

PRAY FIRST

The Transformative Power Of A Life Built On Prayer

LESSON 1 – THE FIVE P'S Of Prayer

“On their release, Peter and John went back to their own people and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said to them. 24 When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. “Sovereign Lord,” they said, “you made the heavens and the earth and the sea, and everything in them.”
Acts 4:23-24 (NIV)

“Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus.” After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.” **Acts 4:29-31 (NIV)**

While prayer can be a struggle, it's also the lifeblood of the Christian faith and more than worth reconsidering and practicing anew. You might be surprised how learning and implementing some simple fundamentals can change the way you consider prayer and, more importantly, incorporate it into your everyday life. When prioritizing prayer in your life, you may be tempted to assume that God prefers quality over quantity. But the Bible reveals that God wants both our full attention and engaged heart in the midst of everything we do every day. Praying just to check an item off a to-do list misses the point of prayer and results in you losing an opportunity to connect to your heavenly Father.

Quote: **Chris Hedges** ~ “*Prayer is easier than you think and more important than you realize.*”

1. The **PRIORITY** of prayer.
 - A. God will listen to our prayers and answer our prayers at any time throughout the day, but there's something special about giving prayer a **place** – a *priority*- in our lives.
 - B. There is something special about **starting** the day by spending a few minutes with God.
 - C. Set aside a **quiet time** with God in the morning—morning time of prayer—by putting God on your calendar. Actually, give God a space in your schedule at the beginning of the day.
 - Based on Jesus' example, for prayer to be a priority in your life, you must also **cultivate** a lifestyle of prayer, engaging deliberately and purposefully on a daily basis. *“Pray Continually” (1 Thessalonians 5:17).*
 - Prayer is about living in **connection** to God and, through that connection, living out his purpose for your life. This is why it's important for you to **talk** to God *before* you act, *before* you decide, *before* you're tempted, *before* you speak, *before* you risk. In other words...to *pray first!*

2. The **PLACE** of prayer.

- A. Find a **specific** place where you will pray. It's not that you can't pray in other places, or that you will always pray in the same location but find a primary place where you will pray.

- B. **Mark 1:35**— “*Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.*” We read that Jesus would retreat to a special *place* to pray. Early in the morning, while it was still dark, he went off to a **solitary** place to pray.
- C. If Jesus had a special place to pray, you should have a special place as well. So, your assignment on this point is to find that **special** place where you will pray.

3. The **PLAN** of prayer.

- A. Prayer is simply having a **conversation** with God, but it’s important to go into that conversation with a plan. Think about who and what you want to bring to God in prayer.
- B. When the disciples saw Jesus praying, they asked him to teach them how to pray in the way that he prayed. Jesus responded with a plan-what today we call the **Lord’s Prayer**.
- C. **Always** have a plan so you never get to the place where you don’t know what to say in prayer.

4. The **POWER** of prayer.

- A. Prayer is a conversation with God, but there is also a **spiritual** element to prayer. When we pray, we are confronting the enemy and dealing in the heavens.
- B. **Acts 4:29**— “*Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness.*” We read the prayer that the disciples Peter and John prayed after being released from prison. They asked for God to enable them to speak his word with **boldness**.
- C. We need to likewise pray bold prayers, **believing** that he will perform mighty works on our behalf. Effective prayers have energy to them.

5. The **PERSON** of prayer.

- A. Prayer is not about prayer. Prayer is about the Person to whom the prayers are **directed**. You are spending time with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
- B. **2 Corinthians 13:14**— “*May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.*” Paul mentions all three members of the **Godhead**.
 - 1) **JESUS** is the mediator. He is the one delivering our prayers to God. He is the one who made it possible through the cross.
 - 2) God is the **FATHER** who loves his children. We don’t come crawling before him in prayer but sit at his feet like someone we love and respect.
 - 3) The **HOLY SPIRIT** is the friend. He is always present and with us every moment of our live

These are the fundamentals of prayer. If you apply them in your life, prayer is going to work.