

Band/Frontline Class

Week #1

An Invitation to Prayer

Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.

(Revelation 3:20 NIV)

Practical Benefits of Prayer

1. Prayer is a Pathway to God's Presence
 - (a) Prayer deepens our relationship with God by:
 - i. helping us to become increasingly aware that God's Spirit lives within us
 - ii. helping us gain an eternal perspective
2. Prayer Facilitates a Transforming Friendship
 - (a) It shines a spotlight that exposes our true selves
 - i. As we spend time with Him, God not only reveals our failings He sets us free from them!
 - ii. If we have no desire to change we will quickly abandon prayer in our lives
 - iii. The more time we spend Christ, the more we become (act) like Him
 - iv. This happens in the context of relationship (friendship)
3. Prayer is the Pathway to God's Power
 - (a) It does not move God to our agenda, it moves us to His agenda
 - (b) Prayer in its self has no power
 - (c) Prayer moves us from the safe and comfortable to the impossible and miraculous
 - (d) It is the difference in doing things in our own strength or carrying on His ministry by the power of the Holy Spirit
4. Prayer is Essential for Effective Ministry
 - (a) Prayer accomplishes some things that nothing else can do (Mark 9:29)². The extent we are willing and able to weave the spiritual disciplines into our own private lives will determine our ability to minister effectively

Restoration of the Soul

Prayer nurtures the soul by cultivating our connection with Jesus, the source of living water. When we fail to pray our spiritual reservoir becomes dry.

Symptoms of Soul Neglect

- Low-grade depression
- Busy but bored
- Loss of control over life's routine (work is in disarray)
- Loss of responsiveness to others
- Withdrawal from responsibility and leadership
- Restlessness and dissatisfaction

- Resurgence of unhealthy habits
- Diminished impulse control/resistance to temptation
- Guilt and shame
- A hard heart (loss of spiritual sensitivity – callousness)
- Increased irritation/insensitivity with others
- You conform, not transform
- You feel good about your spiritual progress

Signs of a healthy soul

- A continuing experience of grace
- A sense of expectancy that is rooted in faith
- The ability to respond to and see life from God's perspective
- Resilience (ability to recover from misfortune or adjust to change)
- Compassion
- Zeal (holy energy)
- Integrity
- Gratitude

Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life. (Proverbs 4:23)

Spiritual vitality cannot be reduced to systems and methods. It is an adventure of love. Prayer should never become a ritual substitute for the spontaneous and authentic interaction and intimacy with our Lord.

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Week #2

Armed and Dangerous – Part 1

The Starting Point to Prayer: Our Understanding of God

Belief in a second-rate, impersonal God will result in a second-rate, impersonal prayer life, for our prayer flows out of our beliefs about God.

Common Misconceptions About God

1. God Has More Important Concerns Than Me
 - (a) The Bible emphasizes God's interest in every aspect of our lives
 - (b) Examples in the Bible of “selfish” prayers:
 - i. Infertile woman who wants a baby; i.e.: Elizabeth, Sarah, Hannah (Samuel's mother)
 - ii. The Widow who needs more oil
 - iii. The Lord's prayer included a plea for daily bread
 - iv. Paul for safe travels, prosperous work, boldness in preaching
 - v. etc.
2. God Could Not Love Me As I Am
 - (a) Some may operate from the belief that their past behavior has somehow disqualified them from God's love and attention. They may think, if God sees me for who I really am can I survive the contact.
 - (b) The Bible is replete with unworthy characters:
 - i. Moses was short-fused
 - ii. Samson was self-absorbed
 - iii. Jonah – the moping prophet
 - iv. David – the murderer
 - v. Manasseh – the wicked King (not even Jewish)
 - vi. The tax collector – contrasted to the prayer of the upright Pharisee
3. God Will Require Me to Do Things I Do Not Want to Do
 - (a) When we experience close encounters with God, we will change, but we will also want to change.
4. God Is Either a Harsh Task Master or a Grandfatherly Type
 - (a) If we think God is an angry tyrant, we will keep our distance from His throne
 - (b) If God is merely my friend or a divine “santa” to grant my wishes, then I will freely express my needs but not my worship
5. God Either Cannot or Does Not Want to Answer My Prayers
 - (a) Many Christians know God can answer prayers but don't have a heartfelt conviction that He will actually do so. When our hearts are not persuaded, we do not pray because deep down we do not believe that God can (or will) answer
 - (b) If we really did believe in God's ability to answer prayer, we would take prayer much more seriously

How to Live Beyond Your Limits

1. Expect More From God
 - (a) Don't let the routines of church attendance and religious activities crowd out living and longing for the kingdom and the glory of God
 - (b) The fatigue from our religious activity can dull our appetite for God
2. Develop Mountain-Moving Faith
3. Have a holy hunger for God
 - (a) The life of prayer leads us to new thresholds of faith and obedience
 - (b) Faith comes from looking at God and not the mountains
 - (c) God gives us faith as we walk in Him
 - (d) Mountain-moving faith will be given as we step out and follow the Lord's leading
4. Expect the Extraordinary
 - (a) Remember: The significance of prayer is not what we are seeking but who we are addressing
 - (b) Job 37:5 - "God's voice thunders in marvelous ways; he does great things beyond our understanding"
5. Get Out of the Boat
 - (a) Do you have a life challenge right now that is so large that you have no hope of meeting it apart from God?
 - (b) God is still looking for individuals who will get out of the boat and live above *see* level.

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Week #3

Armed and Dangerous – Part 2

THE LORD'S PRAYER - A GUIDE FOR TODAY

1. Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name...
 - a) Praise and Adoration
2. Your kingdom come, your will be done
 - a) Intercessory Prayer
3. Give us today our daily bread
 - a) Prayer of Petition
4. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive
 - a) Prayer of Confession
5. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil one.
 - a) Spiritual Warfare

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Week #4

The Reciprocity of Prayer

The Three Developmental Stages of Prayer

- Stage 1: Monologue
- Stage 2: Dialogue
- Stage 3: Unceasing Prayer

Prerequisites for Hearing God's Voice

- We Must Recognize The Importance of Seeking God's Voice
 - Our spiritual and personal growth depends on receiving and responding to His leadings
- We Must Commit to Obeying God's Voice
 - We must be living according to God's commands to learn His will
 - If we do not follow through on the Holy Spirit's leadings, He may see no reason to continue speaking
- We Must Stop Long Enough to Hear God's Voice
 - Most of us have to be intentional about stopping long enough, and quieting ourselves, to be in a position that we can hear His voice
- We Must Learn to Recognize God's Voice
 - Jesus knew that the practice of solitude sharpens our awareness of God's presence and helps us to discern God's voice
 - We learn to recognize His voice as we actively listen for it
- We Must Anticipate Hearing God's Voice

Five Avenues God Uses to Speak to Us

1. God Speaks Through His Word
 1. Anyone who wants to regularly hear God's voice must be a student of the Word
 2. Listening for God's voice without spending time in the Word on a regular basis is irresponsible and even dangerous for it opens us up to hearing voices that are not from God
2. God Speaks through a Still, Small Voice
 1. Inner promptings
 2. Moral Conscience
 1. God gives-or takes-peace from our conscience to let us know whether we are on track
 2. God's ability to whisper to us in His still small voice can be enhanced by two things:
 1. Knowledge of the standards and guidelines He has established in His Word
 2. The more time we spend in the presence of God, the more sensitive we become to our own attitudes and actions that do not reflect God's heart
3. God Sometimes Speaks Through Natural Means
 1. People
 2. Creation
 3. Circumstances
 4. Spiritual Experiences
4. God Sometimes Speak through Supernatural Means
 1. Gifts of the Spirit
 2. Dream and Visions
 3. Angels

- Cautions with Supernatural Revelation
 - Supernatural guidance must always line up with scripture
 - Supernatural guidance will confirm what God is already telling you
 - Supernatural guidance is never intended as a substitute for seeking God for you
5. Sometimes God Speaks by Giving Us a Desire to Do What He Wants Done

Seven Test to Determine If It Is really God Speaking

1. It will line up with the Word

Is this leading consistent with God's character as revealed in His written word?
2. Godly Counsel Will Confirm It

Do my closest friends and spiritual mentors sense this leadership is from God?
3. You Will Have a Peace About Doing It

Even if it may be tough, does my spirit tell me I am doing the right thing?

 - i. While God's leading will have an emotional impact on our lives, we should remember that emotions are great servants but terrible masters.
4. It Calls Us to Service

Is this leading self-serving and self-promoting, or does it call me to serve others?
5. It Will Stand the Test of Time

As I obey this leading, is the Holy Spirit confirming it?
6. God Will Give You the Ability to Achieve It

What circumstances have confirmed that this leading is God's will for my life?

 - i. God's leading are usually consistent with the person He made you to be
 - ii. He strengthens our natural abilities and builds on them
7. God Will Be Glorified By It

What is likely to be the result (outcome) of this leading?