

Each One Teach One Discipleship Lessons

Part Two:

FAITH THAT GROWS UP:

Growing in Your Faith in God

LESSON SIX:

The DISCIPLINE of PRAYER

Deut 4:7

What other nation is so great as to have their gods near them the way the LORD our God is near us whenever we pray to him?

Prayer is not unique to Christianity. Moslems, Hindus, people of every kind of religion want to communicate with their "gods." What **is** unique is the kind of **relationship** we have with God:

Romans 8:15

For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father."

"**ABBA**" is an Aramaic word that implies the kind of **relationship** we refer to when we use the word "Daddy"--not just the formal, biological "Father," but the **intimate** person whose lap we climb into as a small child.

A small child doesn't need to force himself to talk to a loving Daddy. The minute Daddy walks in the door from work, the child drops what he is doing and flings himself at Daddy in glee.

If *prayer* is communication with that kind of "Daddy," why on earth would we find *discipline* necessary for it?!

Because, unfortunately, most of us Christians haven't yet become "like little children" enough in our relationship with our Father. We have the head knowledge **about** Him. But we haven't spent enough time with Him to really **feel** that kind of intimacy. We are more like teen-agers, who often become so wrapped up in their personal activities, friends, and emotions that they "tune out" their parents.

God is very patient. He usually does not intrude in our daily lives and demand attention. He may allow the circumstances of our lives to "discipline" us to the point that we turn to Him. But He would certainly prefer that we would discipline ourselves to develop an intimate relationship with Him, rather than rely on crisis after crisis to "bring us to our knees."



In this lesson, we will explore what the scriptures say about prayer. The first step in becoming disciplined in any area is to be absolutely convinced of the **NEED** to grow in that area. Compare where you are now in your prayer relationship to God to the goal described in the scriptures below.

***** The scriptures make it clear prayer is not an "**option**" but an absolute **requirement** of the Christian way of life:

[Romans 12:12]

Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, _____ in prayer.

[Eph 6:18]

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

[Colos 4:2]

Devote yourselves to prayer, being _____ .

[I Thes 5:17] *Pray _____ .*

[I Tim 2:1-2]

I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for _____ -- for kings and all those in _____ , that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.

*** Regular **private prayer** is important, as Jesus' example shows:

[Mark 1:35]

Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a _____ , where he prayed.

[Luke 5:16]

But Jesus often withdrew to _____ places and prayed.

[Luke 6:12]

One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and _____ praying to God.

***** Private prayer is important, but so is **praying with others**. God often responds with power when His people pray in one accord:

[Acts 2:42]

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the _____ , to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

[Acts 4:31]

After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was _____. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and _____ of God boldly.

[Acts 16:25-26]

About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was such a _____ that the foundations of the prison were _____. At once all the prison doors _____, and everybody's _____ came loose.

***** There can be **hindrances** to God hearing our prayers:

[Proverbs 28:9]

If anyone turns a deaf ear to the law, even his prayers are _____.

[I Peter 3:12]

For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are _____, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil."

[Mark 11:25]

And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, _____ him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins. But if you _____, neither will your Father who is in heaven forgive your sins.

[Matthew 6:5-6]

And when you pray, do not be like the _____, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be _____. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done _____, will reward you.

[Matthew 6:7]

And when you pray, do not keep on _____ like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their _____.

[I Peter 3:7]

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

***** The **reward** of faithful prayer is great:

[Philip 4:6-7]

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

Have you felt a conviction of the need to improve in this area? If you are seeing clearly that you are falling short, then the second step to becoming disciplined will be to commit yourself to developing a personal strategy to break out of old habits of neglect of prayer.

No one can do this for you. But an excellent way to get started is to share your desire with at least one other Christian. "Self-help" groups and the "buddy system" used by such organizations as Alcoholics Anonymous really **do** work. And the principle is Biblical:

[James 5:16]

Therefore _____ your sins to each other and _____ for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a _____ man is powerful and effective.

You can pray **with** each other and **for** each other, and encourage each other to **grow up** in Faith in God through becoming disciplined in prayer.

In our next lesson we will consider...

THE DISCIPLINE OF STUDY

REVIEW:

1. Prayer is not "**optional**" for the Christian: It is **required**.
2. Personal, **individual** prayer is important.
3. **Group** prayer is important.
4. We need to recognize **hindrances** to prayer.
5. One **reward** of prayer is the **peace** of God.
6. Growing in Faith in God requires **self-discipline in prayer**.

MEMORY VERSES:

LESSON SIX MEMORY VERSE:

Philippians 4:6-7

**Do not be anxious about anything,
but in everything by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving,
present your requests to God.**

**And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding,
will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.**

LESSON FIVE MEMORY VERSE:

I Corinthians 9:27

I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.

QUESTIONS:

1. What is prayer for, besides asking for things?

2. Why do you think God encourages group prayer?

3. If God knows our thoughts, why do we need to pray?

4. Do you have trouble picturing God as "Daddy"? Why or why not?

5. Describe two hindrances to prayer.

6. Write Philippians 4:6-7 from memory:

Do not be anxious _____

7. Recite I Corinthians 9:27 from memory: (I beat my body...)