – Psalm 84:11
- Sure Foundation – Isaiah 28:16
- True God – I John 5:20; Jeremiah 10:10
- True Light – John 1:9
- True vine – John 15:1
- Very present help in time of trouble – Psalm 46:1
- Wall of Fire – Zechariah 2:5
- Wonderful Counselor – Isaiah 9:6
- Word made flesh – John 1:14
- Who is, Who was, and Who is to come – Revelation 1:8

C. Praying the Prayer of Jabez (I Chr. 4:9-10)

In recent years some attention has been brought to a little-known, biblical person and his short prayer. This prayer was popularized in a book by Bruce Wilkerson titled, *The Prayer of Jabez*. Because God seemed to respond so favorably to this prayer in the Bible, it has become another model of prayer. Many have found elements in this prayer that can serve as prayer points for their personal time with the Lord.

As we take a closer look at this prayer, I think it is important to say that we keep our prayer life fresh by doing various things in prayer. Any form or model can become a spiritual “rut.” Variety is truly the spice of your prayer life.

Now Jabez was more honorable than his brothers, and his mother called his name Jabez, saying, “Because I bore him in pain.” And Jabez called on the God of Israel saying, “Oh, that You would bless me indeed, and enlarge my territory, that Your hand would be with me, and that You would keep me from evil, that I may not cause pain!” So God granted him what he requested.

There are several aspect of this prayer that can serve a prayer guides for us.

1. *“Now Jabez was more honorable than his brothers”*

Jabez was asking or coming before the Lord from a position of an honorable life. That is, his personal character and lifestyle were in order. He was an individual who had both favor with God and man. In this sense he had distinguished himself from others. Because of the popularity of the recent book on this prayer, non-Christians have begun to pray this prayer. They do it because they want the prosperity referenced in this prayer. However, they do not fulfill the conditions upon which this prayer was prayed. It is to be prayed by those with an honorable relationship to the Lord.

2. *“Oh, that You would bless me indeed”*

Jabez asked for the blessing of the Lord on His life. The Bible declares that the blessing of the Lord makes one rich (Pro. 10:22). We want the same spirit that Jacob had in that we covet the blessing of God more than anything else in our lives (Gen. 32:26).

3. *“And enlarge my territory”*

Jabez desired an enlargement of his sphere of influence. God wants His people to be the head and not the tail (Deut. 28:13). He wants us as His representative to be those that extend His kingdom into every place where His Lordship is not respected. He wants our godly influence to spread to every realm of society (Is. 54:2-3).

4. *“That Your hand would be with me”*

Jabez desired God to play an active role and be present in His endeavors. Jabez understood that we need the hand of the Lord and the presence of God to be in all of the activities of our life. By praying this we are actually inviting the Lord to participate in all that we do. This means, of course, that what we do must be that which is pleasing to Him.

5. *“And that You would keep me from evil”*

Jabez asked God to preserve him from evil and bad choices that would lead to pain for him and others. Every day we are faced with decisions and choices that all lead to some conclusion or end. Every decision leads to some result. We want the ways of righteousness and not the ways of evil or unrighteousness to be established in our lives.

6. *“That I may not cause pain”*

Jabez asked God to help him to be a blessing to others and not a liability. God will give us opportunities every day to be a blessing or to be something less than a blessing. In this prayer we are asking God to help us take every opportunity to be a blessing to the live of others (Gen. 12:1-3).

7. *“So God granted him what he requested”*

The bottom line is God likes this kind of prayer.

D. Praying the Word

Another enjoyable way of praying is to incorporate your Bible reading into your time of prayer. Most believers already do this to some degree, but in this plan you actually pray through the verses that you are reading. This works especially well for the Psalms, the Proverbs and the Epistles, but it can be done with any of the books of the Bible. This plan can be followed in various versions of the Bible to help bring in more color to your prayers.

The following example will help to demonstrate how this is done.

II Timothy 1:1-7

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus, 2 to Timothy, a beloved son: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. 3 I thank God, whom I serve with a pure conscience, as my forefathers did, as without ceasing I remember you in my prayers night and day, 4 greatly desiring to see you, being mindful of your tears, that I may be filled with joy, 5 when I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also. 6 Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. 7 For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

At first glance this does not seem like a typical “prayer text.” However, if you read slowly phrase by phrase, every statement can be turned into a form of prayer.

“Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God...”

Prayer: Lord, I am thankful that you have a will and purpose for each one of our lives. I am thankful that we can know that will. I desire to do your will and I need your help to do it.

“according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus”

Prayer: Lord, I thank you for the life that we have in Jesus. Thank you for the new life that you have extended to me. Thank you for your precious promises of life that you have given to me, to my family and to so many of my friends. Let me live today in your promised land.

“to Timothy, a beloved son”

Prayer: Lord, I see the relationship that Paul had with Timothy. I see him refer to Timothy as a beloved son. I want to be a son of your love. I want to be a son that pleases you in every way so that you can see me as your beloved son in whom you find pleasure.

The rest of the text can be prayed in exactly the same way.

II. There are other biblical instructions that assist us in understanding how to pray.

A. Understanding different kinds of prayer.

There are different kinds of prayer that are referenced in the Bible. Each of these types of prayer can further enhance and deepen our prayer life (Eph. 6:18).

And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

Ephesians 6:18, NIV

1. Petition or Request (Phil. 4:6-7)

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

2. Thanksgiving or Praise (Phil. 4:6; I Tim. 2:1; Ps. 100:4-6)

Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men. I Timothy 2:1

3. Supplication (Phil. 4:6; I Tim. 2:1)
4. Intercession (I Tim. 2:1)
5. Confession (Luke 11:4; I John 1:9)

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. I John 1:9

6. Meditation (Ps. 119:15-16, 147-148)

I rise before the dawning of the morning, and cry for help; I hope in Your word. My eyes are awake through the night watches, that I may meditate on Your word.
Psalm 119:147-148

7. Waiting on the Lord (Ps. 5:3)

In the morning, O LORD, you hear my voice; in the morning I lay my requests before you and wait in expectation. –NIV

8. Prayer in the Spirit—Tongues (I Cor. 14:14-15; Jude 20)

But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit. Jude 20

9. Singing (Col. 3:16; Acts 16:25; I Cor. 14:14-15)

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. Colossians 3:16

10. Prayer of Agreement (Mt. 18:19; Eccl. 4:9)

Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. Matthew 18:19

B. Understanding the biblical approach for prayer.

While the Bible never promotes formulas in prayer, it does seem to indicate that there is a proper way of approach to the Father.

1. We are to pray to the Father (Mt. 6:9; John 15:16; 16:23-27; I Pet. 1:17).

You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you. John 15:16

And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you. Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.

John 16:23-24

And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear...

I Peter 1:17

2. We are to pray in the name of Jesus (Eph. 5:20; Col. 3:17; John 14:13-14).

Giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ... Ephesians 5:20

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

And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it. John 14:13-14

3. We are to pray in or through the power of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 4:6; Rom. 8:15-17, 26).

And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!" Galatians 4:6

Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Romans 8:26

Lesson 5

Activities of Prayer

Another thing that will enhance your prayer life is to recognize that there are several prayer activities that can be incorporated into your personal prayer life.

I. What are some activities that can be incorporated into one's personal prayer life?

A. Prayer Lists

For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of His Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers... Romans 1:9

Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers...
Ephesians 1:15-16

We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers...
I Thessalonians 1:2

1. The purpose of a prayer list
 - a. A prayer list helps you to be more specific in prayer requests made.
 - b. A prayer list helps you to remember important prayer needs.
 - c. A prayer list helps you to make good on personal prayer commitments.
 - d. A prayer list helps you to be systematic in your prayers.
 - e. A prayer list helps you to document answered prayer.
 - f. A prayer list can stimulate faith for future prayers.

2. The format of a prayer list
 - a. Get a small note pad or binder that is convenient to keep with your Bible.
 - b. Divide the notebook into sections representing categories such as: family, church, work, salvations, healings, guidance, etc.
 - c. Put your entries into chart form to record the date entered and the date answered.
 - d. When the prayer is answered, cross out the request with a highlighter.

Date Entered	The Prayer Need	Promise Claimed	Date Answered

3. The entries in the prayer list

The Bible gives us many things for which we are to pray including:

- a. Pray for the salvation of all men (I Tim. 2:4; John 17:21, 23; Rom. 10:1).

Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. I Timothy 2:1-4

- b. Pray for your enemies and those who misuse you (Mt. 5:44; Luke 6:27-28).

But I say to you who hear: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, and pray for those who spitefully use you.
 Luke 6:27-28

- c. Pray for political leaders (I Tim. 2:1-3; Rom. 13:1-7).

- d. Pray for all saints or the Body of Christ (Col. 1:9; I Th. 2:1; 5:23; II Th. 1:11; Rom. 1:9).

- For the unity of God’s people (John 17:20-21).
- For the purposes of God to be realized (Eph. 3:9-11).
- For those who are suffering persecution (Acts 12:5; Phil. 1:19; Phile. 22).
- For laborers to reap the harvest (Luke 10:2).

- e. Pray for individual believers (Jam. 5:16).

- For their spiritual well-being (John 14:16).
- That they might be healed (Acts 9:40; Jam. 5:15-16).
- That they might live in honesty and sincerity (Phil. 1:10).
- That they might be full of the fruit of the Spirit (Phil. 1:11).
- That they might know the will of God (Col. 1:9; 4:12).
- That they might walk worthy of the Lord (Col. 1:10).

- That they might increase in the knowledge of God (Col. 1:10).
 - That they might be strengthened with all might (Col. 1:11).
 - That the patience of Christ might be worked in them (Col. 1:11).
 - That they might fulfill God’s call on their life (II Th. 1:11).
 - That they might bring glory to God’s name (II Th. 1:12).
 - That they might know the power of God on their life (Eph. 1:19).
 - That they might effectively communicate their faith to others (Phile. 4-6).
- f. Pray for local church leadership (Heb. 13:7; I Th. 5:25).
- g. Pray for the programs of the local church and those who lead them.
- h. Pray for missionaries and other outreaches of the local church (II Cor. 1:11).

He will rescue us because you are helping by praying for us. As a result, many will give thanks to God because so many people’s prayers for our safety have been answered. –NLT

- That the word of God would have free course (II Th. 3:1).
 - That the work would not be hindered by evil men (II Th. 3:2).
 - That God would open doors of utterance (Col. 4:3; Eph. 6:19).
 - That their ministry would be received (Rom. 15:30-31).
- i. Pray for other local churches in your city.
- j. Pray for yourself (Luke 18:13; 22:40, 46; Mt. 26:41).
- For forgiveness and the ability to forgive others (Mark 11:25).
 - For the mercy and the grace of God.
 - For personal growth and change.
 - For preservation from the evils of the day.
 - For boldness to share Christ and His Word to others.
- k. Pray for everyone for whom you promise to pray.

B. Journaling

A prayer journal is a spiritual diary in which you write down your personal thoughts gleaned in your time of communion with the Lord. While this method of recording your thoughts in a personal journal is not specifically mentioned in the Scripture, writing down what God has said or is saying is mentioned (Deut. 17:18-20; Jer. 30:2).

Thus speaks the LORD God of Israel, saying: “Write in a book for yourself all the words that I have spoken to you.” Jeremiah 30:2

1. The content of your spiritual diary.

Here you can record some of the following thoughts:

- a. What you prayed for on that day.
- b. What verses you read on that day and the insights that you gained.
- c. What you feel the Lord impressed upon you that day.
- d. What spiritual decisions you have made on that day.

2. The value of your spiritual diary.

- a. It forces us to pay attention while we are praying.
- b. It helps us to measure our own spiritual progress over time.
- c. It helps us to remember the things that the Lord has said.
- d. It helps us to be accountable to ourselves for what the Lord has said.
- e. It helps us to be reminded of the faithfulness of God.
- f. It helps us to see how God answers our prayers.

C. Meditation (Josh. 1:8; Ps. 1:2; 48:9; 77:5-6, 11-12; 119:14-16, 27, 48; 143:5; 145:5; Phil. 4:8-9)

This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.

Joshua 1:8

But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night.

Psalm 1:2

1. The meaning of the biblical concept

Both words used for meditation in the Bible mean much the same thing. One word means to “murmur or mutter to oneself.” The other means to “talk to oneself under one’s breath.”

2. The definition of meditation

“Meditation in the Bible usually indicated a person considering something about God and quietly focusing his mind on that truth. Most often, scriptures in the Bible were the focus of meditation, but anything about God – his mercy, his love, his majesty, his power, his kindness – were all causes for meditation. Christian meditation is when we quietly reflect on the things of God. It is different from

prayer in that we are not communing with God but we are reflecting on his word or his attributes. It is not like eastern meditation, since we are always cognizant of our thoughts and we never enter into a trance-like state. The focus of Christian meditation is always on God, something about God, or on God's care for us."

--Christian Meditation © 1998 by David Humpal

Meditation is likened to a cow "chewing its cud." The cow takes a portion of food and works on it all day long. Meditation is taking a "bite sized" portion of Scripture or an attribute of God and allowing it to be in our minds and our hearts throughout the day. Meditation by its very definition cannot be rushed.

3. The value of meditation

- a. Meditation allows the things of God to be in our spirit throughout the day.
- b. Meditation takes the things of God and works them into our soul-man (mind, will and emotions).
- c. Meditation helps us to implement the word of God into our life.
- d. Meditation helps us to overcome negative thinking.
- e. Meditation helps us to keep in perfect peace (Is. 26:3).

You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You, because he trusts in You.

4. The process of meditation

As was stated previously, a believer can meditate on a specific scripture, on an attribute of God or on a specific work that God has done in our behalf (Ps. 77:12).

I will also meditate on all Your work, and talk of Your deeds.

When meditating on a scripture verse, it is helpful to follow these simple guidelines.

- a. Choose a verse that is relatively short.
 - It may come out of your personal Bible reading.
 - It may come out of a preached word.
 - It may come out of a quickened thought from the Holy Spirit.
 - It may come out of a personal need, challenge or encounter.
- b. Write the verse out on a card or small piece of paper.
 - You may want to make a few copies.

- You may want to post them where you will see them often (e.g. the dashboard of the car, your office cubicle, on the bathroom mirror, etc.).
- c. Attempt to commit the verse to memory.
 - d. Think on the verse word by word and discover the implications of the passage for you.

Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy--meditate on these things. Philippians 2:8

- e. At the end of the day, write down what you have learned from this exercise.

D. Listening

Part of our prayer life should be spent in listening to the Lord. Communication is a two way experience. To cultivate a relationship with anyone, it requires both speaking to a person and listening to another person speak.

1. God desires to speak to His people (Ps. 50:7).

O my people, listen as I speak. Psalm 50:7a, NLT

2. God desires that we would listen (Ps. 81:8, 13; Is. 55:3; John 10:27).

Listen to me, O my people, while I give you stern warnings. O Israel, if you would only listen! ... But oh, that my people would listen to me! Oh, that Israel would follow me, walking in my paths! Psalm 81:8, 13, NLT

3. Listening involves spending some time in quietness before the Lord (Eccl. 3:7; Ps. 39:7-9; 62:5). You cannot listen and speak at the same time.

A time to keep silence, and a time to speak... Ecclesiastes 3:7b

4. Listening involves waiting on the Lord (Ps. 25:5; 52:9; 106:13; Jer. 14:22).

Lead me in Your truth and teach me, for You are the God of my salvation; on You I wait all the day. Psalm 25:5

Some of the words associated with waiting on the Lord mean:

- a. Waiting with an expectation or hope (Ps. 62:5).

My soul, wait silently for God alone, for my expectation is from Him.

- b. Waiting with a longing desire for something or someone (Is. 25:9).

And it will be said in that day: "Behold, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us. This is the LORD; we have waited for Him; we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation."

- c. Waiting in patience for your expectant desire (Ps. 37:7; 40:1).

I waited patiently for the LORD; and He inclined to me, and heard my cry.
Psalm 40:1

5. Listening involves acting on that which is spoken (Luke 8:21; 11:28).

But He answered and said to them, "My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it." Luke 8:21

Blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it! Luke 11:28b

"Did you hear me?" equates to "Have you responded to me?"

E. Praying in the Spirit

Praying in the Spirit is praying in "tongues" (I Cor. 14:14-15). Praying in the Spirit should be an integral part of your time with the Lord. Even though when you pray in tongues you do not fully understand what you are saying (I Cor. 14:2), it is important to do so because when you pray in tongues several things take place.

For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful. What is the conclusion then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding.
I Corinthians 14:14-15

For he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God, for no one understands him; however, in the spirit he speaks mysteries. I Corinthians 14:2

1. You build yourself up in your faith (I Cor. 14:4; Jude 20).

But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit... Jude 20

2. Your spirit connects directly with God's Spirit (I Cor. 14:2, 14-15).

For he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God...
I Corinthians 14:2a

3. You dispel doubt created by Satan's lies (Eph. 6:17-18).

And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints...

4. The Holy Spirit helps you to pray when you do not know what to pray (Rom. 8:26).

Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God. Romans 8:26-27

5. The Holy Spirit helps you to pray according to the will of God (Rom. 8:27).

Praying in tongues is something that you can do throughout the day (I Cor. 14:18).

I thank my God I speak with tongues more than you all...

Lesson 6

Praying that Gets Results

I. What does God promise concerning answers to our prayers?

God gives sweeping promises concerning His heart to answer the prayers of His people. Some of these promises have conditions and some do not. Notice the following verses:

II Chronicles 7:14

If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.

Psalms 34:15

The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their cry.

Psalms 37:4-5

Delight yourself also in the LORD, and He shall give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the LORD, trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass.

Psalms 91:14-15

Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore I will deliver him; I will set him on high, because he has known My name. He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him and honor him.

Matthew 7:7-11

Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!

Matthew 18:19-20

Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.

Mark 11:23-24

For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, "Be removed and be cast into the sea," and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says. Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them.

John 14:12-14

Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father. And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it.

John 15:7

If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.

John 16:23-24

And in that day you will ask Me nothing. Most assuredly, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you. Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full.

James 1:5-8

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

I John 3:22

And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight. And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us commandment.

I John 5:14-15

Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.

- A. Notice some of the things that these verses tell us about God's desire to answer prayer.

1. God wants to answer our prayer.
 2. God wants us to be fruitful.
 3. God wants us to be successful.
 4. God only wants good for us.
- B. Notice some of the conditions for answered prayer in many of the verses.

We increase our potential for answered prayer when...

1. We walk humbly before the Lord (I Chr. 7:14).
2. We are honest in dealing with the sin issues in our lives (Is. 59:1-2).
3. We seek His face (I Chr. 7:14).
4. We keep His commandments (I John 3:22).
5. We walk in love (I John 3:22).
6. We abide in Him (John 15:7).
7. We delight ourselves in Him (Ps. 37:4).
8. We have faith in His desire and ability to do what we ask (Jam. 1:5-8).
9. We ask in Jesus' name (John 16:23-24).
10. We ask according to His will (I John 5:14-15).

II. What kind of prayer does God resist answering?

- A. Prayer originating from our fleshly lusts and materialism (Jam. 4:1-6).

Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members? 2 You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have because you do not ask. 3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures. 4 Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. 5 Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, "The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously"? 6 But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble."

- B. Prayer that is focused on an earthly and temporal perspective (Mt. 6:31-33).

Therefore do not worry, saying, "What shall we eat?" or "What shall we drink?" or "What shall we wear?" For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your

heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

- C. Prayer that comes from hearts filled with iniquity (Ps. 66:16-20; Pro. 15:8).

Come and hear, all you who fear God, and I will declare what He has done for my soul. 17 I cried to Him with my mouth, and He was extolled with my tongue. 18 If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear. 19 But certainly God has heard me; He has attended to the voice of my prayer. 20 Blessed be God, Who has not turned away my prayer, nor His mercy from me! Psalm 66:16-20

- D. Prayer that is used to promote our own agenda (Ps. 138:6; Jam. 4:6, 13-16; I Pet. 5:5-7; Mt. 20:20-23).

God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. I Peter 5:5b

And He said to her, "What do you wish?" She said to Him, "Grant that these two sons of mine may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on the left, in Your kingdom." Matthew 20:21

- E. Prayer that is selfish and does not take into account the needs of others (Phil. 2:2-4).

Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

- F. Prayer that doubts God's ability to answer (Jam. 1:6-8).

But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

III. What kinds of prayers does God enjoy answering?

- A. Prayers like the prayer of Jabez (I Chr. 4:9-10).

Now Jabez was more honorable than his brothers, and his mother called his name Jabez, saying, "Because I bore him in pain." And Jabez called on the God of Israel saying, "Oh, that You would bless me indeed, and enlarge my territory, that Your hand would be with me, and that You would keep me from evil, that I may not cause pain!" So God granted him what he requested.

- B. Prayers like the prayers of David (II Sam. 7:18-29; I Chr. 29:16-19).

“O LORD our God, all this abundance that we have prepared to build You a house for Your holy name is from Your hand, and is all Your own. 17 I know also, my God, that You test the heart and have pleasure in uprightness. As for me, in the uprightness of my heart I have willingly offered all these things; and now with joy I have seen Your people, who are present here to offer willingly to You. 18 O LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, our fathers, keep this forever in the intent of the thoughts of the heart of Your people, and fix their heart toward You. 19 And give my son Solomon a loyal heart to keep Your commandments and Your testimonies and Your statutes, to do all these things, and to build the temple for which I have made provision.” I Chronicles 29:16-19

C. Prayers like the prayers of Solomon (I Kgs. 3:6-10; II Chr. 1:7-10; 6:12-21; 7:1-2).

And Solomon said: “You have shown great mercy to Your servant David my father, because he walked before You in truth, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with You; You have continued this great kindness for him, and You have given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day. 7 Now, O LORD my God, You have made Your servant king instead of my father David, but I am a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in. 8 And Your servant is in the midst of Your people whom You have chosen, a great people, too numerous to be numbered or counted. 9 Therefore give to Your servant an understanding heart to judge Your people, that I may discern between good and evil. For who is able to judge this great people of Yours? 10 The speech pleased the LORD, that Solomon had asked this thing.

I Kings 3:6-10

D. Prayers like the request of Elisha (II Kgs. 2:9-10).

And so it was, when they had crossed over, that Elijah said to Elisha, “Ask! What may I do for you, before I am taken away from you?” Elisha said, “Please let a double portion of your spirit be upon me.” So he said, “You have asked a hard thing. Nevertheless, if you see me when I am taken from you, it shall be so for you; but if not, it shall not be so.”

E. Prayers like the prayer of Daniel (Dan. 9:3-19).

And now, O Lord our God, who brought Your people out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand, and made Yourself a name, as it is this day--we have sinned, we have done wickedly! 16 “O Lord, according to all Your righteousness, I pray, let Your anger and Your fury be turned away from Your city Jerusalem, Your holy mountain; because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and Your people are a reproach to all those around us. 17 Now therefore, our God, hear the prayer of Your servant, and his supplications, and for the Lord's sake cause Your face to shine on Your sanctuary, which is desolate. 18 O my God, incline Your ear and hear; open Your eyes and see our desolations, and the city which is called by Your name; for we do not present our supplications before You because of our righteous deeds, but because of Your great mercies. 19 O Lord, hear! O Lord, forgive! O Lord, listen and

act! Do not delay for Your own sake, my God, for Your city and Your people are called by Your name.” Daniel 9:15-19

- F. Prayers like the prayer of the Apostles (Acts 4:29-31).

“Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word, by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus.” And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.

IV. What are some other hindrances to answered prayer?

- A. Lack of forgiveness toward others (Mark 11:25-26)

And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses.

- B. Marital conflict (I Pet. 3:7)

Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.

In the same way, you husbands must give honor to your wives. Treat her with understanding as you live together. She may be weaker than you are, but she is your equal partner in God’s gift of new life. If you don’t treat her as you should, your prayers will not be heard. –NLT

Marital conflict destroys a couple’s ability to pray united prayers.

- C. Disrespect for authority (Eph. 6:2-3)

“Honor your father and mother,” which is the first commandment with promise: “that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.”

- D. Excessive worry, doubts or anxiety (Ps. 78:18-22; Jam. 1:6-7)

They willfully tested God in their hearts, demanding the foods they craved. 19 They even spoke against God himself, saying, “God can’t give us food in the desert. 20 Yes, he can strike a rock so water gushes out, but he can’t give his people bread and meat.” 21 When the LORD heard them, he was angry. The fire of his wrath burned against Jacob. Yes, his anger rose against Israel, 22 for they did not believe God or trust him to care for them. Psalm 78:18-22, NLT

But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord... James 1:6-7

E. Lack of persistence (Luke 11:5-10; 18:1-8)

Then, teaching them more about prayer, he used this illustration: “Suppose you went to a friend’s house at midnight, wanting to borrow three loaves of bread. You would say to him, 6 ‘A friend of mine has just arrived for a visit, and I have nothing for him to eat.’ 7 He would call out from his bedroom, ‘Don’t bother me. The door is locked for the night, and we are all in bed. I can’t help you this time.’ 8 But I tell you this-- though he won’t do it as a friend, if you keep knocking long enough, he will get up and give you what you want so his reputation won’t be damaged. 9 And so I tell you, keep on asking, and you will be given what you ask for. Keep on looking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened. 10 For everyone who asks, receives. Everyone who seeks, finds. And the door is opened to everyone who knocks.

Luke 11:5-10, NLT

F. Indifference to the needs of the poor (Pro. 21:13).

Whoever shuts his ears to the cry of the poor will also cry himself and not be heard.

G. Apathetic asking (Jam. 5:16b-18)

The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit.

Elijah’s prayer was a prayer that God respected (I Kgs. 18:41-46).

1. He had a humble posture of prayer (I Kgs. 18:42; I Pet. 5:6).

And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; then he bowed down on the ground, and put his face between his knees... I Kings 18:42b

2. He based his prayer on divine promises (I Kgs. 18:1; Zech. 10:1).

And it came to pass after many days that the word of the LORD came to Elijah, in the third year, saying, “Go, present yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain on the earth.”

Ask the LORD for rain in the time of the latter rain. The LORD will make flashing clouds; He will give them showers of rain, grass in the field for everyone.

Zechariah 10:1

3. His prayer was earnest, persistent and fervent (Jam. 5:16-18; Ps. 40:1).

I waited patiently for the LORD; and He inclined to me, and heard my cry.

Psalm 40:1

4. His prayer was watchful and expectant (I Kgs. 18:43-44, Ps. 130:5-6).

And said to his servant, "Go up now, look toward the sea." So he went up and looked, and said, "There is nothing." And seven times he said, "Go again." Then it came to pass the seventh time, that he said, "There is a cloud, as small as a man's hand, rising out of the sea!" I Kings 18:43b-44

"If the truth were known, often you and I are the only obstacles standing in the way of us receiving a desperately needed miracle. Our requests may be right. The timing may not be a problem. But when our lives are wrong God says, 'Before I grant your request, I want you to grow. Put that sin away. Change your attitude. Stop that practice, end that pattern, get off that merry-go-round, reconcile that relationship, soften up your spirit, repent, receive forgiveness. Grow- and I'll open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it'"

-Bill Hybels

V. How important is it to ask? Doesn't God know our hearts?

- A. God continually encouraged His people to ask (Ps. 2:8; Jer. 6:16; 33:3; Zech. 10:1).

Ask of Me, and I will give You The nations for Your inheritance, And the ends of the earth for Your possession. Psalms 2:8

Thus says the LORD: "Stand in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where the good way is, And walk in it; Then you will find rest for your souls."

Jeremiah 6:16

Thus says the LORD who made it, the LORD who formed it to establish it (the LORD is His name): "Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know." Jeremiah 3:2-3

"Ask the LORD for rain in the time of the latter rain. The LORD will make flashing clouds; He will give them showers of rain, Grass in the field for everyone."

Zechariah 10:1

- B. Jesus encouraged his disciples to ask the Father in His name (John 14:12-14; 16:23-24).

Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full. John 16:23-24

C. James indicated that a condition of receiving is asking (Jam. 4:2b).

Yet you do not have because you do not ask.

D. It is important to be sure that you want that for which you ask (Ps. 106:15).

And He gave them their request, but sent leanness into their soul.

Note: We will discuss asking more in the next lesson on “The Voice of Prayer.”

Lesson 7

The Voice of Prayer

It is clear that when Jesus taught his disciples to pray, he encouraged them to use their voice in prayer. He told them to “say” their prayer. Many people have come from traditions where a “moment of silence” is considered a prayer. Others come from a spiritual heritage where they have been encouraged to offer a “silent prayer” to the Lord or to pray in “silence.” It is important for us to know that none of these traditions are completely biblical.

I. What does the Bible tell us about “silence”?

A. Silence is seen as a negative when it comes to praying or praising God.

1. Silence is the result of judgment (Jer. 8:14).

Why do we sit still? Assemble yourselves, and let us enter the fortified cities, and let us be silent there. For the LORD our God has put us to silence and given us water of gall to drink, because we have sinned against the LORD.

2. Silence is sometimes attributed to the place of the dead (Ps. 115:17).

The dead do not praise the LORD, nor any who go down into silence.

B. We are not to be silent before the Lord (Ps. 30:11-12; Is. 62:6-7).

You have turned for me my mourning into dancing; You have put off my sackcloth and clothed me with gladness, to the end that my glory may sing praise to You and not be silent. O LORD my God, I will give thanks to You forever. Psalm 30:11-12

C. There are very few instances in the Bible when people prayed silently.

1. Abraham’s Servant (Gen. 24:45)

“But before I had finished speaking in my heart, there was Rebekah, coming out with her pitcher on her shoulder; and she went down to the well and drew water. And I said to her, ‘Please let me drink.’”

2. Hannah (I Sam. 1:10-15)

Now Hannah spoke in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard. Therefore Eli thought she was drunk.

II. What does the Bible say about using our voice in prayer?

It is important to note that reverence is the same as obedience. It is not reverence to be silent before the Lord if He has asked you to speak. If we maintain silence when God asks for our voice...silence is irreverence!

- A. There are several phrases that consistently describe the voice of prayer (Ps. 18:6; 140:6).

In my distress I called upon the LORD, and cried out to my God; He heard my voice from His temple, and my cry came before Him, even to His ears. Psalm 18:6

I said to the LORD: "You are my God; hear the voice of my supplications, O LORD." Psalm 140:6

1. I will call upon or to the Lord (Ps. 4:3; 86:6-7).

But know that the LORD has set apart for Himself him who is godly; the LORD will hear when I call to Him. Psalm 4:3

Give ear, O LORD, to my prayer; and attend to the voice of my supplications. In the day of my trouble I will call upon You, for You will answer me. Psalm 86:6-7

2. I will cry out to the Lord (Ps. 88:1-2; 141:1; Rom. 8:15).

O LORD, God of my salvation, I have cried out day and night before You. Let my prayer come before You; incline Your ear to my cry. Psalm 88:1-2

LORD, I cry out to You; make haste to me! Give ear to my voice when I cry out to You. Psalm 141:1

For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." Romans 8:15

3. I will cry aloud to the Lord (Ps. 55:16-17).

As for me, I will call upon God, and the LORD shall save me. Evening and morning and at noon I will pray, and cry aloud, and He shall hear my voice.

4. I will lift up my voice to the Lord (Is. 24:14; 40:9).

They shall lift up their voice, they shall sing; for the majesty of the LORD they shall cry aloud from the sea. Isaiah 24:14

Some of the Hebrew words used in these verses literally mean "to hum, to growl, to roar, to shout, to shriek."

- B. The men and women of faith lifted up their voices in prayer.

1. The patriarchs or fathers of Israel called upon the Lord (I Sam. 12:8).

When Jacob had gone into Egypt, and your fathers cried out to the LORD, then the LORD sent Moses and Aaron, who brought your fathers out of Egypt and made them dwell in this place.

2. The children of Israel in bondage cried to the Lord (Ex. 2:23-24; 3:7-8; 14:10; Judg. 3:8-9, 14-15; 4:3; 10:9-16; 11:1; Ps. 22:4-5).

Then the children of Israel groaned because of the bondage, and they cried out; and their cry came up to God because of the bondage. God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.

Exodus 2:23-24

Our fathers trusted in You; they trusted, and You delivered them. They cried to You, and were delivered; they trusted in You, and were not ashamed.

Psalms 22:4-5

3. Moses cried out to the Lord for miraculous assistance (Ex. 15:25).

And the people complained against Moses, saying, "What shall we drink?" So he cried out to the LORD, and the LORD showed him a tree. When he cast it into the waters, the waters were made sweet.

4. Samuel cried out to the Lord (I Sam. 7:8-9).

So the children of Israel said to Samuel, "Do not cease to cry out to the LORD our God for us, that He may save us from the hand of the Philistines." And Samuel took a suckling lamb and offered it as a whole burnt offering to the LORD. Then Samuel cried out to the LORD for Israel, and the LORD answered him.

5. The children of Israel called on God's assistance in battle (I Chr. 5:19-20).

They made war with the Hagarites, Jetur, Naphish, and Nodab. And they were helped against them, and the Hagarites were delivered into their hand, and all who were with them, for they cried out to God in the battle. He heeded their prayer, because they put their trust in Him.

6. David called upon the Lord (Ps. 138:3).

In the day when I cried out, You answered me, and made me bold with strength in my soul.

7. Jonah cried out to the Lord (Jon. 2:1-2).

Then Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from the fish's belly. And he said: "I cried out to the LORD because of my affliction, and He answered me. Out of the belly of Sheol I cried, and You heard my voice."

8. Bartimaeus cried out to Jesus for healing of blindness (Mark 10:46-62).

And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" Then many warned him to be quiet; but he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"

9. Jesus used His voice in His prayers to the Father (Mt. 26:38-39, 42; 27:46; Luke 10:21-22; 23:46; John 17:1ff.).

Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: "Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You..." John 17:1

And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, 'Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit.'" Having said this, He breathed His last. Luke 23:46

10. The Apostles lifted their voice in prayer (Acts 4:24; 7:59-60).

So when they heard that, they raised their voice to God with one accord and said: "Lord, You are God, who made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them..." Acts 4:24

And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not charge them with this sin." And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

Acts 7:59-60

III. Why is using our voice in prayer important?

- A. Because out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks (Mt. 12:34b).

For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.

- B. Because God wants to hear our voice (Ps. 3:4; 5:2-3; 27:7; 28:1-2, 6; 31:22; 61:1-2; 64:1; 66:19; 77:1; 86:6-7; 116:1-2; 130:1-2; 142:1-2; Song 2:14).

Many of these Psalms refer to "the voice" of my prayer.

Give heed to the voice of my cry, my King and my God, for to You I will pray. My voice You shall hear in the morning, O LORD; in the morning I will direct it to You, and I will look up. Psalm 5:2-3

Hear my cry, O God; attend to my prayer. From the end of the earth I will cry to You, when my heart is overwhelmed; lead me to the rock that is higher than I.

Psalm 61:1-2

But certainly God has heard me; He has attended to the voice of my prayer.

Psalm 66:19

Give ear, O LORD, to my prayer; and attend to the voice of my supplications. In the day of my trouble I will call upon You, for You will answer me. Psalm 86:6-7

I love the LORD, because He has heard my voice and my supplications. Because He has inclined His ear to me, therefore I will call upon Him as long as I live.

Psalm 116:1-2

- C. Because God is worthy of our voice (Is. 12:6).

Cry out and shout, O inhabitant of Zion, for great is the Holy One of Israel in your midst!

- D. Because God has given special promises to those who cry out in prayer (Ps. 34:15; 50:15; 55:17; 57:2; 145:18; Is. 30:19; Jer. 33:3; Acts 2:21).

The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their cry.

Psalm 34:15

Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me.

Psalm 50:15

The LORD is near to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth.

Psalm 145:18

For the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem; you shall weep no more. He will be very gracious to you at the sound of your cry; when He hears it, He will answer you.

Isaiah 30:19

Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know. Jeremiah 33:3

1. God hears the cry of the widow (Ex. 22:22-23).

You shall not afflict any widow or fatherless child. If you afflict them in any way, and they cry at all to Me, I will surely hear their cry...

2. God hears the cry of the poor (Ps. 72:12).

For He will deliver the needy when he cries, the poor also, and him who has no helper.

- E. Because Jesus instructed us to “say” our prayers (Luke 11:2).

So He said to them, “When you pray, say...”

- F. Because faith has a voice or confession (Rom. 10:9-13).

For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. Romans 10:10

Lesson 8

Prayer and Fasting

I. What is fasting?

Fasting is not something that excites most people in the Western world. The thought of going without food and even water for any length of time is not something that appeals to cultures that are not extremely familiar with the concept of self-denial.

A. The definition of fasting

Fasting is simply the abstinence from food or certain kinds of food either totally or partially for a specified length of time. The actual Greek word used for fasting literally means “not eat” (*nesteia*).

B. Fasting in the natural realm

In the natural realm people often fast as a regular discipline in their lives for health reasons. Many studies show that regular fasting can help to cleanse the body and give the systems of the body a rest. Fasting can, in fact, purge our body of toxins.

C. Fasting in the spiritual realm

Fasting is common in many religions of the world and it is promoted by Christ in relation to his followers. This fasting is done for the purpose of deepening one’s relationship and enhancing one’s communion with God.

II. What are the various types of fasting?

A. There are varying methods of fasting.

1. The normal fast

The normal fast is abstaining from food while drinking water. This is the most common type of fasting referred to in the Bible. It is also the most common type of natural fasting.

2. The partial fast

The partial fast is abstaining from certain types of food. Daniel and the three Hebrew children practiced this fast in Babylon when they abstained from the king’s pleasant meats and opted for a vegetarian diet (Dan. 1:15; 10:3). This fast is sometimes called a “Daniel Fast.”

But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's delicacies, nor with the wine which he drank; therefore he requested of the chief of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself. 9 Now God had brought Daniel into the favor and goodwill of the chief of the eunuchs. 10 And the chief of the eunuchs said to Daniel, "I fear my lord the king, who has appointed your food and drink. For why should he see your faces looking worse than the young men who are your age? Then you would endanger my head before the king." 11 So Daniel said to the steward whom the chief of the eunuchs had set over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, 12 "Please test your servants for ten days, and let them give us vegetables to eat and water to drink. 13 Then let our appearance be examined before you, and the appearance of the young men who eat the portion of the king's delicacies; and as you see fit, so deal with your servants." 14 So he consented with them in this matter, and tested them ten days. 15 And at the end of ten days their features appeared better and fatter in flesh than all the young men who ate the portion of the king's delicacies. 16 Thus the steward took away their portion of delicacies and the wine that they were to drink, and gave them vegetables.

A partial fast may also include:

- a. Fasting certain items such as sugar, caffeinated beverages, meat or desserts.
- b. Limiting intake to natural fruit juices.

3. The absolute fast

The absolute fast is the most rigorous type of fasting in that it involves a complete abstinence of both food and water. Obviously, this fast should not be attempted for a long time without the approval of a medical professional.

4. The non-food related fast

Some people find it spiritually beneficial to fast other things during a time of separation to the Lord. The most common type of fast in this area is fasting television, movies and other non-Christian forms of entertainment.

B. There are varying durations of fasting.

Fasting can be practiced in a variety of ways. The length of the fast is usually determined by the purpose for the fast in the first place. The fasts that are mentioned specifically in the Bible include the following:

1. One day fast

This is the most common fast (Judg. 20:26; II Sam. 1:12; 3:35). It involves fasting for a 24 hour period. The Jews commonly fasted from sunset to sunset or

approximately 6:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. the following day. Other people fast from breakfast to breakfast. The word breakfast literally means “breaking the fast.” Most people who live a “fasted lifestyle” would practice a normal fast one day each week. The Pharisees of Jesus day fasted twice a week (Luke 18:12).

2. Three day fast

This is the next level of fasting. Esther is an example of someone who proclaimed a fast of three days as the nations looked to God for deliverance (Est. 4:16-17; 5:1).

3. Seven day fast

This is the next level of fasting. David fasted seven days when his child was sick (II Sam. 12:16-18). When Saul and his sons were buried there was a fast of seven days mourning their unfortunate end (I Sam. 31:13; I Chr. 10:12).

4. Twenty-one day fast

Daniel fasted twenty-one days (Dan. 10:1-3). However, in his case it was not a total fast.

5. Forty day fast

This is the highest level of fasting. Three men in the Bible fasted forty consecutive days. Moses has to be the “king of fasting.” He fasted forty days three times, two of which were apparently back to back—80 days with no food or water (Deut. 9:9, 18; Ex. 34:28). Elijah and Jesus also fasted for forty days (I Kgs. 19:8; Mt. 4:2). Fasting at this level is supernatural fasting and should only be done at the specific beckoning of the Lord. This type of fast should not be done without consulting with your physician prior to its inception. In some cases it could be physically dangerous.

III. Who are some of the people who fasted and why did they fast?

A. God’s people in the Old Testament fasted.

1. They fasted on the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:29-31; 23:26-32; Num. 29:7).
2. They fasted during a special encounter with the Lord (Deut. 9:9-11).
3. They fasted for direction and help in battle (Judg. 20:26; II Chr. 20:3-4).
4. They fasted as part of their repentance and return to the Lord (I Sam. 7:6; I Kgs. 21:27). Even the animals had to fast when Nineveh repented (Jon. 3:5-10).

So the people of Nineveh believed God, proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest to the least of them. 6 Then word came to the king of Nineveh; and he arose from his throne and laid aside his robe, covered himself with sackcloth and sat in ashes. 7 And he caused it to be proclaimed and published throughout Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying, let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything; do not let them eat, or drink water. 8 But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily to God; yes, let every one turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands. 9 Who can tell if God will turn and relent, and turn away from His fierce anger, so that we may not perish? 10 Then God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God relented from the disaster that He had said He would bring upon them, and He did not do it.

5. They (David) fasted for healing (II Sam. 12:16-23; Ps. 35:11-13).
6. They fasted in a time of mourning for the death of a leader (I Sam. 31:13).
7. They fasted for deliverance from impending doom (Est. 4:3, 16).
8. They fasted for preservation and guidance on a difficult journey (Ezra 8:21).

B. God's people in the New Testament fasted.

1. They fasted in a special time of seeking the Lord (Acts 13:1-3).
As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Now separate to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." Then, having fasted and prayed, and laid hands on them, they sent them away.
2. They fasted in the context of appointing elders in the church (Acts 14:21-23).
3. They fasted as a regular discipline (II Cor. 6:5; 11:27).

IV. What did Jesus teach about fasting?

Not only did Jesus give us a great example of fasting in His personal life and relationship to His Father, He also said some important things about fasting.

A. Jesus said that fasting would characterize His disciples (Mt. 6:16; 9:14-15).

Then the disciples of John came to Him, saying, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but Your disciples do not fast?" And Jesus said to them, "Can the friends of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast."

Matthew 9:14-15

B. Jesus gave practical instructions about fasting (Mt. 6:16-18).

Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.

C. Jesus demonstrated the power of a fasted lifestyle (Mt. 17:14-21).

And when they had come to the multitude, a man came to Him, kneeling down to Him and saying, 15 “Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic and suffers severely; for he often falls into the fire and often into the water. 16 So I brought him to Your disciples, but they could not cure him.” 17 Then Jesus answered and said, “O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him here to Me.” 18 And Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of him; and the child was cured from that very hour. 19 Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, “Why could we not cast it out?” 20 So Jesus said to them, “Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you. 21 However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.”

V. What are some of the reasons why we might decide to fast?

A. Wrong reasons for fasting

1. Fasting to lose weight.

Diet and exercise are important for the body. Fasting one day a week can be beneficial to almost anyone, but doctors will tell you that fasting is a very poor method of losing weight.

2. Fasting as a way to force God’s hand.

Fasting is not a hunger strike where we are blackmailing or trying to manipulate God into doing what we have determined as our own agenda. God does not respond to this type of fasting (Jer. 14:12). This type of fast can be very disappointing and will not draw us closer to God. The Bible does record one such incident of fasting that could have had a very bad result (Acts 23:12-22).

But the following night the Lord stood by him and said, “Be of good cheer, Paul; for as you have testified for Me in Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness at Rome.” 12 And when it was day, some of the Jews banded together and bound themselves under an oath, saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul. 13 Now there were more than forty who had formed this conspiracy. 14 They came to the chief priests and elders, and said, “We have

bound ourselves under a great oath that we will eat nothing until we have killed Paul. 15 Now you, therefore, together with the council, suggest to the commander that he be brought down to you tomorrow, as though you were going to make further inquiries concerning him; but we are ready to kill him before he comes near.” 16 So when Paul's sister's son heard of their ambush, he went and entered the barracks and told Paul. 17 Then Paul called one of the centurions to him and said, “Take this young man to the commander, for he has something to tell him.”

The Romans ended up sending an armed guard of 470 soldiers to escort Paul safely out of town.

3. Fasting as a way to prove your own spirituality (Mt. 6:16-18).

The Pharisees were concerned about how they looked on the outside. They tried to perform all of their religious duties in an exaggerated way because they wanted to have the praise of men. For this reason they disfigured their faces to create an outward look of suffering. They were fasting for men not for God. They were fasting because that is what “good people” are supposed to do.

4. Fasting as an empty form or ritual (Is. 58:3-9; Zech. 7:5)

This is when we fast or abstain from eating, but we do not truly seek God. Fasting is to be a time of humbling ourselves before the Lord. It is a time to set aside our own agenda and hear from the heart of God. Our time of fasting should be “prayer and fasting.” Remember you can always pray without fasting but you cannot fast in a biblical way without praying.

B. Right reasons for fasting

The following are twelve good reasons for fasting:

1. Fasting for the healing of yourself or others.
2. Fasting for deliverance from bondages for yourself and others (Is. 58:6-11).

Is this not the fast that I have chosen: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, and that you break every yoke? 7 Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out; when you see the naked, that you cover him, and not hide yourself from your own flesh? 8 Then your light shall break forth like the morning, your healing shall spring forth speedily, and your righteousness shall go before you; the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard. 9 Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer; you shall cry, and He will say, “Here I am.” If you take away the yoke from your midst, the pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness, 10 if you extend your soul to the hungry and satisfy the afflicted soul, then your light shall dawn in the darkness, and your darkness shall be as the noonday. 11 The LORD will guide you continually, and satisfy your soul in

drought, and strengthen your bones; you shall be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail.

3. Fasting as part of the process of coming back to the Lord (Neh. 9:1-3; Joel 2:12).

Now on the twenty-fourth day of this month the children of Israel were assembled with fasting, in sackcloth, and with dust on their heads. Then those of Israelite lineage separated themselves from all foreigners; and they stood and confessed their sins and the iniquities of their fathers. And they stood up in their place and read from the Book of the Law of the LORD their God for one-fourth of the day; and for another fourth they confessed and worshiped the LORD their God.

Nehemiah 9:1-3

4. Fasting to mortify the works of the flesh.
5. Fasting to gain a greater sensitivity to the Holy Spirit.
6. Fasting to receive needed guidance from the Lord.
7. Fasting for wisdom in dealing with some of life's difficult issues.
8. Fasting for a greater release of miracle power in our ministry life (Mt. 17:14-21).
Fasting helps to remove unbelief.
9. Fasting to get a fresh revelation of and from God.
10. Fasting in anticipation of a fresh move of the Holy Spirit (Luke 2:36-38; Acts 10:30). Fasting helps one to be spiritually prepared for what God wants to do.

Now there was one, Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, and had lived with a husband seven years from her virginity; and this woman was a widow of about eighty-four years, who did not depart from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day. And coming in that instant she gave thanks to the Lord, and spoke of Him to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem.

11. Fasting to simply obey the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

At times God will lead us into a fast even though we do not fully know why. As we respond in obedience to the Lord we will usually understand the "Why" after the fast is completed.

12. Fasting when the local church is called to a special time of fasting and seeking the Lord (Acts 13:1-3).

Andrew Murray said, "Fasting helps to express, to deepen, and to confirm the resolution that we are ready to sacrifice anything—to sacrifice ourselves—to attain what we seek for the kingdom of God."

VI. What are we actually doing when we fast?

- A. We are afflicting or chastening our soul (Lev. 16:29; Ps. 69:10).

When I wept and chastened my soul with fasting... Psalm 69:10a

- B. We are humbling ourselves before God (Ps. 35:13; 1 Kgs. 21:29; Ezra 8:21).

But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth; I humbled myself with fasting... Psalm 35:13a

- C. We are starving our natural man and feeding our Spirit man.

- D. We are focusing all of our energies on hearing from God (Jer. 29:13-14).

And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. I will be found by you, says the LORD, and I will bring you back from your captivity; I will gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you, says the LORD, and I will bring you to the place from which I cause you to be carried away captive.

VII. What are some practical things to keep in mind when fasting?

There are no hard and fast rules when it comes to fasting. Fasting in the New Testament appears to be totally voluntary. The believer is to be led and guided by the Holy Spirit regarding when to fast, how long to fast and what type of fast to do. However, there are some things that will make your overall experience better.

- A. Use wisdom while fasting and try to lighten your schedule and physical activity (I Sam. 14:24-30).

And the men of Israel were distressed that day, for Saul had placed the people under oath, saying, "Cursed is the man who eats any food until evening, before I have taken vengeance on my enemies." So none of the people tasted food. 25 Now all the people of the land came to a forest; and there was honey on the ground. 26 And when the people had come into the woods, there was the honey, dripping; but no one put his hand to his mouth, for the people feared the oath. 27 But Jonathan had not heard his father charge the people with the oath; therefore he stretched out the end of the rod that was in his hand and dipped it in a honeycomb, and put his hand to his mouth; and his countenance brightened. 28 Then one of the people said, "Your father strictly charged the people with an oath, saying, 'Cursed is the man who eats food this day.'" And the people were faint. 29 But Jonathan said, "My father has troubled the land. Look now, how my countenance has brightened because I tasted a little of this honey. 30 How much better if the people had eaten freely today of the spoil of their enemies

which they found! For now would there not have been a much greater slaughter among the Philistines?"

B. Limit activities that will distract from seeking the Lord (Is. 58:3-4).

- Television
- Sports
- Hobbies
- Video Games
- Entertaining Guests
- Non-Christian Reading
- Sexual Activity (I Cor. 7:3-5)

Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband. The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. And likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

C. Focus on activities that will enhance your ability to hear from God.

- Bible Reading
- Prayer and Meditation
- Laying before the Lord (napping)
- Reading a challenging Christian book
- Singing and Worship

D. Keep a note pad available at all times to write down spiritual impressions from the Lord. Expect God to speak to you and to reward your time with Him (Mt. 16:18).

E. Unless you are doing an absolute fast, drink lots of water while you are fasting. It will help you to keep from getting dehydrated.

F. Check with a doctor before you fast especially if you have a medical condition that requires the use of medications. Do not be presumptuous in this area. Pregnant women should never fast on any level without consulting their doctors.

G. If you have never fasted, start small and work up. Start with fasting one or two meals. Remember the whole purpose of missing the meal time is to use the time in seeking the Lord.

H. Expect your body to react with withdrawal symptoms. These symptoms may include headaches, nausea, and lightheadedness. In longer fasts, most of these symptoms will eventually subside.

- I. Come off of an extended fast slowly. Large quantities of food will be a shock to your system after not eating for a while. You may not like the body's reaction.

Section 2

Personal Bible Study

Lesson 9

Feeding on the Word

Our Daily Bread

I. What is the importance of the word of God in our lives?

The word of God is the food that gives life to and sustains the believer in their earthly walk. The word of God is the believer's food for their journey.

A. Jesus indicated that the word of God was the source of life to Him (Mt. 4:4).

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry. Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'"

Matthew 4:1-4

B. Jesus encouraged us to labor for and to feed on the right kind of food (John 6:22-27).

Jesus answered them and said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him." John 6:26-27

1. Jesus spoke of a bread that when you eat you never hunger (John 6:35).

And Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst."

2. Jesus spoke of a water that when you drink you will never thirst (John 4:13-14).

Jesus answered and said to her, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life."

3. However, the responsibility is on us to hunger and thirst and to eat and to drink (Mt. 5:6; Is. 55:1-2).

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled.
Matthew 5:6

Is anyone thirsty? Come and drink--even if you have no money! Come, take your choice of wine or milk—it's all free! Why spend your money on food that does not give you strength? Why pay for food that does you no good? Listen, and I will tell you where to get food that is good for the soul! Isaiah 55:1-2, NLT

II. How important is it to get a word from the Lord on a daily basis?

- A. Jesus indicated that we need daily bread (Mt. 6:11).

Give us this day our daily bread.

- B. God has a word that is proceeding out of His mouth for us (Mt. 4:4b).

Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.

God is speaking to us all of the time. There is a word that is proceeding out of His mouth for us. Responding to this word is the thing that keeps us alive.

- C. God has a present truth or now word for us (II Pet. 1:12).

For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth.

God has a word for us that is designed to fit in to the specific context of our life in the present tense. He wants us to have present tense experiences with Him.

- D. God has a word for us today (Heb. 3:1-7, 13, 15; 4:7).

Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.

Hebrews 3:15

God has a word for us today. That word is consistent with our present development and growth level as we walk forward into the purposes of God for our lives. God method of building is line upon line, precept upon precept and little by little (Is. 28:10). God will be faithful to give us “meat in due season” (Luke 12:42).

III. What are some of the things that we need to do if we are to receive proper food?

- A. We need to understand the place and power of the word of God.

1. God's attitude about His word.

- a. He magnifies His word above His name (Ps. 138:2).
 - b. His word is alive, powerful, active and sharp (Heb. 4:12).
 - c. His word does not return void (Is. 55:11).
 - d. He backs up His word with signs following (Mk. 16:15-20).
2. The Eight-fold Ministry of the Word in II Timothy 4:1-2
- a. For Doctrine
 - b. For Reproof
 - c. For Correction
 - d. For Instruction
 - e. For Convincing
 - f. For Rebuke
 - g. For Exhortation
 - h. For Comfort

B. We need to have a proper attitude toward the word of God.

- 1. The attitude of hungering for and desiring the word (Mt. 5:6; I Pet. 2:2).
- 2. The attitude of teachableness before the word (Ps. 119:33).
- 3. The attitude of humility before the word (Is. 66:1-2).
- 4. The attitude of obedience or personal application of the word (James 1:25).
- 5. It means learning the right way to study the Bible (II Tim. 2:15).
- 6. It means learning how to use the best tools for digging (Pro. 25:2).
- 7. It means accumulating helpful resources.
- 8. It means studying and doing the work yourself.
- 9. It means battling the natural “spirit of laziness.”
- 10. It means overcoming the natural weariness of much study (Eccl. 12:12).
- 11. It means having a designated place for private study.
- 12. It means having a set time to study.

IV. How is the word of God like manna for God’s people?

Jesus ties the preceding word into the manna of old (Mt. 4:4; Deut. 8:3).

And you shall remember that the LORD your God led you all the way these forty years in the wilderness, to humble you and test you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. So He humbled you, allowed you to hunger, and

fed you with manna which you did not know nor did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD. Deuteronomy 8:2-3

See: Exodus 16

1. It was bread from heaven (Ex. 16:4; Num. 11:9; Ps. 78:23-24; 105:40).

Yet He had commanded the clouds above, and opened the doors of heaven, had rained down manna on them to eat, and given them of the bread of heaven. Men ate angels' food; He sent them food to the full. Psalm 78:23-25

The word of God is God's special gift to us.

2. It was miracle bread (Ex. 16:7).

And in the morning you shall see the glory of the LORD...

When you consider the process by which the word of God has come to us, it is indeed a miracle.

3. It was the bread that God had given them to eat (Ex. 16:15).

So when the children of Israel saw it, they said to one another, "What is it?" For they did not know what it was. And Moses said to them, "This is the bread which the LORD has given you to eat."

The word of God is the food that God has given us to sustain our lives.

4. It came to where the people were (Ex. 16:14).

And when the layer of dew lifted, there, on the surface of the wilderness, was a small round substance, as fine as frost on the ground.

The word of God is accessible. We really do not have to go far to get it. In addition, the word of the Lord is able to meet us where we are. If we are babes, it is milk. If we are the more mature, it is meat.

5. It was small (Ex. 16:14).

...was a small round substance...

Naturally speaking, the word of the Lord is a small thing, not impressive to the natural man.

6. It was round (Ex. 16:14).

The word of the Lord is round in the sense that it has no rough angles or edges, it is perfectly whole and eternal.

7. It was white (Ex. 16:31a).

And the house of Israel called its name Manna. And it was like white coriander seed...

White is a symbol purity, righteousness and holiness (Dan. 12:10; Rev. 19:8-9; Ps. 19:8).

8. It was to be eaten (Ex. 16:15b).

And Moses said to them, "This is the bread which the LORD has given you to eat."

The word of God does us no good if we only look at it from afar, it must be eaten, that is, taken in and digested (Jer. 15:16).

Your words were found, and I ate them, and Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart; for I am called by Your name, O LORD God of hosts.

9. It was all to be eaten (Ex. 16:19).

And Moses said, "Let no one leave any of it till morning."

When it comes to the word of God, you cannot eat some words and avoid others. You cannot pick and choose what suits you.

10. It tasted like fresh oil (Num. 11:8).

The people went about and gathered it, ground it on millstones or beat it in the mortar, cooked it in pans, and made cakes of it; and its taste was like the taste of pastry prepared with oil.

The word of God works together with the Spirit of God.

11. It tasted like honey (Ex. 16:31b; Ps. 19:10).

...and the taste of it was like wafers made with honey.

More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Psalm 19:10

The word of God is sweet to the hungry soul.

12. It kept them healthy (Neh. 9:20-21; I Cor. 10:3).

You also gave Your good Spirit to instruct them, and did not withhold Your manna from their mouth, and gave them water for their thirst. Forty years You sustained them in the wilderness; they lacked nothing; their clothes did not wear out and their feet did not swell. Nehemiah 9:20-21

The word of God is all we need to keep us in health—Spirit, soul and body.

13. It was fine and easy to digest (Ex. 16:14b).

...was a small round substance, as fine as frost on the ground.

14. It was to be gathered daily (Ex. 16:4).

And the people shall go out and gather a certain quota every day, that I may test them, whether they will walk in My law or not.

15. It came with the dew (Ex. 16:13-14; Num. 11:9).

So it was that quails came up at evening and covered the camp, and in the morning the dew lay all around the camp. And when the layer of dew lifted, there, on the surface of the wilderness, was a small round substance, as fine as frost on the ground.
Exodus 16:13-14

The word of God is forever fresh.

16. It was gathered in the morning (Ex. 16:11-12).

And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "I have heard the complaints of the children of Israel. Speak to them, saying, 'At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall be filled with bread. And you shall know that I am the LORD your God.'"

17. It was gathered by labor.

It takes a certain amount of work to gather a word from the Lord.

18. It was gathered by stooping.

We must maintain a humble posture before the Word.

19. It had to be gathered personally (Ex. 16:16).

This is the thing which the LORD has commanded: "Let every man gather it according to each one's need, one omer for each person, according to the number of persons; let every man take for those who are in his tent."

No one can pray for you and no one can gather your measure of manna for you.

20. It was always enough (Ex. 16:17-18).

Then the children of Israel did so and gathered, some more, some less. So when they measured it by omers, he who gathered much had nothing left over, and he who gathered little had no lack. Every man had gathered according to each one's need.

Whether you read a little or much, it always has the power to satisfy.

21. It met each one's need (Ex. 16:18).

...and he who gathered little had no lack.

The word of God ministers to each one personally and meets us at our point of need.

22. It could not be stored for another day (Ex. 16:20).

Notwithstanding they did not heed Moses. But some of them left part of it until morning, and it bred worms and stank. And Moses was angry with them.

Yesterday's word is insufficient to meet the challenges of the new day. We must have fresh experiences in the word to keep ourselves alive spiritually.

23. It tested their obedience daily (Ex. 16:4).

...that I may test them, whether they will walk in My law or not.

Each day they had to rise up and gather. Each day they had to choose for obedience if they were going to be fed.

24. That which was kept in the ark endured forever (Ex. 16:33-34; Heb. 9:4).

And Moses said to Aaron, "Take a pot and put an omer of manna in it, and lay it up before the LORD, to be kept for your generations." As the LORD commanded Moses, so Aaron laid it up before the Testimony, to be kept. Exodus 16:33-34

The word that we hide in our hearts and make a part of our lives will stay with us forever.

25. It was to be eaten throughout their wilderness wanderings (Ex. 16:35).

And the children of Israel ate manna forty years, until they came to an inhabited land; they ate manna until they came to the border of the land of Canaan.

As long as we are living on this planet we need the heavenly manna. When we get to heaven the need for it will cease.

26. Sadly, it was often despised by God's people (Num. 11:4-6; 21:5-6).

And the people spoke against God and against Moses: "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and our soul loathes this worthless bread." So the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and many of the people of Israel died. Numbers 21:5-6

They experienced a miracle every day. Unfortunately, it became common place and they took it for granted. They wanted something more exciting. May we never take God's word for granted in our lives.

Lesson 10

Reading the Bible

I. What are the first steps to Bible reading and study?

A. Seeing the need for it.

In our last class we discussed the importance of feeding on the word for spiritual survival. If you do not accept the importance of this area in your life you will not do anything else about it. We must not let our sense of need be governed by how we feel on any given day. We must believe that we need the word of God more than we need the food we eat.

1. We must believe that we will not prosper without it.
2. We must believe that our survival depends upon it.
3. We must believe that we will die without it.

When you actually believe something, it changes the way that you live.

B. Making a personal commitment to it.

As with anything of value in our life we must make a commitment to the principle of regular Bible study or feeding on the word. This commitment is made to the Lord, but it often helps to solicit a prayer partner with whom to be accountable. This can be a spouse, a close friend or simply another believer with the same heart and drive.

C. Choosing a translation of the Bible for it.

Every person will have a translation of the Bible that will serve them in the area of personal Bible study. You may use many different translations of the Bible for personal devotional enrichment, but it is good to choose one for the more systematic study. You should choose one that is both readable and accurate.

D. Adopting a plan for it.

When we fail to plan, we plan to fail. We must always translate specific desires or commitments into specific plans or they will simply never happen. How are you going to go about your Bible study? Where do you begin?

E. Establishing a schedule for it.

Your personal Bible study may occur in conjunction with your normal prayer time or it may be another designated time where the primary focus will be on digging deeper into the word. Whenever it is, it should be time when you are fresh and can give proper attention to it.

F. Keeping the schedule that you have established for it.

This is where discipline comes in. Most people begin well but lack the discipline to carry on. No matter what happens in terms of keeping your schedule, make sure to get right back into it when you realize you have been negligent.

G. Being willing to invest in it.

This means being willing to spend money on your Bible reading habit. How much do we spend on hobbies and recreation? Often when we look at the price of Bible study books, we gasp in shock. However, we can go out to eat or go to a movie and spend that amount of money without even thinking. A good student of the word is willing to invest resources to have the correct tools with which to work.

II. How does one choose a translation or version of the Bible?

There are many versions and translations of the Bible to choose from. Different translations are suitable to different purposes (See the chart at the end of this lesson taken from the *Text and Product Preview: New Living Translation Holy Bible*, page 37, Tyndale House, 2001).

A. For devotional reading.

Almost any version will do for devotional reading. In fact, it is good to collect many different translations throughout your lifetime and read different versions each year in your devotional times. This keeps the reading from becoming stale and often sheds a new light on the more familiar passages.

There are two types of versions that are inspirational when you are reading for personal devotions.

1. Paraphrase

A paraphrase, like the *Living Bible*, *The Message* or *Phillip's Translation*, attempts to understand the meaning of the passage and put it into the context of the modern world. Many paraphrases are not based on the original Greek text, but are based on the reading of other contemporary versions.

2. Thought for thought translations

A thought for thought translation like the *New International Version* is usually based on the original languages, but is not so concerned about a word for word translation of the Greek. The translators attempted to understand the Greek mind and translate the thought or concept into the contemporary mind or understanding.

B. For deeper study.

For deeper study it is usually better to use a more literal translation of the Bible. Because your deeper study will involve digging into the actual Greek words and concepts, it is more rewarding to work from a text that will be true to actual word equivalents.

C. For cautious usage.

There are some translations that should be avoided or used with extreme caution. Some translations take extreme liberty with the text of the Bible. Usually translators in this category have an agenda other than understanding the clear meaning of the original text. Often they attempt to bring modern culture with its modern system of values into the inspired word of God. The New Revised Standard Version is one such version that seeks to make the text of the Scripture gender neutral to the extent of referring to God as both Father and Mother.

Part of researching a translation is being aware of who is doing the work of translating. Sad to say, Bible translation work is not an exact science. Often there are choices to be made in choosing words to go from one language to another. The bias of the translator can enter in at this point. This is why it is important to remember that the only truly inspired text are the original documents of the original language text in which the Bible was actually written.

III. What are some common Bible reading plans?

There are many ways to approach the study of God's word.

A. Reading the Bible straight through.

There are many Bible reading plans that can be adopted all with the view of reading the Bible through each year of one's life. Specific Bible reading plans can be purchased at a Christian bookstore or downloaded from the internet. Most of these plans run through a calendar year.

To read the Bible through in a calendar year one must only read three chapters of the Bible a day. I usually recommend that people read five chapters a day so that when they miss a day for whatever reason they do not end up with a lot of "catch up" reading to do. Getting behind often brings discouragement and can lead to "giving up" on the plan.

1. Reading through from Genesis to Revelation.

In this case you simply leave a marker in your Bible and return to the spot where you left off.

2. Alternating Old Testament reading with New Testament reading.

In this case you keep a marker in the Old Testament and another marker in the New Testament. If you read five chapters a day, in one year you can go through the Old Testament once and the New Testament twice.

3. Reading a portion of the Old or New Testament and a chapter in Proverbs and a chapter in Psalms.

Reading in Proverbs and the Psalms more often than the other books will keep your heart and mind in Christ Jesus. Since there are 31 chapters in the Book of Proverbs you can use the day of the month to determine the chapter to be read. Because of the varying length of the Psalms (they vary from 2 verses to 176 verses), they should be read by the volume of verses rather than a chapter on any given day.

B. Reading the Bible chronologically.

Most people understand that the books of the Bible as we find them are not in chronological order. They are arranged by category (i.e. Books of Moses, Historical Books, Poetry, and Prophets).

Bible reading plans based on chronology are available or you can actually purchase *The Chronological Bible* that is already arranged in this way.

C. Reading the Bible topically.

This is not a very common way to read through the Bible, but it can be very rewarding. In order to do this you will need to purchase a topical Bible such as *Nave's Topical Bible*. In this case you would read the main entries that are given in full beginning with "Ablution" and going through "Zeal."

There are study Bibles that focus on various themes. Those who have crafted these Bibles do so with the idea of emphasizing certain aspects of the word of God. Example of this include *The Spirit Filled Life Bible*, *The Life Application Bible*, *The Maxwell Leadership Bible* or *The Christian Counselor's New Testament* by Jay Adams. When you read these Bibles and the comments that are made it becomes somewhat of a topical study.

IV. What are the primary ways to interact with the Bible?

The Bible seems like a very large book, but when you consider that it is the only book that the Christian must master in his or her lifetime, it is not overwhelming.

In addition to memorization and meditation that we discussed earlier, believers should adopt the following ways of interacting with the word of God so that they grow in their knowledge of the word throughout their lifetime.

A. They should read it devotionally.

This reading is for daily bread and general spiritual enrichment. This type of reading is usually connected with our personal, daily prayer life. In this case the only book that we need is a version of the Bible or perhaps a study Bible with some additional notes and helps. This kind of reading is daily food for the soul.

This kind of reading should always be accompanied by note taking and even marking of your Bible. To some the thought of marking in their Bible seems sacrilegious. In matter of fact, the Bible itself is not to be an object to be worshipped but the words of the Bible are to be the source of life and strength. If underlining or taking notes in our Bible help us to remember and obey the word of God, it is a valuable exercise for us.

“The sacred page is not meant to be the end, but only the means toward the end, which is knowing God himself.” –A. W. Tozer

B. They should study each book of the Bible in depth.

In addition to reading the Bible in our devotional time, believers should work through the Bible in a more systematic and disciplined way. At any given point in time it is good to be working through a particular book.

In this case, you will need your Bible and/or study Bible plus some other tools of study. These would especially include commentaries on that particular book of the Bible. It is an achievable goal to work through the entire Bible book by book in one's lifetime.

C. They should study it topically.

In addition to systematic study through the books of the Bible, at times believers should study the Bible topically. This is true especially during a season where the Holy Spirit is working on a particular area of our life. By reading all that the Bible has to say on any given subject, the believer has the resources to exercise and grow in faith in that area of focus.

In this case, topical Bibles, concordances, word study dictionaries and cross references can be very useful.

For all of these types of study it is critical for the believer to pray at the beginning of the study asking God by the Holy Spirit to enlighten your understanding concerning what you are reading (Acts 8:30-31).

So Philip ran to him, and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said, “Do you understand what you are reading?” And he said, “How can I, unless someone guides me?” And he asked Philip to come up and sit with him.

Bible Translations or Versions Chart

Translation or Version	Reading Level	Summary	Methodology of Translation Passage Comparison of Matthew 4:19
King James Version (KJV)	12	The now classic English translation of the Bible dating from 1611. Though difficult for many to understand because of its sometimes archaic language, it is loved for its familiarity and poetic beauty.	Literal And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.
New International Version(NIV)	7	This popular translation seeks to balance the concerns of literal and dynamic equivalence translation philosophies.	Literal with freedom to be idiomatic “Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will make you fishers of men.”
New Living Translation (NLT)	6	Authoritative text with a fresh, clear style that is enjoyable to read. A leading thought-for-thought translation that accurately communicates the meaning of the original Greek and Hebrew texts.	Dynamic Equivalence Jesus called out to them, “Come, be my disciples, and I will show you how to fish for people!”
New King James Version (NKJV)	7	A translation that updates the language of the KJV while preserving its basic literary structure.	Literal Then He said to them, “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.”
New American Standard Bible (NASB)	10	Translates the original text as literally as possible, preserving word-for-word equivalency and original sentence structure in English wherever possible.	Strictly literal And He said to them, “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.”
New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)	7	Translation sponsored by the National Council of Churches of Christ. Generally literal word-for-word philosophy.	Literal And he said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fish for people.”
New American Bible (NAB)	7	The official translation of the Roman Catholic Church in America. This fairly literal translation includes the deuterion-canonical books in all editions.	Literal He said to them, “Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men.”
Contemporary English Version (CEV)	5	A dynamic equivalence translation that avoids difficult vocabulary and sentence structures to produce a straightforward translation that’s understandable to the modern reader.	Dynamic Equivalence Jesus said to them, “Come with me! I will teach you how to bring people in instead of fish.”
The Living Bible (TLB)	8	Paraphrase by Kenneth Taylor that communicates the essential message of God’s Word to the average English reader. Simplifies theological language so it’s easy to understand.	Paraphrase Jesus called out, “Come along with me and I will show you how to fish for the souls of men!”
The Message	5	A colorful paraphrase by Eugene Peterson that seeks to capture the message of the original text in a creative and impacting way.	Paraphrase Jesus said to them, “Come with me. I’ll make a new kind of fisherman out of you. I’ll show you how to catch men and women instead of perch and bass.”

Lesson 11

Bridging the Gap

I. What is the most significant challenge when it comes to studying the Bible?

The most significant challenge to fully understanding the Bible is bridging the communication gaps that exist between the contexts in which the Bible was written and our present day context. The truth of what was being communicated by God is in a very real sense locked up in the actual biblical context. In order to fully understand the Bible we must bridge four primary gaps.

A. The Language Gap

The Bible was written in languages which, for the most part, are not understood by those reading it today. The primary languages of the Bible are Hebrew and Greek with some portions having been originally written in Ancient Chaldean or Aramaic. Even for those who speak some of these languages today there is a problem. Ancient Hebrew and Koine Greek are not the same their modern day counterparts. All language evolves over time. Just compare the English of Shakespeare and modern English and it is easy to see how language can change over time. What happens when you add thousands of years to the development of a language?

If we are to understand the Bible in its context, we need to know some things relative to the languages in which the Bible was written.

1. We need to know what the words meant when they were written down by the author. Because words tend to evolve in meaning with time, it is important to know what that word meant when it was actually written.
2. We need to know the idiomatic expressions and figures of speech that are used in the Bible and what their contemporary equivalents are. When Solomon indicated that the Shulamite woman had “doves eyes” (Song 1:15), what exactly did he mean?
3. We need to know the origin, formation and history of the words (etymology). For instance when you understand that the Greek word for obedience (*hupakoe*) is a compound word composed from the verb meaning “hear” (*akouo*) and the word meaning “under” (*hupo*), it helps you to understand God’s concept of obedience. It means that we are to hear and respond as those that are under authority.
4. We need to know the significance of different grammatical constructions as to how they have a bearing on the meaning of the text.

5. We even need to understand the literary style (i.e. poetic, historical, prophetic, apocalyptic, etc.) in which a passage is written to better understand its present day application. You cannot interpret the Song of Solomon the same way that you would the Book of Judges. They are different types of literature. One is very literal and the other is very symbolic or figurative (Song 2:8-9).

The voice of my beloved! Behold, he comes leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills. My beloved is like a gazelle or a young stag. Behold, he stands behind our wall; He is looking through the windows, gazing through the lattice.

B. The Cultural Gap

In addition to a language gap there is a culture gap. The Bible was written in the context of an eastern and agrarian culture that is not consistent with the culture of most of those reading the Bible today. Much of the culture of the Bible is built around farming, sheep-herding and systems of bartering. Many of the cultural practices of the people in the Bible are not a part of our modern culture. Even the actual authors who wrote over many centuries did not share the exact same culture. The culture of Daniel is much different than the culture of Amos.

God is not interested in the duplication of biblical culture, per se, but He is interested in the principles by which the culture operated. In order to understand the principle behind the practice, we must understand certain things.

1. We must understand what the culture of the day was and how it has a bearing on the passage in question. Much of the New Testament material about head coverings, meat offered to idols and women being silent in the church can be understood more fully when one understands some of the cultural practices of the day.
2. We must understand the material elements of culture including such things as transportation, cooking, clothing, tools for farming, weapons of warfare, housing and animal life (e.g. taxation, balances and scales, weights and measures, raising sheep, etc.). How big or little was the woman's offering (Mark 12:42)? How valuable is a sparrow (Luke 12:6)? How expensive was the bonfire that was built by those confessing their deeds (Acts 19:19)? How much manna was gathered and placed in the Ark of the Covenant (Ex. 16:33, 36)?

And Moses said to Aaron, "Take a pot and put an omer of manna in it, and lay it up before the LORD, to be kept for your generations".... Now an omer is one-tenth of an ephah.

3. We must understand the social order of the society in which the verses were written including such things and marriage customs, biblical trades, economics, legal requirements, civil laws and other social customs (e.g. betrothal, smelting, avenger of blood, cities of refuge, etc.).

4. We must be able to distinguish between the cultures that are referenced including the cultures of the Babylonians, the Assyrians, the Persians, the Greeks, the Romans and, of course, the Jews. What was the Roman law regarding scourging and crucifixion? What was the way in which the Romans paraded those conquered by them?

C. The Historical Gap

In addition to the language and culture gap we also face an historical gap. The various books of the Bible were written in an historical context that is much different than the world of today. Many of the nations that are referenced in the Bible do not even exist today. The super powers of the biblical world are not the super powers of the present world (e.g. Nineveh, Edom, Hittites, etc.). And yet, so much of the Bible centers around these cultures and the world events that surrounded them.

1. We must understand the political world and the relationship of the various nations to each other.
2. We must understand the economic and religious forces that were at play in the time when the books were written.

D. The Geographical Gap

A fourth gap that must be bridged is the geographical gap. The story of the Bible took place in various geographical settings that are totally unfamiliar to the average reader of the Bible. In addition, the geography of the Bible varies from large cities (Rome) to rural deserts (Sinai Peninsula) and from the beginning of a city (Babel) to its full development as a city (Babylon).

1. We must understand the topography of the land.

Did you know that the road from Jerusalem to Jericho was a road that went down (Luke 10:30). In fact, Jerusalem was 3000 (.9 km) feet above sea level and Jericho was 1000 (.3 km) feet below sea level. The actual road was about 17 miles (27 km). It is a very rugged, mountainous pass and a difficult journey.

2. We must understand the plant and animal life of the land.

The Bible makes reference to various types of trees including fig trees, olive trees, cedar trees and palm trees. It often uses them in a symbolic way. In order to understand the symbolism connected with them it is helpful to learn something of the trees themselves. It also uses animals to symbolize certain things, whether it is Herod the fox or disciples being as harmless as doves.

3. We must understand the climate and weather patterns of the land.

4. We must understand mountains, rivers and seas.
5. We must understand the proximity of one nation to another.

II. What are some of the tools that will help to bridge the communication gap?

Digging deeper in the word of God is much like mining for precious gems. Gems are rarely found lying on the surface of the ground. Fortunately, others have gone before us and developed tools for mining the gems from God's word. It would be foolish not to take advantage of them.

The following are some of the basic tools with which the serious Bible student should become familiar. All of these books are available electronically through various Bible Software programs. However, hard copies of these books can also be used very easily.

A. Concordances

1. A concordance is a compilation of all of the places a certain word occurs in the Bible.
 - a. There are modern language concordances as well as concordances for the original language text of the Bible.
 - b. There are exhaustive concordances and complete concordances.
 - c. There are concordances that are specific to specific versions of the Bible.
2. A concordance can be used to find a passage when you know some specific words in the passage for which you are looking. It is best to try to find the least used word in the text.
3. A concordance can be used to find all of the places where a certain word occurs.
 - a. If you are using a modern language concordance, it will tell you all of the places where that modern language word occurs.
 - b. If you are using an original language concordance (i.e. Greek or Hebrew) it will tell you where all of the places are where that original language word occurs in the Bible.

B. Lexicons

Lexicons are dictionaries of words that help you to understand the meaning and origins of words as they are used in the original languages. Many lexicons require a certain amount of familiarity with Greek or Hebrew. However, most modern lexicons have a numbering system where you can easily locate the words that you are trying to search.

C. Bible Dictionaries or Encyclopedias

Bible dictionaries and encyclopedias are a wonderful resource for background information and summaries of biblical material. Unfortunately the Bible is not catalogued alphabetically. People, places, doctrines, and all other information is scattered throughout its pages. These books function just like other dictionaries and encyclopedias except they focus on topics that are specifically related to the Bible.

D. Bible Handbooks

Bible handbooks are books that are meant to be read along with your personal Bible reading. They often give insights into a variety of things including archeological findings, relevant historical data, background to the Book and many other useful bits of information. Their weakness is that usually they are not large books and cannot do full justice to any of the areas that they attempt to cover.

E. Bible Atlases

Bible atlases are books of maps that help you understand many things about the geographical world of Bible times. Atlases may be large or small and can offer information on topography, rainfall, weather patterns, proximity of nations, areas of land mass and distances for travel. They usually give you information related to various times in history past and may even compare Bible times to modern times. Large ones may also include information about vegetation, animal life and other relevant facts. Perhaps the greatest help they provide is in assisting you to visualize the movements of people and groups of people as recorded in the Bible (e.g. The wilderness wanderings, the journeys of Paul, etc.).

F. Commentaries

Commentaries are written by scholars who try to expand a persons understanding concerning what is being read in the Bible. They are organized by chapter and verse of the books of the Bible. Commentary sets can consist of one volume to 66 volumes. Commentaries can be affected greatly by the theology of the person who is doing the writing, but most commentaries can be very helpful since they draw from many sources and bring information together for the purpose of unfolding specific passages of scripture.

G. Manners and Customs of the Bible

There are many such books that help the student of the Word to discover any customs that might have a bearing on the passage under study. They can be very helpful in unlocking the true intended meaning of the passage.

In addition to these books there are many other resources for the student of the Bible. In a sense you can go as deep as you want to go or as time permits for any particular study. One thing that we know for sure is that we will never exhaust the Bible, the word of God.

It should be remembered, however, that all of these books (as good as they are) are not to be placed on the same authority as the Bible. They are all written by human authors and are, therefore, subject to misinterpretation.

Resources for Bridging the Gap

THE LINGUISTIC GAP:

Concordances:

1. *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance* (Abingdon). For those who study from the KJV Bible.
2. *Zondervan's Exhaustive Concordance* (Zondervan). For those who study from the NIV Bible.
3. *The NASB Exhaustive Concordance* (Thomas Nelson). For those who study from the NASB Bible.
4. *New Englishman's Greek Concordance* (Baker)
5. *New Englishman's Hebrew & Chaldee Concordance* (Baker)
6. *Young's Analytical Concordance* (Eerdman's)

Lexicons:

1. *Greek-English Lexicon*, Arndt & Gingrich (University of Chicago Press)
2. *New Thayer's Greek - English Lexicon* (Baker)
3. *New Gesenius Hebrew Lexicon*, Gesenius (Baker)
4. *Analytical Greek Lexicon* (Zondervan)
5. *Greek-English Lexicon*, Liddell & Scott (Oxford)

Word Studies:

1. *The Expanded Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, John R. Kohlenberger III (Bethany House)
2. *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, Harris, Archer, Waltke (Moody)
3. *Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, Colin Brown (Zondervan)
4. *Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament*, Rienecker & Rogers (Zondervan)
5. *Word Studies in the New Testament*, M.R. Vincent (Eerdman's)
6. *Expositor's Greek Testament*, W. Robertson Nicoll (Eerdman's)
7. *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, A.T. Robertson (Broadman Press)
8. *Christian Words*, Nigel Turner (Nelson)
9. *Synonyms of the Old Testament*, R.B. Girdlestone (Eerdman's)
10. *Synonyms of the New Testament*, R.C. Trench (Eerdman's)
11. *Lexical Aids for Students of New Testament Greek*, Bruce Metzger (Theological Book Agency, Dist.)
12. *Grammatical Insights into the New Testament*, Nigel Turner (T&T Clark)
13. *Syntax of the Moods and Tenses*, E. Burton (T&T Clark)
14. *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*, E.W. Bullinger (Baker)
15. *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament*, Moulton & Milligan (Eerdman's)
16. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Kittel, Ed. (Eerdman's)

Grammars:

1. *New Testament Greek for Beginners*, Machen (MacMillan)
2. *Manual Grammar of the Greek Testament*, Dand & Mantey (MacMillan)
3. *Practical Grammar for Classical Hebrew*, J. Weingren
4. *Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, A.T. Robertson (Broadman Press)

THE CULTURAL GAP:

1. *The New Manners and Customs of Bible Times*, Gower (Moody Press)
2. *Manners and Customs of the Bible*, J. Freeman (Logos International)
3. *Harper's Encyclopedia of Bible Life*, Miller, Miller, Bennett, Scott (Harper & Row)
4. *Sketches of Jewish Social Life*, A. Edersheim (Eerdman's)
5. *Life and times of Jesus the Messiah*, A. Edersheim (Eerdman's)
6. *Insights into Bible Times and Customs*, Weiss (Moody)
7. *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*, Jeremias (Fortress Press)
8. *All the Holy Days and Holidays of the Bible*, H. Lockyer (Zondervan)
9. *All the Trades and Occupations of the Bible*, H Lockyer (Zondervan)
10. *The Bible and Archaeology*, J.A. Thompson
11. *Ancient Israel*, R. DeVaux (McGraw Hill)
12. *The Temple*, A. Edersheim (Eerdman's)
13. *Eerdman's Handbook to the World's Religions*, (Eerdman's)
14. *The Land and the Book*, W.M. Thompson (Harper & Brothers)

Bible Dictionaries:

1. *The New Bible Dictionary*, M.C. Tenney (Zondervan)
2. *Unger's Bible Dictionary*, (Moody)
3. *Pictorial Bible Dictionary*, M.C. Tenney (Zondervan)
4. *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, (Eerdman's)
5. *Bible Dictionary*, Smith (Holt, Rinehart, Winston)

Biblical Interpretation:

1. *Interpreting the Scriptures*, Conners & Malmin (Bible Temple Press)
2. *Biblical Hermeneutics*, Terry (Zondervan)
3. *The Protestant Biblical Interpretation*, Ramm (Baker)

THE GEOGRAPHICAL GAP:

1. *The Oxford Bible Atlas*, (Oxford Press)
2. *The Wycliffe Historical Geography of Bible Lands*, Pfeiffer & Vos (Moody)
3. *All the Animals of the Bible Lands*, G. Cunsdale (Zondervan)
4. *Geography of the Bible*, D. Baly (Harper & Brothers)
5. *The MacMillan Bible Atlas*, (MacMillan)

THE HISTORICAL GAP:

1. *New Testament History*, F.F. Bruce (Anchor)
2. *Survey of Israel's History*, L. Wood (Zondervan)
3. *New Testament Times*, Tenney (Eerdman's)
4. *Jerusalem in the Times of Jesus*, Jeremias (Fortress)
5. *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, A. Edersheim (Eerdman's)
6. *Old Testament Bible History*, A. Edersheim (Eerdman's)
7. *The Archaeology of Cities on Western Asia Minor*, Yamauchi (Baker)
8. *Archaeology and the Old Testament*, Unger (Zondervan)
9. *The Archaeology of the New Testament*, Unger (Zondervan)
10. *The Works of Flavius Josephus*, (Kregel)
11. *Bible Archaeology*, G.E. Wright (Westminster Press)
12. *General Bible Introduction*, H.S. Miller (Word Bearer Press)
13. *Bible Survey*, Wm Hendriksen (Baker)
14. *The Books & The Parchments*, F.F. Bruce (Pickering & Inglis)
15. *Introduction to the Old Testament*, E.J. Young (Eerdman's)
16. *Introductory Guide to the Old Testament*, Unger (Zondervan)
17. *Introduction to the New Testament*, Thiesen (Eerdman's)
18. *Introduction to the New Testament*, Vols., Zahn (Kregel)
19. *New Testament Survey*, Tenney (Eerdman's)
20. *The Progress of Doctrine in the New Testament*, Bernard (Pickering & Inglis)

Note: The above resource list was extracted from *Bible Research*, by Ken Malmin and Team, pg. 19-20.

Lesson 12

Interpreting the Bible

I. **What are some of the things that will help to lay a foundation for deeper biblical study?**

Before you can understand the parts of the Bible, you must have a good handle on the whole. As you approach the idea of deeper Bible study there are some important foundations to lay in your own experience of the Bible (Note: The following points taken from unpublished notes by Lanny Hubbard entitled *Committed to the Study of God's Word*).

A. A general working knowledge of the Bible.

The first thing a student needs prior to more serious study the scripture is a good base of general Bible knowledge. This would include the knowledge of events, people, and culturally relevant issues. This information can be acquired by continually reading the scriptures to familiarize one with the details of stories and ideas. Study Bibles are helpful in this area by providing a significant amount of background material as you read through. When you have a good overall view of the Bible it will help you to evaluate new material that you may come across in later studies. In other words, don't start from the Book of Revelation and work back.

B. An understanding of the chronology and main events of the Bible.

The student also needs a good working understanding of the chronology and history of the Bible. This information does not have to be exhaustive, but when the student reads a story he or she should be able to mentally place the event into a biblical timeline. This timeline should include the approximate timing of major events, people, transitions, and the writing of the books of the Bible.

C. An understanding of the basic themes of the Bible.

The student should familiarize him or herself with the major themes that are referred to throughout the whole Bible (The Seed of the Woman, the Messiah, Covenants). These themes are the key elements to the major doctrines of Scripture. It is important to follow the development of these themes as they move through the different sections of the Old and New Testament. They will act as the connective links between the two testaments.

D. An understanding of basic doctrine.

A last area of general importance is a good understanding of theology. The student should be familiar with the major doctrines of the Bible. There is doctrinal material

scattered throughout every book of the Bible. Each book helps to build the totality of each doctrine of the Bible.

II. What are some of the principles of interpretation that will help me to rightly divide the word of God?

We will be going into much more detail on principles of interpretation in a later course called Hermeneutics. However, there are a few simple guidelines that can help us not to get off track in the area of biblical interpretation.

A. Let scripture interpret scripture (Acts 17:11).

These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.

What else does the Bible say about this subject? By studying cross references you can find out what the rest of the Bible says on a subject. Do not approach a verse with the intent of proving your doctrine. Approach the verse in an attempt to understand its doctrine.

B. Pay careful attention to the context of the verse. A text out of context is a pretext.

Often you hear people quote the verse found in Romans 8:28. When something negative happens they say, “Well, you know what the Bible says, ‘All things work together for good.’”

The Bible does indeed say this, but if you read the rest of the verse it finishes with the very important phrase, “to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.”

Discovering the context includes attention to the following:

1. Old or New Testament
2. Book of the Bible
3. Chapter of the book
4. What comes before
5. What comes after
6. The central subject being discussed

C. Look for specific things that will bring out meaning. (Note: The following points taken from unpublished notes by Lanny Hubbard entitled *Committed to the Study of God's Word*).

1. Repetition of words. Look for words and phrases that repeat. Key words will help you understand the main thrust of the passage (e.g. I Corinthians 13, love; I Corinthians 14; edify).
2. Contrasts. Look for ideas, individuals, and/or items that are contrasted with each other. In Galatians 5 the works of the flesh are contrasted with the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:16-26).
3. Comparisons. Look for ideas, individuals, and/or items that are compared with each other. Look also for similarities.
4. Lists. Note where the text mentions more than two items.
5. Cause and effect. Look for the cause for certain effects or the effects brought on by various causes. There may be more than one effect from a single cause mentioned in the text.
6. Conjunctions. Notice terms that join units including “and,” “but,” “for.”
7. Verbs. Determine the action involved and whether a verb is active or passive. Pay special attention to imperatives.
8. Pronouns. Be sure to identify the proper antecedent for each pronoun.
9. Tone of the author. Is the author giving an admonition, exhortation, warning, promise, encouragement or judgment?
10. Questions. The word of God poses many thought provoking questions. As we meditate on the question we better understand what is being intended in the text (I Cor. 1:13, Gal. 3:1-5, Rom. 6:1).

Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? I Corinthians 1:13

D. Look for divine principles that apply to any age, any people, anywhere.

III. What are some practical guidelines to ensure that you get the most out of your study?

(Note: The following points taken from unpublished notes by Lanny Hubbard entitled *Committed to the Study of God’s Word*).

- A. Always start a study project with prayer. Ask God for help to open up the passage to you.

- B. Read the passage several times. Read it in several translations to get different perspectives.
- C. Establish the boundaries of the passage. Determine which verses before the passage and after it are necessary to understand it.
- D. Research background material related to the passage.
 - 1. Who is the author of the passage?
 - 2. To whom was the passage written?
 - 3. When was the passage written?
- E. Discover the content of the passage.
 - 1. What are the key or repeated words of the passage?
 - 2. Are any unique words used in the passage?
 - 3. Who is speaking in the passage?
 - 4. Who is being spoken to?
 - 5. Are there any cultural, ceremonial, geographic, or historical issues in the passage?
 - 6. What persons are mentioned in the passage?
 - 7. What are places mentioned in the passage?
 - 8. What events are mentioned in the passage?
 - 9. What objects are mentioned in the passage?
 - 10. What symbols are used in the passage?
 - 11. Does the author give any advice to the readers?
 - 12. Does the author give reasons for his advice?
 - 13. Are any contrasts or comparisons made in the passage?
 - 14. Are any lists given?
 - 15. Are there any summary statements given in the passage?
 - 16. What is the author's tone of the passage?
- F. Evaluate the passage:
 - 1. What is the purpose of the passage?
 - 2. What is the main point of the passage?
 - 3. How does the passage relate to the rest of the book?
 - 4. How does the passage relate to the other books of the testament?
 - 5. How does the passage relate to the rest of the Bible?

For the serious student, refer to the course titled, “Interpreting the Scriptures” where you will find principles to use in the study and application of God’s word.