

“How Prayer Works and Why”

Zoe Christian Fellowship of Whittier
Bishop Edward A. Smith

INTRODUCTION TO LESSON

Life Group Lesson Objective: To understand how and why God responds to our prayers.

Life Group Leader Lesson Preparation:

Prayer is a way of communicating with our heavenly Father.

Jesus taught on Prayer in Luke Chapter 11:1-13

1. Pray the will of God – pray according to His Word
2. Pray persistently. Stand your ground. Don't give up.
3. Pray in faith. Expect God to give you what you ask for.

Pray Always

One of the first things we should learn about prayer is to **pray always**.

Jesus said “men should always pray and not faint” – *Luke 18:1*

2 Chronicles 7:14-15 – If my people who are called by my name will humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face,

Now my eyes will be open and my ears attentive to prayer made in this place.

God's power is released in our lives **when** we pray. Prayer gives God the opportunity to get involved in our life.

When we pray, we should expect results. Always give thanks to God when you pray – *1 Thessalonians 5:18*

WEEK #1 – God Expects Us to Pray

Discussion Question: What are some ways you can improve on **how** you pray?

1. Decide what you want from God and find the scripture or scriptures that promise you these things.
2. If you don't know or are not sure what you want; that is exactly what you will get, **nothing**.
3. Understanding that God expects you to pray ... Jesus taught on prayer many times throughout the gospels. He said "that men ought always to pray and not faint"

Pray According to the Word

1. Realize the importance of the Word of God in prayer.
2. And we know that God's Word is His will. If the scripture doesn't promise you the things you are desiring, you shouldn't pray for those things.

You shouldn't want anything that the Word of God says you shouldn't have...

Someone else's spouse. Someone else's job or position, etc.

3. Meditate on the Word that gives you faith, so you can pray according to your faith.

When you know the scriptures, you can pray with confidence. – 1 John 5:14

The reason many people are not praying with confidence and faith is that they are not finding scripture that validate God's promises.

Joshua 1:8 – This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt **meditate** therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for **then** thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and **then** thou shalt have good success.

Let's be honest – Discussion Question: Who are you living? Your marriage, your children, your purpose, your ambition? Share how these important things in your life help you to live for Him.

4. Prayer and faith get God involved in our circumstances
 - We invite God's help into our lives through prayer

WEEK #2 – Power of Steadfast Prayer – Don't Give Up!

Discussion Question: How do you maintain a regular prayer life?

Colossians 4:2 – Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving.

- Devote yourself to prayer
- Always pray

Success in your life comes by meditating on God's Word

As you continue to feed on the Word by meditating, you will always be ready to use those scriptures against demons and devils that will try to make you doubt God and try to rob you of what you want. **The devil wants to make you doubt God.**

Fight the Good Fight of Faith

It takes a little time sometimes to build the Word into your spirit so you can stand in faith for an answer to certain prayers. The Bible says, "fight the good fight of faith – 1 Timothy 6:12.

If there weren't any hindrances to your faith, there wouldn't be a fight.

- When it comes to natural things, we will fight with everything that is within us for what belongs to us. But sometimes when it comes to spiritual things, we just roll over and play dead! We act like we don't have good sense. If someone came to your house and tried to take your children and your home, you would fight them for your family. You would fight for what belongs to you.

If God's Word says something belong to you, then it belongs to you! So put up a fight by standing your ground on God's Word and prayer.

Discussion Question: How can you maintain a daily steadfast prayer life?

WEEK #3 – The Power of Prayer, Faith and Petition Prayer

Discussion Question: When we pray the 'prayer of faith' and the answer doesn't come, should we pray a different type of prayer, or should we start over with the same prayer?

Mark 11:24-26 – Jesus said:

“Therefore, I say to **you**, whatever things **you** ask when **you** pray, believe that **you** receive *them*, and **you** will have *them*. “And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses.”

You don't need agreement with this type of prayer.

1. Whatsoever you ask you get
 - a. Not what **resembles** what you ask for, but **exactly** what you ask for
2. Believe you receive
 - a. You don't have to **understand** to receive
 - b. You don't have to **feel** like you receive
 - c. You don't have to **see** to believe
3. Faith is your evidence – *Hebrews 11:1*

Abraham was fully persuaded that what God had promised him and Sarah, God would keep his word and do it.

God Can Not Lie

Titus 1:2 – In hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie promised before time began ...

Numbers 23:19 – God is not human, that he should lie, not a human being, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?

That's why Paul said the just shall live by faith ... conduct their everyday lives by faith, believing that God's word is true and that you can expect **constant** manifestation of his word to work for you.

Prayer of Faith Believes!

Meditate on the above scriptures that say God cannot lie, we know that truth, but meditate on them day and night, think it over in your mind, take time throughout the day. Think on, **God is not a liar**. The Holy Spirit will give you new revelation and insight. He will help you believe God. Remember the Holy Spirit is our Helper!

WEEK #4 – Power of Agreement in Prayer

Discussion Question: Discuss instances where prayer of agreement would not work. Be specific, give a personal example.

Prayer of Agreement – Matthew 18:18-19

¹⁸ Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Power!

- Whatever you bind or loose, heaven backs up
 - We don't have to wait for someone else to bind or loose for us. **We can do it ourselves.**

¹⁹ If two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it shall be done for them by my Father in heaven. Power!

- More than one person getting into agreement about a thing they are believing God for
- Must agree – it is a good thing to write it down so no one is confused about what you're praying for.
- Notice that Jesus said, "it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven". "If you ask anything in My name, **I will do it.** *John 14:14*

These are strong words coming out of Jesus' mouth.