

habits of grace

Enjoying Jesus through the Spiritual Disciplines
October 15th-December 10th

Chapters 7-9

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I. What Is Prayer and Why Do It?

A. Prayer, put simply, is communication with God. It can take many forms:

1. Prayers of repentance (Psalm 51; Daniel 9:1–19)
2. Prayers for aid or blessing (1 Samuel 1:10–11; 1Kings 8:22–53; Psalm 17; Psalm 143; Acts 12:12)
3. Prayers of praise (Exodus 15; John 17)

B. Prayer has many purposes in the Christian life:

1. It focuses our hearts on God and our relationship with him.
2. It focuses our minds on things outside of ourselves.
3. It reminds us of God's sovereignty.
4. It acknowledges our dependency on God's provision.
5. It glorifies God as our creator.

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II. *Personal Prayer (Matt 6:5–15)*

- A. Personal prayer should lead our hearts and minds toward God and have no selfish ambition attached to it.
- B. Personal prayer brings us into God's presence more directly than any other individual spiritual practice.
- C. Personal prayer should be considered and intentional, as would any conversation with another person.
- D. Personal prayer should remind us of what we have received from God and how we should respond to other people as a result ([see the Great Commandment in Matt 22:34–40](#)).

III. *Corporate Prayer (Acts 2:37–47)*

- A. Praying with other Christians focuses our community on the power and glory of God.
- B. Praying corporately encourages us to confess sins and to admit weaknesses like sickness, selfishness, lack of wisdom, wavering faith, etc. ([see James 1:5–8; 4:1–3; 5:13–20](#))
- C. Praying corporately helps smooth over the interpersonal strife that arises in the church by emphasizing community care.