

THE

PRAYER

LIFE

30 DAYS OF PRACTICING GOD'S PRESENCE

JOE WYROSTEK



The Prayer Life: 30 Days of Practicing God's Presence

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PREFACE

1 Thessalonians 5:17, “*Pray continually.*”

At some point in your journey as a disciple, you will have to embrace the lifestyle of prayer if you want to know Jesus intimately, grow in your faith and practice the presence of God. And there is no other way to have a vibrant prayer life without knowing, understanding and implementing the scriptural teachings on prayer. Like with any relationship, it will take practice to communicate with God in a vibrant way.

If Jesus, God the Son in the flesh, took time to pray and fellowship with the Father on a regular basis, how much more should you? Many times, we as disciples forget how far humanity has fallen from the glory of God because we neglect prayer and are dependent on our own efforts. We forget that the fallen world we now live in wasn't God's original design. Humanity, along with the whole universe, has been plunged into darkness because sin has taken away the glory it was first created with. We need the supernatural power of God to raise us above the natural order and pattern of this world.

Consider how Jesus was compelled to always be in constant companionship with the Father, because He knew that He could never have victory over the enemy without heaven's empowerment.

Jesus experienced the despair of humanity; yet instead of withdrawing into depression, He withdrew to solitary places to pray. His prayer life was His connection to heaven and the source of His power.

Jesus knew that prayer brings humanity back to the glory of what we were first created for; the glory of dwelling with God in our spirits, having His thoughts in our thoughts and always doing what pleases God. Prayer reminds us that God's will can always be done on earth as it is in heaven because God brings it about through His praying people. The purpose of prayer is for the knowledge of God's glory to cover the earth as the waters cover the seas (Habakkuk 2:14).

Jesus commanded the early church to stay and pray in Jerusalem until they received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. He set the pattern that prayer would precede all outpourings of the Holy Spirit. Heaven comes down when

our prayers go up. When we admit how far we've fallen and deny our ability to save ourselves, we are only left with total dependence on God through prayer. Our first real prayer is a cry for salvation, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" After being saved, all of our prayers are grounded on this foundation; I am nothing without God, but in Jesus I am everything He said I am and I can do all that He said I can do.

Those who say they are too busy to pray are in fact, too busy not to pray. They are most likely already experiencing the consequences of prayerlessness; mental fatigue, stress, worry, fear and inner turmoil. Prayer is how God purposed the Holy Spirit to release power in the believer's life; therefore, it's not an option but a necessity. A prayerless person is powerless against the devil and the flesh's evil desires. It takes humility and faith to pray because we express our heart to God and hear His; if you're proud or unbelieving you'll never know the God of the Bible nor His miracles. You'll be like a spoiled child that was left home, while your siblings experience an adventure at the park.

When we humbly pray, subjecting our will to the will of the Father, we are given all that we need in our hour of testing and guided along the paths of righteousness in times of temptation. On the Mount of Olives, Jesus prayed but the disciples slept; when Jesus was arrested He had courage and the disciples ran away in fear. Jesus' prayer life, not His divinity, made the difference. Prayer is our lifeline; without it there is no divine enablement, with it, heaven comes to earth from the inside out.

I consider it an honor to spend time with God everyday; both in private and throughout the day with my thoughts. It is the way in which heaven comes to earth and my earthly prayers enter the throne room of God (Revelation 8:4). As you will soon learn, prayer goes beyond just making requests to God; it includes everything from declaring our faith in His Word to bringing Him heartfelt praise and worship. David said it best when it comes to fellowship with God when he wrote, "*My heart says of you, 'Seek his face!' Your face, Lord, I will seek*" (Psalm 27:8).

HOW TO USE THE BOOK

1. Read a lesson each day consistently for 30 days.
2. Prayerfully consider the reflection at the end of each lesson.
3. Put into practice the three actions listed each day.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DAY 1:	Teach Us to Pray	7
DAY 2:	Hallowed be Your Name	9
DAY 3:	Your Kingdom Come and Will be Done	11
DAY 4:	Our Daily Bread	13
DAY 5:	Forgive Us Our Debts	15
DAY 6:	Lead us Not into Temptation	17
DAY 7:	The Prayer of Request	19
DAY 8:	The Prayer of Repentance	21
DAY 9:	The Prayer of Intercession	23
DAY 10:	The Prayer of Thanksgiving	25
DAY 11:	The Prayer of Tongues	27
DAY 12:	The Prayer of Faith	29
DAY 13:	The Prayer of Agreement	31
DAY 14:	The Prayer of Spiritual Warfare	33
DAY 15:	The Prayer of Persistence	35
DAY 16:	Dedicated to Prayer	37
DAY 17:	The Father Seeks Worshippers	39
DAY 18:	Worshipping in Spirit	41
DAY 19:	Worshipping in Truth	43
DAY 20:	Worshipping in Surrender (Yadah)	45
DAY 21:	Worshipping with Singing (Tehillah)	47
DAY 22:	Worshipping by Kneeling Down (Barak)	49
DAY 23:	Worshipping in Celebration (Halal)	51
DAY 24:	Worshipping with Thanksgiving (Todah)	53
DAY 25:	Worshipping with Instruments (Zamar)	55
DAY 26:	Worshipping with Shouts of Praise (Shabach)	57
DAY 27:	Worshipping the Father	59
DAY 28:	Worshipping the Son	61
DAY 29:	Worshipping the Holy Spirit	63
DAY 30:	Worshipping in Heaven	65

DAY 1: TEACH US TO PRAY

Luke 11:1, “One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, ‘Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples.’”

The disciples wanted Jesus to teach them how to pray because they had seen His consistent prayer life and wanted to be close to God like Him (Mark 1:35). In the ancient world, religious leaders would often times teach their followers what to pray as well as where and when to pray. Likewise, the disciples desired to know how Jesus wanted them to pray. They desired to have a successful relationship with God the Father.

The act of praying in the Bible has two different functions. First, it functions as, “asking God for something;” (Mark 11:24) and second, it implies, “talking and listening to God” (Luke 6:12). Today, and for the rest of your life, you have the privilege of talking to God, sharing your requests with Him and listening to His voice. God not only wants you to call on Him in your times of need to make requests, He also desires for you to have a meaningful relationship with Him. In your times of prayer, God desires to hear your heart and share His with you. A.B. Simpson wrote, “Prayer is the link that connects us with God.”

You are never disconnected from God if your prayer life is vibrant. Your prayer life will determine the climate of your spiritual life.

Do you want to connect with God and stay connected with Him all day, everyday? Do you desire to learn how to pray like Jesus did? Do you want to learn how to practice the presence of God wherever you go? If you answered, “yes,” then the first thing you should desire to do is learn from Jesus’ example found in the Bible, because prayer is one of the most important gifts that God has given His children. By prayer, we can know the will of God, have our needs met, be encouraged, receive forgiveness, lift up others in their times of trouble and know God personally.

Take a moment right now to set a regular time of prayer with God every day and begin to ask Jesus to teach you how to pray as effectively as He taught his disciples. As you remain committed to grow in your scheduled

times of prayer, you will naturally develop a 24/7 prayer life that will positively impact every area of your life. You will soon learn that from your prayer life, God will give you everything you need in your daily life!

REFLECTION

Do you want to learn how to pray like Jesus?

ACTION

1. Ask Jesus to teach you how to pray.
2. Set a regular time to pray each day and stay committed to it (Matthew 6:6). For example, pray from 6-7am before you start getting ready for work or take a prayer walk from 8-9pm each night after you put the kids to bed.
3. When you pray, spend time both talking to God and listening to His voice.

DAY 2: HALLOWED BE YOUR NAME

Matthew 6:9, *“This, then, is how you should pray: ‘Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.’”*

As Jesus began to teach His disciples how to pray, He gave them a basic outline and prayer routine. Today, his example prayer is known as, “The Lord’s Prayer.” However, many people use this specific prayer to actually violate Jesus’ command in the prior verse by praying it verbatim over and over again. Jesus said in Matthew 6:7, *“And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words.”* Therefore, when well-intentioned people pray this prayer over and over again, they are in danger of sounding like a pagan who continually and mindlessly repeat their same prayers and mantras over and over again.

As a result, the best way to view “The Lord’s Prayer” is to see it more like a “prayer template” rather than a “word-for-word repetitive prayer.” In other words, when we look closely at “The Lord’s Prayer,” we can see five unique areas we can pray at any given time and use our own spontaneous words. Consider these sections as “workout routines,” which will grow you spiritually and make your relationship with God stronger.

The first routine or workout is, “praise and worship,” because Jesus starts the prayer by saying, *“Our Father in heaven, hallowed by your name.”* Just as a good workout routine usually starts with stretches to warm up the body, Jesus starts our prayer workout with welcoming the presence of God through worship. David wrote in Psalm 16:11, *“You make known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.”* We should always be excited to do this section, because it reminds us of our identity in Jesus as God’s living temple (1 Corinthians 3:16). Jesus taught that God the Father is always seeking to visit and bless His true worshippers, those who worship Him in spirit and in truth (John 4:21-24).

As we look closer at this first section, we can learn two lessons. First, *“Our Father in heaven,”* teaches us that we should always start our prayers by addressing God as our Father and believe that He cares for us. Second, *“hallowed by your name,”* teaches us to always give honor to the name of

God, specifically the Hebrew name for “Lord” which is, “Yahweh” (Isaiah 42:8).

The application for us in this first section of the Lord’s Prayer is simple. Whenever you pray, start by acknowledging God as your Father because He adopted you and brought you into His family (Romans 8:15-17). Then honor His name with worship (Psalm 29:2). This first step reminds us that life isn’t about us.

Human existence was and will always be about God. We do not start our prayers with lifting up our needs. But rather, we start by lifting up our praise.

Charles Spurgeon wrote, “It is, perhaps, one of the hardest struggles of the Christian life to learn this sentence – ‘Not unto us, not unto us, but unto Thy name be glory.’” Jesus promised that when we would seek first God’s Kingdom and His righteousness, all our needs would be met (Matthew 6:33).

A great way to apply this first step in prayer is to start your prayers like this, “Father, I love and adore your name. May you be glorified in my life today and upon this earth. I thank you for all your wonderful blessings in my life.” Then spend time worshipping God and thanking Him for all He has done in your life. Start right now in prayer by honoring your heavenly Father’s name with worship!

REFLECTION

Do you believe God is a good Father?

ACTION

1. In your prayer times, acknowledge God as your Father. Meditate on James 1:17 and Romans 8:15-17 to help you be thankful for all that He has done for you.
2. Repent if you have taken the name of the Lord in vain or treated His name lightly.
3. Always make time in your prayers to honor God and worship His name because it represents who He is.

DAY 3: YOUR KINGDOM COME AND WILL BE DONE

Matthew 6:10, *“Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.”*

The second exercise of “The Lord’s Prayer Workout” is to ask for God’s kingdom and His will to be done on earth as it is in heaven. God’s Kingdom or the Kingdom of God is the active rule and reign of Jesus Christ as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords (Psalm 2:6). God’s will is for things on earth to be done His way, just like everything is done in heaven for His glory.

Jesus taught the people of His day that wherever He was, the Kingdom of God was present in their midst because He was both the King and the perfect representation of what the Kingdom of God looks like (Luke 17:21). Jesus told Nicodemus in John 3:3 that by being born again, everyone can spiritually see the Kingdom of God and participate in it. After His resurrection, Jesus commanded His newly reborn disciples to go into the entire world to display the Kingdom of God and preach for others to enter in (Acts 1:3-7).

As a result, today’s portion of the Lord’s Prayer teaches us to earnestly seek God for people to be born again and receive all that God has for them. When people enter into God’s Kingdom, they get to participate in the will of God.

It is God’s will for no one to perish. It is His will for His people to prosper. It is His will for the sick to be healed. God’s will is for heaven to come to earth through His people!

That is why, in God’s Kingdom, sinners are set free from the power of sin and made holy. The broken hearted are mended. The past is overcome. The captives are set free. People dwell together in perfect unity. There is fullness of joy, peace beyond understanding and life is lived to the fullest! Everything we need comes to us through the Kingdom of God! Yet, Jesus taught in Matthew 6:33, that we don’t get our needs met by seeking them or

striving to build our own kingdom; we receive everything God has for us by seeking first His Kingdom and righteousness (“His will”).

When praying this section, we shouldn't be asking for our earthly kingdom to come and our fleshly will to be done; we should be praying for God's Kingdom to come and for His will to be done on earth as it is in heaven. Without God's Kingdom power and blessings, we will only experience, “hell on earth;” which is the result of Satan's kingdom and will. William Law once said, “If you have not chosen the Kingdom of God first, it will in the end make no difference what you have chosen instead.”

Choose God over Satan and heaven over hell. With that in mind, can you imagine what it will be like to see Jesus' prayer answered in your life; to see the fullness of God's Kingdom upon the earth, as it is in heaven and for people everywhere obeying His perfect will? This will truly be “heaven on earth!”

REFLECTION

Do you believe God can replace, “hell on earth” with His Kingdom and bring, “heaven on earth?”

ACTION

1. Remove your needs and wants from being your first priority in prayer and make God's Kingdom the first priority of all your prayers.
2. Every time you pray, seek God's Kingdom first.
3. After you pray for God's Kingdom to come, praise Him for letting you be in it.

DAY 4: OUR DAILY BREAD

Matthew 6:11, *“Give us today our daily bread.”*

The third exercise in “The Lord’s Prayer Workout” is to pray for one’s needs to be met in the context of God’s community. After a believer has started their prayer by praising the name of God and seeking His kingdom and will to be done on earth as it is in heaven, the door opens to pray for needs to be met.

When Jesus said “give us” today our daily bread, He purposefully said “us” (plural) and not “me” (singular). The words “us” and “our” are used in contrast to “me” and “my.” The words “me” and “my” are used to signify one’s personal needs, whereas, “us” and “our” represent the needs of the community. Jesus was teaching His disciples that when they pray, they should pray for everyone’s needs to be met, not just their own.

God said to Abraham in Genesis 12:2-3, He would bless him to be a blessing and that all nations would be blessed through him. Jesus, a natural descendant of Abraham, came to bring about God’s promise to bless the entire earth through Abraham. In Acts 4:33-35, Luke recorded that the early church began to fulfill this promise to Abraham by being charitable in their community; *“33 With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And God’s grace was so powerfully at work in them all 34 that there were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales 35 and put it at the apostles’ feet, and it was distributed to anyone who had need.”*

Like in the early church, we should pray for our needs to be met in the context of community because this is the reason why God blesses His people in such abundance. Likewise, after we pray for God’s communal blessings, we should be diligent to look for them in our lives so that we can give them to others, lest we become hoarders of God’s blessings.

The difference between a pond and a river is the flow of water. The pond is stagnant, yet the river is constantly moving fresh water through its channels. God called His people to be like a river, generously flowing His blessings to the world around us; not like a pond, where we keep everything for ourselves.

It is good to remember, that we are not only to give when we have abundance but we should also give in times that require sacrifice. Jeremy Taylor wrote, “He, who gives what he would as readily throw away, gives without generosity; for the essence of generosity is in self-sacrifice.” For many, God is testing your faith to see if you give what little you have to help others, so He can entrust you with more.

In your prayer times, you should always be confident that God cares for your every need. However, you should never look to your needs alone, but also to other’s needs. Be mindful to see all the gifts and blessings that God gives “to you” are to go “through you” to the community in need “around you!”

REFLECTION

Do you pray daily just for your needs to be met or for the needs of your community?

ACTION

1. Examine your heart and repent of any selfishness in the form of stinginess or greed.
2. Pray everyday for other’s needs to be met along with your own.
3. As God meets your daily needs, be ready to share with others; this is how God answers the prayers of people in need. God doesn’t usually send angels to meet our needs. He primarily sends people to help other people (Philippians 4:10-20)!

DAY 5: FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS

Matthew 6:12, *“Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.”*

The fourth exercise in “The Lord’s Prayer Workout” is the prayer of forgiveness; both for your sins and for those who have sinned against you. Even though the believer has been saved perfectly and given a new nature, they can still be tempted and sin (James 1:13-15). The prayer of repentance should be a common prayer for the believer whenever they disobey God in thought, word or deed. Likewise, when other people sin against the disciple, they should forgive them of their sins just like how God has forgiven their sins.

In the parable of the “Unmerciful Servant” found in Matthew 18:21-35, God will punish all people (whether Christian or not) who do not forgive the sins of others against them. If God can forgive our greater debts against Him, we can by the power of the Holy Spirit forgive the lesser debts against us. C.S. Lewis wrote, “Forgiveness does not mean excusing.”

Our forgiveness doesn’t condone the behavior of those who sinned against us or remove their consequences. However, it does remove the bitterness from our heart so that we can be healed.

Jesus plainly said in Matthew 6:14-15, *“14 For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.”* Jesus taught, both in the Lord’s Prayer and in His teachings, that if His disciples did not forgive others their sins, the sins they committed would not be forgiven.

Also, just as Jesus taught us to pray in the plural for “our” daily bread, we are to pray in the plural for “our” debts and forgive “our” debtors. The disciple is not only to pray that God forgives their own personal sins, but we are to also pray that God forgives the sins of our community. Praying for the forgiveness of other people’s sins is called “intercession.” For example, Daniel, the Old Testament prayer warrior, while living in Babylon, not only

prayed for his sins to be forgiven, but also for the whole nation of Israel (Daniel 9).

From this point forward in your prayer times, pray for your sins to be forgiven as well as the sins of your community. By the blood of Jesus shed on the cross and armed with the power of forgiveness, sin will be defeated in your life instantaneously and eventually in your community. I believe that God's forgiveness can come in fullness to all people and nations who believe the gospel of Jesus Christ.

REFLECTION

Do you forgive others when they sin against you, just like God forgave your sins against Him?

ACTION

1. Ask God to search your heart if you have sinned against Him or others and need forgiveness.
2. Pray for the sins of your community to be forgiven.
3. Live a life of forgiveness towards others who have sinned against you.

DAY 6: LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION

Matthew 6:13, *“Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.”*

The final exercise in “The Lord’s Prayer Workout” is to ask God to lead you not into temptation, but deliver you from the evil one. The first part of the prayer is asking God to not let us go into temptation without Him giving us a way of escape (1 Corinthians 10:13). The source of temptation comes to the believer in two main ways; first, from the outside forces of the devil and his demons (Ephesians 6:12) and second, from the inside forces of the fleshly body (James 1:13-15).

When a believer knows the voice of God and is led in the paths of righteousness, by default, they will not let anything lead them into temptation. The prayer for God to not let us go into temptation is really a prayer for God to lead us into righteousness. The consistent pattern for disciples is to live without sin because they were made holy to live holy.

The second part of the prayer is to be delivered from the evil one. This prayer is important because the devil, like a roaring lion, is always seeking to devour God’s people (1 Peter 5:8). However, when Jesus died on the cross He destroyed all the works of the devil (1 John 5:8). The moment you were born again, Jesus made you more than a conqueror (Romans 8:37). You don’t have to fear the devil or his attacks “because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world” (1 John 4:4). Even if you do sin by leaving God’s path of righteousness, Jesus is always there to deliver you from Satan’s bondage when you repent and ask for forgiveness.

Billy Sunday once preached, “Temptation is the devil looking through the keyhole. Yielding is opening the door and inviting him in.” That is why all disciples should pray to follow God’s righteous paths and if they should sin, they need to repent and be delivered from the evil one. God desires for all His people to be holy and live free!

REFLECTION

Do you believe you can live holy and free from the power of the evil one?

ACTION

1. Ask God to reveal any ways you may be under the power of sin or the devil.
2. Pray for God to lead you and keep you on the paths of righteousness (free from sin) and to always deliver you from the power (snares and traps) of the devil.
3. Intercede for those you know who are under the power of the devil and trapped in sin. Pray for their salvation and freedom.

DAY 7: THE PRAYER OF REQUEST

Ephesians 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 Lord’s people.”*

Paul taught in Ephesians that the disciples were to pray, “all kinds of prayers” in their Christian life. Some may think of prayer as only being one-dimensional. However, there are many different aspects and dimensions to prayer. We will be going over the different kinds of prayer in the next few lessons. Let us start first with the most popular form of prayer, which is the “prayer of request.”

The prayer of request is praying to God for Him to meet our needs. Our needs sometimes can seem too big for God or too small. However, no need that we present to God is ever too big or too small. God loves to hear us pray and meet our needs.

When I first taught my children to pray, I had to be careful to not discourage their requests because I thought they were “too childish” (I’ve prayed many times for their scratches and bruises). God reminded me that everything we do, from breathing to eating, is literally by God’s grace. Paul said in Acts 17:28, *“For in him we live and move and have our being.”* Therefore, we should never be embarrassed to bring our requests to God.

Jesus taught His disciples this kind of prayer in “The Lord’s Prayer” when he prayed, *“Give us our daily bread.”* Also, Jesus spoke of this kind of prayer in John 14:13-14 when He said, *“13 And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.”* We, as disciples, need to have faith to tap into this great promise from Jesus by making our requests known to God in prayer.

A preacher once said that it would be a great tragedy for many to go to heaven and see all the treasures that remained unopened because we failed to pray and ask God, in faith, to meet our needs. I do not want to leave any of God’s promises in heaven that are meant to come to earth. A.W. Pink

wrote, “Prayer is the way and means God has appointed for the communication of the blessings of His goodness to His people.”

You can pray the prayer of request in the following ways; (1) Come to God the Father in Jesus’ name, (2) Pray based on God’s will revealed in the Bible and (3) End with praise and confidence in God’s power. Here is an example of the prayer of request regarding the need of finances: “Father, I come to you in the name of Jesus asking you to provide financial blessings for me so that I might be a blessing to my family and community. I ask you to bless me according to your Word in Luke 6:38 because you said that if I give, it will be given back to me. Therefore, as a faithful tither and giver of offerings, I ask for you to pour out your blessings upon me for your Kingdom’s sake according to your Word. I believe you are able to do this and I praise you for your goodness. Amen.”

God’s promises come with conditions that must be obeyed for God to respond and answer accordingly; He is not our personal genie. Be obedient to God’s Word and remain submitted to His will so that you can receive all that God wants to give you. In doing so, I believe you will see God answer your prayers and meet your needs according to His riches in Christ Jesus!

REFLECTION

Do you believe that God wants to meet your needs?

ACTION

1. Think about three important needs in your life.
2. Find a promise from God in His Word for each of your needs.
3. In conjunction with obedience to God’s Word, pray to God the Father in Jesus’ name and make your requests known with faith. Then praise God and take Him at His Word.

DAY 8: THE PRAYER OF REPENTANCE

2 Corinthians 7:10, *“Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.”*

Another kind of prayer taught in the Bible is the “prayer of repentance.” Repentance means to “change one’s mind and direction.” When people sin against God’s holy and just commands, they should pray this kind of prayer to receive forgiveness and live the God kind of life. Paul taught that true repentance comes with “godly sorrow” and that it “leads to salvation” and “leaves no regret.”

Godly sorrow is a positive response brought about by the Holy Spirit in our hearts when we sin, so that we can properly confess our wrong doing to God (1 John 1:9). Each time we break God’s commands, the Holy Spirit convicts our heart (conscience) and lets us feel a sense of guilt and sadness. This sadness, also known as “grieving,” is not to bring condemnation or shame. But rather, God uses this emotional feeling to produce sorrow towards our sin. God then uses the sorrow to remind us of God’s strong hatred towards all disobedience, whether it is big or small in the eyes of man, so that we can confess it, be forgiven and repent (change our actions by changing our thinking).

Whenever we take sin lightly, we need to look at the cross and see how serious the Father saw Jesus’ sacrifice. Jesus’ blood shed on Calvary was never meant to be an excuse to sin, but motivation to live free from sin.

Charles Spurgeon said, “Repentance is as much a mark of a Christian, as faith is. A very little sin, as the world calls it, is a very great sin to a true Christian.” May we always hate what God hates and love what He loves (Romans 12:9)!

The prayer of repentance has two main functions. First and foremost, it is prayed when a sinner repents of their sins to be saved and confesses Jesus as the Lord of their life. Second, the prayer of repentance is for the saved saint whenever they sin and break one of God’s commands. That

prayer asks to be forgiven and set back on the right path. On both occasions, the Holy Spirit will come and grieve the heart of the offender and make them aware of their treason against God. Then, when they are made aware of their sin and pray to receive forgiveness, God will respond with His blessed assurance from His great love and mercy (Psalm 32:1).

In contrast, some people just feel bad about their sins with only a “worldly sorrow” and never really repent. Worldly sorrow is the mindset of self-pity and unwillingness to ask God for help. They may say, “I’ll always be like this, after all nobody is perfect.” However, this kind of sorrow doesn’t lead to life, but rather death because it comes from man’s emotions and makes excuses for sin. True repentance produces sorrow brought about by God and leads to forgiveness and life.

Here is an example of the prayer of repentance in regards to the sin of perversion, “Father I come to you in the name of Jesus asking for you to forgive my sins of lust and perversion. I know I have broken your law and have fallen short of your glory. Please wash me in the blood of Jesus and make me as white as snow. Create a new heart within me and give me a willing spirit to always obey you. I believe you made me holy to live holy. Thank you for your mercy and loving kindness, Amen.”

Make time every day to search your heart and see if there is any wicked way in you. If God brings godly sorrow into your heart, pray the prayer of repentance and receive His forgiveness!

REFLECTION

Do you believe godly sorrow is a good thing?

ACTION

1. Ask God to convict you of any sins in your life.
2. With godly sorrow confess to God all the sins He may expose.
3. Pray the prayer of repentance and declare you are who God said you are and that you can all that He said you can do.

DAY 9: THE PRAYER OF INTERCESSION

Romans 8:26-27, “26 In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. 27 And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God’s people in accordance with the will of God.”

Paul taught in Romans another kind of prayer called the “prayer of intercession.” Intercession means, “to bring a person’s needs before God.” When disciples pray for others and plead their case to God on their behalf, they’re interceding. One of the Holy Spirit’s roles is to help the disciple know what to pray when interceding, because we don’t always know what we should pray. Sometimes, during these times of deep emotional prayers, God may cause us to groan and speak in other tongues because our words fail to fully express the will of God.

Sadly, many Christians have wrongly been taught that some dead Christians (known as “saints”) are the best intercessors, because they are already in heaven and are close to Jesus. However, the Bible never teaches us to pray to the dead, including dead saints. The best form of intercession according to the Bible is for one to pray directly to God the Father in the name of Jesus, by the leading of the Holy Spirit.

It is a great privilege for us to experience and express the heart of God for the lost and for His will to be done upon the earth. Austin Phelps said, “We are never more like Christ than in prayers of intercession.” We see in the life of Jesus His example of intercession concerning Jerusalem when he wept and said, “*Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing*” (Luke 13:34).

Paul said, “*the Spirit helps us in our weakness,*” because we don't know how to pray for others, but the Holy Spirit does. He knows the hearts of people, everything involved in their situation and the will of God. The two kinds of things God will have us intercede for are the lost to be saved and for His will to be done upon the earth through people. The three main ways the Holy Spirit will lead us in intercession are; (1) Praying with weeping and groaning, (2) Praying in tongues and (3) Praying with our own language. Each kind of prayer will involve us praying for God to do things in other people's lives. Some of the things intercessors pray for are governments to change, lost people to be saved, righteous standards to be upheld in a nation and justice to come to the oppressed.

Due to the nature of the first two kinds of intercession, I will simply give an example of the third kind. Remember, the first two kinds are very powerful. I would say, in my experience, those two are even more effective. So don't be afraid to let the Holy Spirit pray through you with strong emotion and unlearned languages.

Here is an example of the prayer of intercession for an unsaved relative in a learned language, “Father, I come to you in the name of Jesus, asking you to save my sister, Lisa. I pray that you will convict her of sin and open her heart to the gospel. Please send her gospel preachers so she may hear your Word and be saved. I rebuke all the attacks of the devil against her and plead for her salvation and protection. I praise you for always seeking and saving the lost, Amen.”

Try to make time every day to intercede for the unsaved. God will use you in incredible ways!

REFLECTION

Do you desire the lost to be saved?

ACTION

1. Think of three people in your life who don't know Jesus.
2. Ask God, by the Holy Spirit, to lead you in deep intercession for their souls.
3. Pray like heaven and hell are in the balance; because they are.

DAY 10: THE PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Philippians 4:6, *“Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.”*

Have you ever enjoyed a pizza without a crust or a cake without batter? Why not? You can't really have a pizza without crust or a cake without batter. It wouldn't be the same thing. The same is true with the prayer of thanksgiving, because you cannot really have a good prayer without giving God thanks.

Before you ask God to do something new, God wants to know if you're thankful for what He's already done.

Paul taught in Philippians that whenever we pray, especially when making requests to God, we should always include the prayer of thanksgiving. Thanksgiving literally means, “to give thanks.” A prayer without thanksgiving is like a pizza without a crust or a cake without batter! I don't give God thanks so I can get more stuff. I thank God because I realize that without Him, I am nothing.

There are two ways to thank God in prayer. First, thank God for who He is. Second, thank God for what He has done. Starting with who God is, you can thank Him for manifesting and revealing His many divine attributes. You can thank Him for His mercy, kindness, truth, power, forgiveness, love, wisdom, compassion, generosity, favor, blessings, friendship, salvation and His unchanging nature. David said, *“I will praise God's name in song and glorify him with thanksgiving”* (Psalm 69:30). For example, “God, I thank you that you're so loving to me, always compassionate and slow to anger. I thank you for your truth and wisdom that you so freely give and for your power that dwells within me and is displayed in the universe for all to see.”

Next, you can thank God in three ways for what He has done; (1) For what He has done in the past, (2) For what He is doing in the present and (3) For what God will do in the future. First, you can give God thanks for all the things He has already done in the past. For example, “Thank you God for

saving me, making me new, giving me the Holy Spirit to dwell with me, for every day of life I've already lived and for all your kindness to me."

Second, you can also take time to thank Him for all the things He is currently doing in your life. "God, I thank you today that I am alive and that I am holy, righteous, a new creation, favored, empowered to prosper and your Kingdom representative. I thank you that I have been given the honor to pray to you, serve you in a great church and have the chance to make disciples for your glory. I thank you for my family, job and all the good things in my life."

Lastly, you can thank God for all the things He has promised to do. "God, I thank you that you promised to never leave me or forsake me, that you have prepared a place for me in heaven, and are coming back to give me a new body to forever dwell with you upon the new earth. I thank you that every promise you have ever made is, "Yes and amen in Christ Jesus!"

Andrew Murray wrote, "Let us thank God heartily as often as we pray... thanksgiving will draw our hearts out to God and keep us engaged with Him; it will take our attention from ourselves and give the Spirit room in our hearts." Make time every day in your prayers to thank God for all that He is, has done, is doing and will do!

REFLECTION

Do you include thanksgiving to God in your prayers?

ACTION

1. Repent if you have not been thankful towards God in your prayers; especially if you've been bitter, jealous or feeling sorry for yourself.
2. Think of five things you're thankful and give God thanks.
3. Tell three people today how good God has been to you!

DAY 11: THE PRAYER OF TONGUES

1 Corinthians 14:2, *“For anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to people but to God. Indeed, no one understands them; they utter mysteries by the Spirit.”*

One of the most overlooked kinds of prayer in American Christianity is the “prayer of tongues.” The Greek word for tongue means, “language.” The Bible teaches that God can supernaturally give His disciples the ability to speak in a language (tongue) they haven’t learned and to utter mysteries by the Spirit. Luke recorded this phenomenon first happening in Acts 2:1-3, *“1 When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. 2 Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3 They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. 4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.”*

In Acts 2, the crowd could understand the disciple’s languages, because even though the languages they spoke were unlearned by them, they were known to the people (Acts 2:6). However, in today’s passage, Paul is describing an expression of the baptism of the Holy Spirit in which the disciple prays in unlearned languages that, “no one understands.”

God can use people to speak in unlearned tongues to others like on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:6) and He can have His disciples pray in tongues (that no person understands) so they can speak directly to Him and utter mysteries (1 Corinthians 14:2).

Paul further described the prayer of tongues in 1 Corinthians 14:15, *“So what shall I do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my understanding; I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my understanding.”* He makes the distinction between praying and singing with your “understanding” and your “spirit.” Every Spirit-baptized disciple has the privilege to pray in unlearned languages, because the Holy Spirit will give them new languages to express their spirit and declare God’s mysteries.

Also, Jude wrote in his letter that when someone prays in the Spirit (“tongues”) they are building up their “most holy faith” (Jude 1:20).

Sadly, there has been disagreement concerning this kind of prayer in the church, however, the truth still remains that it’s both commanded and beneficial for all disciples (Acts 2:38). The great Pentecostal pioneer Lester Sumrall wrote, “Tongues is the most misunderstood of all the spiritual gifts. There is no gift in the entire world that receives so explosive a reaction as the gift of tongues. Because the devil is afraid of it, he gets everybody fighting over it. If tongues did not cause him trouble, he would ignore it, but speaking in tongues is dynamic. It will change a person’s life, so Satan fights it with every force he can muster.”

Don’t be afraid of this kind of prayer or ignore it; believe what God’s Word teaches and use it consistently, just like Paul and the first disciples did (1 Corinthians 14:18). Make time everyday to pray with your mind (“learned languages”) and with your spirit in tongues (“unlearned languages”).

REFLECTION

Have you been baptized with the Holy Spirit, evidenced by praying in tongues?

ACTION

1. Ask God to baptize you in the Holy Spirit (if you haven’t already) and begin praying in unlearned languages. Remove all doubts and false teachings, because everyone is commanded to receive this gift (Acts 2:38).
2. Pray in tongues on a daily basis.
3. Teach others the truth about praying in tongues.

DAY 12: THE PRAYER OF FAITH

Psalm 23:1, *“The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing.”*

Another kind of prayer is the “prayer of faith.” This kind of prayer is not requesting something from God, but rather it is declaring by faith the will of God. Often times, people come to God with a heart of doubt and make “wishes,” as if they were tossing a quarter into a wishing well. They really don’t believe what they are asking, but they pray just in case there is a small chance that God will actually do something. This kind of wishful praying could sound like, “God, I am struggling in life because I’m broke and don’t have any money. I pray, if you can, to please help me pay my bills.”

Though God doesn’t look down on us because of our doubtful prayers, He does want us to grow in our faith and learn to pray according to His Word. In Psalm 23, David didn’t ask God to be His shepherd and meet his needs; David boldly declared in faith that God was his Shepherd and believed He had already met all his needs- He confidently prayed, “I lack nothing!”

Some skeptics and naysayers call this “make believe,” however, according to Peter, this kind of declaration is not based in “man’s wish list,” but rather, God’s “very great and precious promises” (2 Peter 1:4). When someone knows the will of God in regards to a situation like David did, one can boldly declare it, rather than doubtfully ask for it. For example, when Jesus walked the earth, He didn’t ask for sickness to leave, He commanded it to leave and people were instantly healed. Jesus didn’t counsel demon-possessed people; He cast the demons out instantly. Jesus did amazing things by the power of the Holy Spirit because He knew how to speak the Word of God.

Jesus taught His disciples how to have the same power and authority in Mark 11:23-24, “23 *“Truly I tell you, if anyone says to this mountain, ‘Go, throw yourself into the sea,’ and does not doubt in their heart but believes that what they say will happen, it will be done for them. 24 Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have*

received it, and it will be yours.” Jesus, also promised in John 14:12, that we would do greater works in number than His own miracles, because He would multiply Himself in His disciples.

The prayer of faith is not a self-centered “name it and claim it” wish; it’s a God-centered, “know it and speak it” declaration. You must first know God’s Word in regards to a certain situation to be able to speak it in prayer like David did. Here is how you could speak the prayer of faith in regards to your finances, “The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. I believe that He will meet all my needs according to His riches in Christ Jesus!”

Sometimes, we won’t see the results immediately. Other times, we will have to wait until Jesus comes back for everything to come to pass. But, either way, we are to be faithful and believe. A.W. Tozer wrote, “Let God be true [and] every man a liar, is the language of true faith.”

I believe the more you pray like Jesus, the more you will display God’s power like Jesus.

So what do you have to lose? Don’t wait any longer. Start right now and declare the promises of God in your life!

REFLECTION

Do you believe God will do what He promised He would do?

ACTION

1. Pray and ask God to give you a specific promise in His Word for a situation you are facing in life.
2. In faith, boldly pray and declare God’s promise over your life.
3. Continue to speak God’s Word over your situation until the promise comes to pass.

DAY 13: THE PRAYER OF AGREEMENT

Matthew 18:19, “Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven.”

Another kind of prayer taught in the Bible is the “prayer of agreement.” The prayer of agreement, as taught by Jesus, is when two or more disciples agree about anything they ask God for. Though most of your praying will be done in private between you and God, there are times in which you are commanded to pray with others. In those times of agreement with others, Jesus promised that whatever you ask would be done.

The “anything” Jesus is referring to is anything according to “His will.” John wrote concerning the will of God and prayer, “*14 This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. 15 And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him*” (1 John 5:14-15).

The significance of praying with others is to insure that we’re praying the will of God.

The will of God is, first and foremost, based on the Word of God. God’s will, will never contradict what He has revealed in the Bible. Second, the Holy Spirit will confirm the will of God pertaining to specific situations by each of those praying. God will not be divided in His will. Lastly, the will of God will always be done in the timing of God. We should not be discouraged when waiting for our prayers to be answered. Jesus told us to look to the persistent widow as an example of praying and not giving up (Luke 18:1-8).

We, as Christians, should be committed to meeting regularly with other believers and making our requests known to God. Some of the best ways to pray the prayer of agreement are in the following ways; (1) Home Bible studies, (2) Church prayer meetings, (3) At the altar with church prayer workers and (4) With your family.

When disciples learn to discern and pray the will of God, we will experience the manifestation of the Kingdom of God on earth.

Kenneth Copeland wrote, “When you are in harmony and agreement with those around you, you will step into a deeper, more personal fellowship with God. He becomes real and vital to you.” Make time this week to get together with someone and pray the prayer of agreement according to God’s will!

REFLECTION

Do you have a prayer partner?

ACTION

1. Pray and seek God’s Word for His will concerning an area of your life.
2. Set up a regular time to pray with others according to God’s will.
3. Be faithful to pray with your prayer partner until God’s will comes to pass.

DAY 14: THE PRAYER OF SPIRITUAL WARFARE

Ephesians 6:12, “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.”

There is no doubt the Bible teaches us that we are in a spiritual battle against the forces of evil (Daniel 10). Ever since the fall of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, we’ve been trading blows with the enemy. Thankfully, Jesus defeated the devil on the cross, destroyed his work and gave us victory in His name (1 John 3:8). The prayer of spiritual warfare is two-fold. First, it is a type of prayer directed to God to keep our ground when Satan attacks us. Second, it is used to advance God’s Kingdom upon a world that is still, in some ways, under the power of the devil (2 Corinthians 4:4).

In the book of Psalms, we read that David prayed for God to defeat his enemies (Psalm 3:7, 18:3, 55:15 & 143:9). In those days, David was literally praying against people and asking God to defeat his enemies in war. However, Paul taught in Ephesians that, in the New Covenant, we are not fighting against “flesh and blood,” but rather “spiritual forces of evil.”

When we pray and fight against evil, we are praying for Jesus’ victory to be enacted upon the devil’s kingdom; the battle has already been won (1 John 3:8)!

Since there are two applications of the prayer of spiritual warfare, I will give you two different prayer templates. First, when praying to stand your ground in times of spiritual attacks (temptation, discouragement or evil thoughts), your prayer should be as follows; “Father, I pray in the name of Jesus that you would keep me safe from the attacks of the devil. I believe that Jesus has defeated Satan and made me more than a conqueror. So I ask that you remove all fear, temptation and doubt from my heart. Keep me safe under the shadow of your wings (Psalm 91). By the power of the Holy Spirit, I choose to stand my ground and live in total victory, Amen.”

Second, when engaging in spiritual warfare for the advancement of the Kingdom of God, you should pray as follows; “Father, I pray that you strike down the satanic spirit of violence and persecution in the nation of North Korea in Jesus’ name. I pray that the devil’s power will be broken over the leadership of that nation, so they can repent and be saved. Deliver your persecuted people and allow your children to worship you without fear or harm, Amen.”

Never forget that the devil has already been defeated, so stand your ground upon Jesus’ victory. The devil can only have power over us when we doubt who God is and what He has said. Some people fall for the lie that the devil doesn’t exist or that we are not at war, however, D.L. Moody said, “I believe Satan to exist for two reasons: first, the Bible says so; and second, I’ve done business with him.”

Wage war against the devil wherever you see his forces at work. Advance the Kingdom of God in prayer, believing that, as it is in heaven, it will be upon the earth. Take Jesus’ Great Commission in Matthew 28:18-20 as your life’s mission and make disciples of the nations. Do not accept the world for the way it is- fight in Jesus’ name!

REFLECTION

Do you believe in spiritual warfare?

ACTION

1. Consider the battles you may be facing today and discern by the Holy Spirit if they are attacks of the devil. If you are being attacked by the devil, pray against them in Jesus’ name.
2. Always stand in Jesus’ victory by obeying the Word of God.
3. Advance the Kingdom of God in prayer wherever you see the devil and his forces at work.

DAY 15: THE PRAYER OF PERSISTENCE

Luke 11:9 (NLT), *“And so I tell you, keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you.”*

The prayer of persistence is to pray for something without ceasing until the answer comes. This kind of prayer should be joined together with the other kinds of prayers, because God wants us to pray until His will is done on the earth as it is in heaven. For example, pray with persistence when praying the prayers of faith, spiritual warfare and intercession. Jesus didn't say just ask one time and then do nothing. Rather, He taught to, “keep on asking, keep on seeking and keep on knocking.”

In the verses prior to our above passage, Jesus gave an example about a persistent friend knocking on their neighbor's door, hoping to get some bread. Jesus said the friend would get their bread, not because they asked once, but because they kept knocking and asking until the neighbor was compelled to meet their need. Jesus then said the neighbor's reason for giving them the bread would be because of their “shameless audacity” (Luke 11:8). In the same way, we need to humble ourselves and be persistent in our prayers with God.

Also, later on in Luke, Jesus taught His disciples the parable of the persistent widow to reinforce the command to pray without giving up (Luke 18:1-8). The widow kept coming to the judge to plead her case until she was given justice. A wise person once said, “P.U.S.H; Pray Until Something Happens.” We may not know God's timing, but one thing we can know for sure is that He wants us to be persistent in our prayers.

I have often wondered why God chooses to delay His answers to our prayers. I believe the answer is at the heart of our relationship with God, faith. God has chosen for His children to grow in their faith during their times of waiting. God is in the waiting (Isaiah 40:28-31).

He is teaching us to know Him as a Father, not as a genie. He is renewing our strength and is teaching us lessons that will last longer than the

answer itself. God is doing things in His time to teach us to pray and be in fellowship with Him all the time. No matter what you are facing in life, pray and do not stop until your answer comes!

REFLECTION

Have you stopped praying for something that God wants you to keep praying for?

ACTION

1. Name three things that you know God wants you to pray for until something happens. Examples: Lost people getting saved, dreams coming to pass, etc.
2. Pray consistently for God's will to be done.
3. Don't quit praying and believing until the blessing comes.

DAY 16: DEDICATED TO PRAYER

Matthew 26:40, “Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. ‘Couldn’t you men keep watch with me for one hour?’ he asked Peter.”

Have you ever fallen asleep while you were supposed to be praying? I don’t mean falling sleep in bed while praying and fellowshiping with God, but rather slipping off into sleep while praying at church or in your devotional times. There was a time I committed to praying at the church four days a week from 5am to 8am and I would often fall asleep on the floor. I kept trying to convince myself I was only lying down to be humble before God but I fell asleep every time. One day I slept on my Bible and drooled on the pages. I can relate to the disciples falling asleep while praying with Jesus because during that season I slept more than I prayed!

So often, just like Jesus’ disciples, we give our best energies to everything else, but when it comes to praying, we give God the leftovers. Then we wonder why our prayers lack passion and are so powerless. Why is it so easy to stay up late to watch our favorite show or team play, but we get tired when fellowshiping with God? Could it be that we don’t really appreciate our time with God or see the value in developing a vibrant prayer life?

Please don’t misunderstand me. I’m not advocating we make prayer a chore and punish ourselves when we fall short of our self-imposed standards. However, I want to challenge all disciples to give God our best in prayer. We should consider prayer a spiritual discipline and make our body obedient to pray for an hour a day. Just as an athlete goes into strict training to discipline their body for their sport, we should discipline our schedule to make praying a priority. Is it too much to ask that we pray for one hour a day, just half the time we give to a movie?

It’s true we should pray without ceasing and always be in a continual state of fellowship with the Holy Spirit in our thoughts. But I also believe we should be like Jesus and make specific times to get alone with the Father

and fellowship with Him (Mark 1:35). When I get alone with God everyday for an hour or more, I find myself encouraged and empowered. There is nothing more important to me than my alone times with God. As the old song goes, “And He walks with me, and He talks with me, and He tells me I am His own. And the joy we share as we tarry there, none other has ever known.”

What were the results from the time Jesus spent praying while the disciples were sleeping? He was arrested and faced the crucifixion with courage and the disciples ran away in fear. Times of testing will come to everyone but your prayer life will determine your outcome; whether you are courageous or fearful.

Consider the following ways to be dedicated to God in prayer; (1) Pray consistently every day for an hour alone with God, (2) Pray at times when you have the energy to focus and spend quality time with God, (3) Talk to God from your heart and let Him lead you in your prayers, and lastly, (4) Pray with passion and purpose by the power of the Holy Spirit.

When Jesus comes to you and asks you to pray with Him for an hour, what are you going to say?

REFLECTION

Do you believe it's important to spend an hour with God every day in prayer?

ACTION

1. Set up a time each day to have a consistent prayer life that is full of energy and passion.
2. If you miss your prayer time, don't beat yourself up. Rather, repent and move forward in grace without condemnation. You're not earning “extra credit” with God; you're building a meaningful relationship with your Father.
3. Practice God's presence in internal prayer throughout the day, “Pray continually” (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

DAY 17: THE FATHER SEEKS WORSHIPPERS

John 4:23-24 (ESV), “*23 But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. 24 God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.*”

In Jesus’ discussion with the woman at the well in John 4, He gave the clearest and most powerful command for all disciples to be worshippers of God. He declared in this passage that true worship wasn’t about a “holy place” or a temple. Rather, worship is about honoring God in spirit and in truth. The importance of worship cannot be overstated, because worship is the very criteria God uses to determine who He will seek to be in close relationship with.

If you desire to be intimate with God, you must learn to worship Him.

Jesus’ definition of worship is more than just singing slow songs to God. It is a lifestyle of honoring God for who He is and what He does. A more adequate definition of worship, based upon Jesus’ teachings in this passage, could be “honoring and acknowledging God in spirit and in truth.” In other words, Jesus’ focus on worship wasn’t on singing (though that can be worship), but His focus was on disciples lovingly admiring the very character and nature of God.

Jesus corrected the woman’s false view about worship. She, along with her culture, believed that people needed to go on a spiritual treasure hunt to find God. Jesus, on the other hand, taught that all we have to do is start worshipping the one true God in spirit and in truth, and God will find us! Jesus’ disciples don’t have to wonder where God is, because the Father Himself is seeking out people who worship Him in spirit and in truth. God is where His worshippers are.

Jesus revealed to us that the Father always wants to be with His children, but His children need to first love and adore Him for who He is, not just for what He does. God wants us, but doesn't need us. A.W. Tozer wrote, "God wants us to worship Him. He doesn't need us, for He couldn't be a self-sufficient God and need anything or anybody, but He wants us. When Adam sinned it was not he who cried, 'God, where art Thou?' It was God who cried, 'Adam, where art thou?'" For God to dwell with us in a real way, we must seek His face and not just His hands. Our greatest heart's cry shouldn't be for God's presents, but for His presence. Once we have encountered His presence, we can ask for His will to be done in our lives and experience His blessings.

Prayer and worship go hand in hand and compliment each other, because they are related in their function and purpose. For example, every time you pray you should incorporate worship, lest you be seen as prideful and spoiled. Likewise, whenever you worship, you are, by definition, praying because you are in communication with God. Therefore, prayer and worship are two sides of the same coin.

Jesus didn't command us to pray and worship the Father at certain times a day, facing a specific direction like robots, sing certain songs or to go on extended long fasts and torture our bodies. Rather, He taught us in John 4, to worship the Father in spirit and in truth. When we truly open up our spirits to God and obey His truth, we will never have to wonder where God is, because He will always be with us.

REFLECTION

Are you a true worshipper?

ACTION

1. Repent of any false views you may have about worshipping God.
2. Worship God right now in spirit and in truth.
3. Practice worshipping God throughout your day; both inwardly with your heart and outwardly with singing and thanksgiving.

DAY 18: WORSHIPPING IN SPIRIT

John 4:23-24 (ESV), “*23 But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. 24 God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.*”

To worship God in spirit means to, “love and adore God in one’s spirit through the Holy Spirit.” The Bible teaches that you are a spiritual being living in an earthly body (Genesis 2:7). You are more than just a body with five senses. You are a spiritual soul created in the image of God to be in fellowship with the Holy Spirit. Your spirit and the Holy Spirit are similar in substance, though different in identity (one divine and the other human). Yet they can be in relationship with each other.

Ira David Sankey wrote in his classic hymn, *The Old Man Has Been Crucified with Him*, “In spirit mingled, we are one, O Lord, the human and divine in one accord; yet thou must have a proper faculty, that all thy glorious personality, may be expressed. So, Lord, I give my heart to Thee today, that it may be thy home in every way, a place for thee to come and settle down, and all thy grand recovery work to crown, in one new man.”

Worshipping is the place where we can be the closest to God in our spirit. Just like with prayer, spiritual worship is based on communicating and sharing our heart with God.

When Jesus said in Matthew 22:37 that the greatest commandment is to, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind,” this is the same kind of command to worship God with your spirit. You are to worship God with everything on the inside of your heart and what happens on the inside should be expressed on the outside with singing and thanksgiving. Though singing songs and raising your hands in worship is commanded, the most important thing is to totally love and adore God with everything in your heart. If you’re not right on the inside,

what you do on the outside will never please God.

God gave the priests of the Old Testament a foretaste of spiritual worship when they went to the temple in Jerusalem and encountered the glory of God in the Most Holy Place. Once, in the time of King Solomon, the presence of God came so powerfully in the temple that the priests fell to their faces and couldn't even go inside (2 Chronicles 7:1-2).

Paul also wrote in 2 Corinthians 3:17-18 that because God's Spirit dwells within every disciple, we can experience the presence of God in freedom and go from "glory to glory." Worshipping God in spirit may be expressed in many different ways (i.e., singing, kneeling, praying, thanksgiving, etc.), but the result will always be the same; God's presence will come and fill your life. Make time each day to love and adore God with your spirit and get ready for Him to invade your atmosphere!

REFLECTION

Do you worship God in spirit?

ACTION

1. Ask the Holy Spirit to lead you in spiritual worship right now.
2. As you worship in your spirit, be sensitive to the moving of God's Spirit and do what pleases Him in the moment. By worshipping in this way, your love for the Lord will remain fresh instead of becoming stale and religious.
3. Worship God with everything on the inside of you as He leads you throughout the day.

DAY 19: WORSHIPPING IN TRUTH

John 4:23-24 (ESV), “23 But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. 24 God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.”

To worship God in truth means, “to love and adore God by obeying His commands.” Jesus said in John 14:15, *“If you love me, keep my commands.”* The apostle John went as far as to teach, *“Whoever says, ‘I know him,’ but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in that person”* (1 John 2:4).

True worship is not only done spiritually, but it is also lived out practically.

Some people claim to worship God by just singing at church or by listening to Christian music. Though these things can be good, that was not how God primarily wanted us to worship Him. Jesus commanded us to worship the Father in spirit and in truth by living lives that obey His commands. If you are really spiritual, you will live a holy life because the Spirit of God is a “Holy” Spirit. When you keep God’s commands, your songs of worship will be pleasing to God because you’re not just singing songs hypocritically. You’re singing songs that represent your beliefs and actions.

Someone might ask, “Where does truth come from?” Truth came first from Jesus because He is “The Truth” (John 1:14;14:6). Then, He gave it to His disciples in the form of the Bible (John 14:16). Lastly, the truth of God’s Word is made alive in our spirits by the Holy Spirit (John 16:13). When we truly know Jesus, read His Word and live in obedience to His commands by the power of the Holy Spirit, we are worshipping God in truth.

In many respects, prayer aligns with worship here because no prayer is ever pleasing to God unless it is accompanied with an obedient and

humble heart (Proverbs 28:9). John Owens wrote, “The foundation of true holiness and true Christian worship is the doctrine of the gospel, what we are to believe. So when Christian doctrine is neglected, forsaken, or corrupted, true holiness and worship will also be neglected, forsaken, and corrupted.” We can never divorce spirit from truth. They go hand in hand, just like love and obedience.

When we combine “worshipping in spirit” (with everything in our heart) with “worshipping in truth” (in obedience to Christ’s commands), we can expect to be the kind of true worshippers that the Father seeks. Make time everyday to worship God in both spirit and in truth; don’t settle for anything less than God’s presence!

REFLECTION

Do you worship God in truth by obeying Jesus’ commands?

ACTION

1. Ask the Holy Spirit to examine your heart and expose any disobedience in your life to God’s Word.
2. Repent of all sin and set your mind on doing all that God commanded you to do.
3. Worship God today by obeying all His commands.

DAY 20: WORSHIPPING IN SURRENDER (YADAH)

Psalm 42:11, *“Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise [yadah] him, my Savior and my God.”*

The Old Testament Scriptures are full of examples of worship that we as New Testament Christians can learn from and apply in our prayer times. Some people today in the church try to make a difference between “praise” and “worship” by thinking praise is singing happy songs and that worship is singing slow songs to God. However, according to the Bible, giving God praise is a form of worship because worship means, “to love and obey God.”

Biblically speaking, praise and worship are not different music genres we use in church. But rather, praise is an expression of true worship. Notice what the psalmist wrote in Psalm 100:2-4, *“2 Worship the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs. 3 Know that the Lord is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture. 4 Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name.”* He praised and gave thanks to what he worshipped. Accordingly, you cannot truly praise God if you don’t worship and serve Him first.

For the next few lessons we will be examining Hebrew words in the Old Testament that teach different forms of praise that are considered worship. They express love and obedience to God in prayer. In today’s reading, the psalmist is praying and communicating to God that they are down cast in their soul, but they still are going to put their “hope in God” and “praise Him.” The Hebrew word for praise in this verse is, “*yadah*,” which, in its root form, can mean, “to throw or cast.” The psalmist is basically saying, “I will worship God by throwing all of my cares on Him.”

Imagine if you get caught robbing a bank, and the police say, “Cast all the money towards us and put up your hands!” The same is true in your Christian walk. God doesn’t want you carrying all your burdens by yourself. He wants you to cast and throw them on Him because He bore them on the cross (Psalm 55:22). Andrew Murray wrote, “May not a single moment of my life be spent outside the light, love and joy of God's presence and not a

moment without the entire surrender of myself as a vessel for Him to fill full of His Spirit and His love.” In this act of surrender, we get the tradition of raising our hands to signify casting our cares on God (Psalm 134:2).

The following is an example of performing “yadah,” if you face a tough time in your marriage, “Father, I surrender to you all the problems in my marriage. I let go of all my fears, failures, sins and worries and I decide today to put my full trust and hope in you. I believe you sent Jesus to be my perfect Savior and He is able to perfectly save my marriage. You are my God, the one that is ultimately in control of everything in my life. I believe that what you have joined together, no one can tear apart. My marriage will make it, in Jesus’ name, Amen!”

Whenever you face times of stress, worry, temptation or fear; do not freak out or run away from God. Run to God with yadah and worship Him in total surrender, because He will rescue you every time!

Be encouraged by what David wrote in Psalm 34:4-6 regarding how God rescues us from all our troubles, “*4 I sought the Lord, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears. 5 Those who look to him are radiant; their faces are never covered with shame. 6 This poor man called, and the Lord heard him; he saved him out of all his troubles.*”

REFLECTION

Do you believe God can rescue you from all your troubles?

ACTION

1. Surrender, in yadah worship, every situation in your life that is troubling you.
2. Praise God in advance for all that He has promised to do.
3. Boldly testify to others that Jesus Christ is your perfect Savior from all your troubles.

DAY 21: WORSHIPPING WITH SINGING (TEHILLAH)

Psalm 34:1, *“I will extol the Lord at all times; his praise [tehillah] will always be on my lips.”*

Do you like to sing? I have never met a person yet that doesn't like to sing. Certainly, many people don't like to sing in public or have people hear them, but I think everyone likes to sing down deep inside. They will especially sing when their favorite song is on and nobody is around. God designed our singing to have a special relationship with our mind and body.

When we sing, we calm our mind, release stress and bring emotional healing to our lives.

My children have taught me that singing is as natural to human nature as breathing. They love to not only sing the songs we teach them, but they love to make up their own songs. They enjoy singing about God, what they've learned throughout the day and totally random things like their favorite food. They always have a song in their heart. It is so precious to hear them sing. May we all be like children in the Kingdom of God and have a song in our heart about the exaltation of our God.

The Hebrew word David used for praise in the above psalm is “tehillah” which literally means, “song of praise.” David is declaring that God's song of praise (tehillah) will always be on his lips. As a matter of fact, the word “psalm” actually means “song.” Therefore, David not only loved to sing, but he wrote his own songs, too. You can think of the book of psalms as a book of songs. Some people in the church wrongly believe that the psalms were only written to be read as poetry. But the most notable application of the psalms was to be sung with instruments. Consider the notes found before Psalm 58, “For the director of music. To the tune of ‘Do Not Destroy.’ Of David.”

There are many ways you can do this form of prayer to God as worship and praise. You can sing songs karaoke style with your favorite worship band with your stereo or headphones. You can make up your own songs in your prayer time and sing them out loud to God, like David and many of the prophets did. Or you can sing at church with the band and singers. I would recommend not just singing at church, but finding ways to sing throughout the day. At this season in my life, I like to end each day with a prayer walk where I incorporate singing songs that I've memorized. I mostly like the old hymns because they are easy to sing without a band and are packed with great theology. Some of my favorite hymns are; *Be Thou My Vision, I Surrender, The Doxology* and *Oh, For a Thousand Tongues to Sing*. Here is one of my favorite verses I like to sing from *Be Thou My Vision* by Dallan Forgaill, "Be thou my vision oh Lord of my heart, naught be all else to me save that thou art, thou my best thought by day or by night, waking or sleeping thy presence my light."

When you sing and exalt God in praise and worship, He will fill your heart with His presence. You will find this saying is true, "When the praises go up, the blessings come down!" (Psalm 67:5-7). Don't wait. Start singing right now and make a joyful noise to the Lord because He loves to hear you sing to Him.

REFLECTION

Do you believe God created you to sing songs of praise and worship to Him?

ACTION

1. Make time today to sing songs to God. Consider singing and playing the songs others have written, like hymns or sing along with your music player.
2. In your time of singing, ask the Holy Spirit to give you words to sing a new song from your heart. I usually start by just singing a new song in the melody of a song I already know.
3. Whenever you gather with the church, come ready to sing with passion to help encourage others who may be shy or don't understand the power of singing songs to God.

DAY 22: WORSHIPPING BY KNEELING DOWN (BARAK)

Psalm 95:6, *“Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel [barak] before the Lord our Maker.”*

What is the most common position you think of when you imagine praying to God? Most people think of kneeling before Jesus as one does a king. The idea of kneeling is not one of earthly origin but rather heavenly. Before God and His throne people are kneeling and worshipping Him even right now. John recorded in Revelation 19:4, *“The twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God, who was seated on the throne. And they cried: ‘Amen, Hallelujah!’”* Also, we read in Acts 20:36 that Paul kneeled in prayer, *“And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down and prayed with them all.”*

In the above psalm, the author, like a good worship leader, is calling people to bow down to God in worship. He says to all the people, *“let us kneel (barak) before the Lord our Master,”* because we should acknowledge the greatness of our God. The Hebrew word “barak,” means to “kneel in worship.”

It’s good in our worship to display physically what our hearts are doing spiritually before God. By bending our knees in submission and reverence to God, we are expressing our inner humility and gratefulness.

Remember, the bending of the knees is not the main thing God is looking for. He is looking for the “bended heart” that is bent towards His will. At the same time, just like singing and shouting praises to God uses our vocal cords, we should also be willing to use our body to kneel before God and acknowledge Him as the Lord our Maker.

Kneeling is important, because it shows that we are dependent upon God and not our own strength. It removes the excuses that I am too tired to pray, because I can rest my physical body while my spirit presses into the will of God. Jesus set the example of kneeling when He prayed on the Mount of Olives in Luke 22:41. E.M. Bound wrote, “Jesus taught that

perseverance is the essential element of prayer. Men must be in earnest when they kneel at God's footstool. Too often, we get faint-hearted and quit praying at the point where we ought to begin. We let go at the very point where we should hold on strongest. Our prayers are weak because they are not impassioned by an unfailing and resistless will."

Don't forget that to bow down in worship to anything other than God is idolatry, so we ought to be careful. Like Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego we should never compromise who or what we kneel down to (Daniel 3). Also, a time is coming when everyone will bow down before Jesus- Buddha, Mohammed, Hitler and every other person who has ever lived (including the devil and his demons) will bow down before Him and confess Him as Lord. Paul wrote in Philippians 2:10-11, "*10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*" Therefore, the question isn't, "Are you going to bow before God and declare His praise?" But rather, "When are you going to bow and worship God, now as His child or on Judgment Day as a sinner being sent to eternal damnation?"

REFLECTION

Do you think it is important to express with your body your humility and gratefulness to God?

ACTION

1. Humble your heart before God by confessing any sin in your life. Remember, the spiritual comes first, then the physical.
2. Make time to regularly kneel down and worship Jesus as your God and Creator.
3. Live your life "bent" to the will of God.

DAY 23: WORSHIPPING IN CELEBRATION (HALAL)

Psalm 113:1, *“Praise [halal] the Lord. Praise [halal] the Lord, you his servants; praise [halal] the name of the Lord.”*

Celebrate the Lord with me by shouting, “Hallelujah!” The word “hallelujah” comes from two root words in Hebrew. “Halal,” which means, “to offer praise in celebration with shouts, joyful cheers and outburst of spontaneous adoration” and “Jah,” is short for “Yahweh,” which means, “Lord.” The combination results in the compound word “hallelujah,” which means, “Praise the Lord!”

When the psalmist wrote, “Praise the Lord,” he was literally saying in Hebrew, “Hallelujah!” He was commanding the people to “halal” “Jah” with joyful praise and passionate worship. If they remained silent, they would have been in rebellion.

The command to praise God with joyful cheers is neither optional nor dependent upon one’s personality. The command to celebrate God is for everyone.

In our church’s worship service, people in the congregation will shout out “Hallelujah” spontaneously and freely, because they want to celebrate the goodness of our God. This kind of vibrant worship may startle someone new, especially if they are used to church being boring. However, this is exactly the kind of prayer God wants from us. We don’t silence them. We encourage them to pray louder, clap their hands and joyfully celebrate God’s love.

Certainly, we also believe there are times to be silent before the Lord and not disrupt the speaker, but we’d rather have “wild fire” than “no fire!” It is easier to help guide an on-fire disciple who is filled with joy than to try to get a “lukewarm Christian” excited. Albert Barnes wrote, “Praise now is one of the great duties of the redeemed. It will be their employment for ever.” Let us all be obedient to celebrate the Lord with gladness.

Think about how people celebrate when their favorite team wins. When the Cubs won the World Series, the people here in Chicago celebrated

for days, some even for weeks! Why should sports teams, politicians and rock stars be celebrated while God, the Maker of heaven and earth and the Savior of world, only get golf claps and whispers of thanksgiving? God forbid! This will not happen in my church. I refuse to let a sports fanatic out celebrate me. I will be happier and more passionate about celebrating my God than they are about a person hitting a ball with a bat.

I don't just want to celebrate God in public with the saints at church. I want to celebrate God with my family in our devotions and in my prayer times. I believe the reason many people don't like celebrating God is because they don't really know who He is and what He has done. What has God done for me? Jesus died on the cross for my sins, rose again for my life and is seated next to the Father as my Mediator. He sent the Holy Spirit to make me new, to fill me with power and to grow the fruit of the Spirit in my character. Sin and the devil are defeated, death has lost its sting and heaven has a place reserved for me. I will inherit the earth, reign with Christ forever and every promise God has made is "Yes and Amen" in Christ Jesus!

Who is God in my life? God is my Healer (Jehovah Rapha), my Shepherd (Jehovah Roeh), my Righteousness (Jehovah Tsidkenu), my Sanctifier (Jehovah Mekoddishkem), my Banner of Victory (Jehovah Nissi), my Provider (Jehovah Jireh) and my Peace (Jehovah Shalom). So, like I wrote at the beginning of this lesson, celebrate the Lord with me and shout, "Hallelujah!"

REFLECTION

Do you believe God wants everyone to celebrate Him, regardless of their personality?

ACTION

1. Remove any hindrances you may have from celebrating God; for example, your personality, hardships or caring about what others think about you.
2. Celebrate God with joyful cheers for three things He has done in your life and for three things He is in your life.
3. Next time you're in church celebrate God with His people!

DAY 24: WORSHIPPING WITH THANKSGIVING (TODAH)

Psalm 50:14 (ESV), *“Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving [todah], and perform your vows to the Most High.”*

Have you ever thought about all the things in your life you have to be thankful to God for? Do you often find yourself in prayer asking God for new things when you haven't thanked Him for all the things He has already done? When was the last time you tried to “count” all your blessings and name them one by one? I would like to take the next few sentences to give you an example of what my thanksgiving to God would look like if I just named a few of the things God has done for me.

“God, I am thankful for my parents and how they brought me up in your ways. I am thankful for your protection over my life in the days I was living without you. Thank you for your mercy and grace that saved me on November 5th, 1995. I am so thankful that you set me free from drugs, perversion, violence, depression and selfish ambition. Thank you for giving me the chance to go to Bible College and be trained for the ministry.

Thank you for placing me into ministry, giving me the great calling to start churches and the ability to lead your people. Thank you for my wife and her parents that raised her in your Word. Thank you for the wonderful years of marriage and the many children you have given us. Thank you for each of my children's health, personality and giftings. Thank you for the church I now pastor, the people who serve with me and the disciples that are made daily.

Thank you for the cross that bought my salvation, the Holy Spirit that makes me new and abides with me forever, your precious Bible that directs my life and your promises which give me hope everyday. Thank you for all the days that I've lived and the blessings you have given me, especially the ones I may not even be able to see. I am thankful and humbled by all you have done in and through me. May my life glorify you in all I do.”

Get the idea? Harry Ironside wrote, “We would worry less if we praised more. Thanksgiving is the enemy of discontent and dissatisfaction.” The psalmist commanded us to offer God thanksgiving (todah) as a sacrifice in prayer with our praise and worship because God is worth it and our hearts need to be reminded of how good God has been to us.

Though giving God a proper sacrifice of thanksgiving everyday may take time, remember that it is worth it because it pleases God and expresses our gratitude.

To keep things fresh as opposed to just listing off a bunch of things I’ve said before, I like to make time in the moment each day to say either out loud or to myself, “Thank you Jesus!” Decide with me today that you will be forever thankful to God whenever you pray.

REFLECTION

Why do you think God considers our prayers of thanksgiving a sacrifice to Him?

ACTION

1. Consider all the good things God has done in your life and give Him thanks for them, one by one.
2. Have an attitude of gratitude in life by thanking God for His goodness whenever you’re made aware of them.
3. Share His goodness with others by testifying about how good God has been to you.

DAY 25: WORSHIPPING WITH INSTRUMENTS (ZAMAR)

Psalm 57:7, *“My heart, O God, is steadfast, my heart is steadfast; I will sing and make music [zamar].”*

Have you ever noticed how everyone loves music, but not everyone has the exact same musical taste? While one person might agree with another person’s love for one particular song, those same two people may disagree about a different song. It’s like food. Everyone loves to eat, but no two people have an identical palate. God made us unique for His pleasure and will.

Jonathan Edwards wrote, “Every saint in heaven is as a flower in the garden of God, and holy love is the fragrance and sweet odor that they all send forth, and with which they fill the bowers of that paradise above. Every soul, there, is as a note in some concert of delightful music, that sweetly harmonizes with every other note, and all together blend in the most rapturous strains in praising God and the Lamb forever.”

Think about the following questions: What kinds of music do you like to listen to when you’re sad, happy or feeling adventurous? Who are your favorite singers? What are your favorite songs? What are your favorite instruments? All of these answers show how unique your love for music is and how each of us has an individual musical expression.

Your unique expression of music was meant to make your worship to God special and personalized.

Zamar describes a kind of praise to God that involves the use of musical instruments, often times with singing. Remember that singing with instruments while we worship is a form of prayer because it is communication with God. God can also give us His words to sing spontaneously over music as well. This is called “prophetic worship” (1

Chronicles 25:1). Singing, praying and prophesying go hand in hand when it comes to worshipping God with music.

Though God doesn't expect everyone to learn a new instrument to perform "zamar," you can do this kind of praise by using the instruments God already gave you, your hands and feet. The next time you hear a great praise song, clap your hands and tap your feet to the beat.

For those who do play an instrument, use your talent to worship God. If not, you can learn to play an instrument with practice and dedication (if that's your desire). Maybe your church could use you in the worship band or you could be the worship leader for your family devotions. No matter your musical skill, be sure to worship with others who are talented in music, either at church or with recorded music. Whatever you do, use music to worship God!

REFLECTION

What kinds of music do you like to worship God with?

ACTION

1. Worship God today either with an instrument you can play or with others who are talented in making music.
2. Sing, pray and prophesy when you worship God with music.
3. Keep your music library exciting with a variety of styles and songs from both the past and the present.

DAY 26: WORSHIPPING WITH SHOUTS OF PRAISE (SHABACH)

Psalm 117:1, *“Praise [halal] the Lord, all you nations; extol [shabach] him, all you peoples.”*

“Bravo to the King of Kings and Lord of Lords! God you are so good and your deeds are worthy of all my praise and applause!” In today’s psalm, the first kind of praise mentioned is “halal,” which means to “celebrate.” The second is “shabach,” which means to “congratulate with joy and excitement.” When you combine the two forms of praise together, you can understand that the psalmist is commanding us to celebrate God with joyful shouts of exaltation because of all He has done in our lives and upon the earth.

The minor difference between “halal” (praise) and “shabach” (extol) is that halal is celebrating God’s goodness, whereas shabach means to applaud and give God honor for specific things He has accomplished. Since we are made in the image of God, we too love to be complimented and affirmed when we do something right. Often times, people need the applause of others to remove self-doubt or insecurity. God, on the other hand, doesn’t need our compliments or affirmations, but He does desire for us to show Him our appreciation and express our love.

By extoling God, we guard ourselves from the sins of pride, selfishness and self-pity. When we display our total satisfaction in the goodness of God, we are obedient to the purpose in which God made us. We were made for His glory.

Commending and applauding God with shouts of joy is the duty of every disciple, because God is worthy of all our adoration. Just imagine if you were in a city that the Allied troops liberated during WWII. Wouldn’t you be excited to celebrate the victory our forces had over the enemy? Consider the excitement millions of people had in Chicago when the Cubs

won the World Series. If you were a Cubs fan, wouldn't you be thrilled to applaud all the players?

Now these kind of worldly victories can't even begin to compare to Jesus defeating sin and the devil for our salvation. We should give God more praise than we ever would give a team or country. John J. Rice said, "We ought to shout out our thanksgiving [to God] as if every war were over." The next time you feel inspired by the goodness and greatness of God (whether in church or by yourself), offer Him the best applause and shout of joy for all He has done in your life!

REFLECTION

Do you believe it is important to extol Jesus, even more than sports teams and military victories?

ACTION

1. Repent if you have been more excited about the victories in this world than you have been about Jesus conquering death, hell and the grave.
2. Celebrate and extol Jesus for three things He has done in your life.
3. Teach others the meaning of true celebration.

DAY 27: WORSHIPPING THE FATHER

Philippians 2:11, *“And every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”*

God’s nature is composed of three separate co-eternal persons that share the same divine substance known as the Trinity. God is the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. There are not three separate gods coming together to form one god (like multiple parts making one car) or three individual persons of god each having 1/3 of divinity and together making one god (like a three sliced pie). There is only one being which is called God and He is triune in His nature. The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are each fully divine and one in nature, yet separate in personality and function.

Jesus taught the tri-unity of God’s nature in Matthew 28:19 when He gave His disciples the baptism formula. He said, *“baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”* Therefore, there is only one God with one name (Yahweh) and this one name is shared by three unique persons; the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Think of there being only one “what” and three “who’s.” For example, What is God? One divine all-powerful, all-knowing and ever-present being. Who is God? Three separate yet equal persons sharing the divine nature; the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 13:14).

The Scriptures teach that God the Father is worthy of praise and worship in places like Matthew 6:9, 2 Corinthians 1:3 and Revelation 1:6. However, it wasn’t until God the Son came and revealed to us God the Father that we were able to truly understand who He is (John 1:18). Jesus taught that the Father is a Spirit (John 4:24). No one can come to Him without Jesus as their mediator because He dwells in unapproachable light (1 Timothy 6:16).

The only way to truly honor and worship the Father as revealed in the New Covenant is through Jesus Christ (1 Timothy 2:5-6).

Jesus boldly declared in John 14:6, *“I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”* As a result, you

can only rightly worship the Father by accepting His Son as your Lord and Savior. After you have accepted Jesus, the Father desires that all worship for Him to go through Jesus (John 17:1). Disciples can worship the Father in prayer in the following way, “Father, I come to you in the name of Jesus and worship you as the source of all things good and the sustainer of life. I honor and hallow your name by loving you, living for you and obeying all that you have commanded through your Son, Jesus.”

Paul taught in Galatians 4:6 that because of Jesus, Christians are adopted sons and daughters of the Father. That means we can worship the Father with such terms of endearment as, “Abba,” and no longer consider ourselves His slaves. We are His children that are co-heirs with Christ. Join with me in worshipping the Father by singing the following song by Pat Barrett, “You’re a good, good Father. It’s who you are, it’s who you are. And I’m loved by you. It’s who I am, it’s who I am.”

REFLECTION

Do you worship the Father from a place of intimacy?

ACTION

1. Make time to memorize Matthew 28:19 and the points which define the Trinity. Knowing who God is in His triune nature is very important to all aspects of your Christian walk.
2. Always remember that prayer and worship come to the Father through Jesus Christ.
3. Pick three kinds of praise to worship the Father with right now!

DAY 28: WORSHIPPING THE SON

Revelation 5:13, “Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, saying: ‘To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!’”

One of the main reasons the Jews wanted to crucify Jesus was because He made Himself equal to God (John 5:18). However, John stated in his introduction to his gospel that Jesus wasn't a man trying to become a god, but rather Jesus was God who became a man (John 1:1). The Son had eternally existed as the Word and shared in the divine nature. The Word became flesh so that He might save mankind by His willing sacrifice on the cross (John 1:1-18).

When Jesus walked the earth, He was both divine and human (the God-man) and so He was worthy of worship and adoration from the people. We see glimpses into the worship He received at various times in the gospels. For example, his disciples worshipped Him after He walked on water and calmed the storm in Matthew 14:33. The healed blind man worshipped Him after Jesus revealed His true nature to Him in John 9:38.

The New Testament, especially in Paul's writings, encourages Jesus to be worshipped because He is God. Paul said of Jesus in Colossians 1:15-19 that He is the very image of God, possessing full deity and in Titus 2:13 that He is our great God and Savior.

Jesus not only received worship in the New Testament, but He also was worshipped in the Old Testament when He appeared to the Israelites. From beginning to end in the Bible, Jesus has been worshipped!

For example, in Genesis 18:1-2 Abraham identified Jesus as “Yahweh” and bowed low to Him and in Daniel 7:14 the prophet Daniel saw Jesus (the Son of Man) receive worship from every tribe and tongue.

It is no surprise to read in the last book of the Bible that when the apostle John sees the throne of God in heaven, the Lamb of God (Jesus) is

receiving the same worship and adoration as the Father. Let us join with the host of heaven and worship Jesus today! One of my favorite songs to worship Jesus is, *Holy and Anointed One*, by Brian Doerksen. It goes as follows, “Jesus, Jesus, Holy and anointed One, Jesus. Jesus, Jesus, Risen and exalted One, Jesus. Your name is like honey on my lips. Your Spirit like water to my soul. Your word is a lamp unto my feet. Jesus, I love You, I love You.”

REFLECTION

Do you believe Jesus is to be worshipped as God?

ACTION

1. Be certain that you have the right doctrines and beliefs concerning Jesus, because He is not only a man, He is God in the flesh.
2. Worship Jesus with all the different kinds of praise.
3. Preach to others about Jesus so they can receive Him and be saved.

DAY 29: WORSHIPPING THE HOLY SPIRIT

2 Corinthians 3:17, *“Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.”*

The Bible makes it clear from beginning to end that the Holy Spirit is not just a force or a projection of the Father and Son, but rather He is an individual divine person. The Holy Spirit has His own personality (Acts 5:3) and shares the same name (Yahweh) as the Father and Son. Therefore, He is equally divine (Matthew 28:19). The Holy Spirit is God because He is ever-present, all-knowing and all-powerful; just like the Father and Son.

David declared in Psalm 139:7-12 that the Holy Spirit is ever-present, Paul taught in 1 Corinthians 2:10-11 that the Holy Spirit is all-knowing and Moses recorded in Genesis 1:1-2 that He is all-powerful because He created the heavens and earth. The writer of Hebrews said the Holy Spirit is eternal in Hebrews 9:14, which means He has no beginning or end. Also, the Holy Spirit is continually referred to in the epistles with the same status as the Father and the Son. For example, Paul wrote in 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.”*

David wrote in Psalm 18:3 that the Lord (Yahweh) is worthy of worship. Since Matthew 28:19 teaches that the Holy Spirit is Yahweh, He deserves the same worship as the Father and Son. In summary, since the Holy Spirit is considered to be our Lord and has the same divine attributes as the Father and the Son (all-knowing, ever-present, all-powerful, eternal, etc.), He is also worthy of our worship.

It is good and right to worship the Holy Spirit with the same kind of worship you would give the Father and the Son.

At the same time, remember the Holy Spirit draws all people to worship the Son of God. Jesus said in John 16:14, *“He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you.”* The best way to worship the Holy Spirit is to worship Jesus by His leading and guidance.

The Holy Spirit loves to lead disciples to worship Jesus. Likewise, you honor and worship the Holy Spirit by offering up spiritual worship to God the Father through Jesus Christ our Lord (John 4:23). Join with me in worshipping the Holy Spirit by singing the Doxology, “Praise God from whom all blessings flow, praise Him all creatures here below, praise Him above ye heavenly hosts; praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.”

REFLECTION

Do you believe the Holy Spirit is a divine person that is equal to the Father and Son, sharing the name of Yahweh?

ACTION

1. Repent of any false understandings you may have had about the Holy Spirit. For example, if you considered the Holy Spirit as an “it” instead of a “He” because you thought He was more of a “force” than an actual person.
2. Worship the Holy Spirit with the different kinds of praise.
3. Learn to be led by the Holy Spirit to worship and follow Jesus.

DAY 30: WORSHIPPING IN HEAVEN

Revelation 4:10-11, “*10 The twenty-four elders fall down before him who sits on the throne and worship him who lives for ever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne and say: 11 ‘You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.’*”

Take a few moments to close your eyes and imagine the scene that John is depicting in today’s Scripture reading. This is what heaven looks like right now. Twenty-four elders are worshipping God around His throne with all the saints in heaven who have gone before us, along with the heavenly creatures. They’re all focused on the throne and giving praise and worship to God.

Everyone in heaven is waiting for the Kingdom of God to completely be established upon the earth so that, once and for all, the earth will be like heaven. It will be a place of glorious worship to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Revelation 21-22).

From eternity past, now in the present, and for eternity to come, everything is about the worship and glory of our God.

That is what Jesus taught us in the Lord’s Prayer when He said we should pray, “*Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.*” Likewise, the only reason we keep praying after Jesus left back for heaven is because heaven hasn’t fully come to earth yet and we still have to ask God to bless us with His promises.

We started this series with learning how to pray and then discovered the different ways to worship the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. The goal here is to practice the presence of God. By the grace of God, continue to practice the presence of God until either you go to heaven in death, or heaven comes to earth in Jesus’ second coming. Remember, Jesus taught us in John 4 that God is a Spirit. Those who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and truth. These are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks. You don’t have to be on a quest looking for God or try to catch a comet to

heaven. Just stop whatever you are doing right now and start worshipping God as described in this series. God will come to you!

One day, you will take off the tent of your earthly body and put on the body of immortality to live forever with God in His presence. There, in God's presence, you will experience the fullness of joy and pleasures forever more (Psalm 16:11). Everyone will eventually worship Jesus. For those damned to hell, however, the blessing of God's eternal joy is only for those who are willing to do it now. A.W. Tozer wrote, "I can safely say, on the authority of all that is revealed in the Word of God, that any man or woman on this earth who is bored and turned off by worship is not ready for heaven."

I hope that worship doesn't bore you, because you and I can have a foretaste of heaven's joys and pleasures through our prayer and worship. Now, worship the Lord in the beauty of His holiness and join with all of heaven and give Him the glory He deserves!

REFLECTION

Do you want to join with all of heaven and worship God?

ACTION

1. Find your joy and pleasure in worshipping God.
2. Make time every day to worship God and pray.
3. Think about heaven and one day being with God face-to-face.

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