

WEEK ONE | TEACH US TO PRAY

INTRODUCTION

We know that prayer is an important part of our Spiritual life. It is how we connect our hearts with the heart of our Heavenly Father. Yet, prayer isn't always easy. For some, it might feel too mysterious. For others, they're not sure how to even begin. The famous evangelist John Wesley once said that he has a very poor view of any Christian who does not pray at least four hours per day. I'm not sure about you, but John Wesley would have had a low view of me (Brad)! If you struggle with prayer, you're not alone. The men and women who followed Jesus needed to be taught to pray, and there is no one better to teach you to pray, than Jesus.

"There is nothing that tells the truth about us as Christian people so much as our prayer life...a man discovers the real condition of his spiritual life when he examines himself in private when he is alone with God...We must never start with ourselves, we must never start with our own petitions...our own circumstances and conditions...we must start with this great concern about God and His honor and His glory." - Martyn Lloyd Jones

"Prayer doesn't change God, but it changes him who prays." - Soren Kierkegaard

"By our praying...we are instructing ourselves more than we are him." - Martin Luther

START WITH SCRIPTURE

READ Luke 11:1-13

OBSERVATIONS

- 1) What are a few immediate observations you make from the text? (Instructions, Promises, Character Traits of God, Gospel Implications)
- 2) How important is the disciple's posture and attitude, which is exhibited in their request: "Lord, teach us to pray?"
- 3) How did the sermon and the Scripture/reflection above challenge, encourage or disrupt you?
- 4) When Jesus taught his disciples to pray he gave them a template of sorts with the "Lord's Prayer." He instructs His disciples to begin prayer by imploring God as Father. What do you make of this?
- 5) As you go through the Lord's Prayer, how much of it would you say is centered on God versus how much of it is centered on the one who prays? How can this model practically impact the way that we pray?

PRACTICING THE PRACTICES

As a group, walk through the template of prayer Brad gave Sunday: Behold, Submit, Petition, Repent

- Put away your phones or any other distractions, and get into a comfortable, but alert position.
- (Leader) Invite the Holy Spirit to come...Pray through the Lord's prayer, like this...

"Our Father in heaven, your name be honored as holy..."

- Take a moment and BEHOLD the idea of God as your Father, with good intentions toward you.
- Take a moment to think about the idea that God is all around you. As you breathe in and out, imagine yourself breathing in and out more of the Holy Spirit.
- Spend a few minutes just sitting with the Father in joyful, grateful, worship. You might want to sit in silence, or rattle off a list of things you're grateful for. Or praise God with specific things you love about him.

"Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven..."

- SUBMIT to God's will being done in our city / church / community / life.
- In this moment give God specific things in your life that you're wrestling with control over. A simple prayer of, "Your will be done in _____," is a great place to start.

"Give us today our daily bread..."

- PETITION: Ask God for specific needs and wants in your life.
- Pray over specific people in your family or community who need something: a job, healing, wisdom to make a decision, etc.

"And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors..."

- REPENT: Ask God for forgiveness for specific areas in your life, and release others to forgiveness.

"And do not bring us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one."

- Pray against temptation in your life.
- Pray against specific sins...
- Pray against any kind of evil - spiritual evil (demonic), human evil, natural evil, etc.
- Pray against bad things in your life or community, and for God's blessing - the divine flow of good things into your life and community.

Conclude with a word of thanks to your Heavenly Father.