

"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 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. Expect God to give you what you ask – Pray in faith

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 Chron 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 for your prayers.... I Thess 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 what you want; that is exactly what you'll 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. Find scriptures that promise the things you are asking for. If the Scriptures 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 in 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.

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

Week #2 – Power of Steadfast in Prayer – Don’t Give up!

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

Col 4:2 - Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving.
Devote yourself to prayer
Keep praying

Success in your life comes by meditating on God's Word. And as you continue to feed on the Word by meditating, you will always be ready to use those scriptures against demons and devils who will try to make you doubt God, and who will try to rob you of what you want. It is the devil who tries 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 Tim. 6:12). If there weren't any hindrances to your faith, there wouldn't be a fight.

- When it comes to the 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'd fight them for your family – you would fight for what belongs to you.

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

Discuss: How/Ways I can maintain a daily steadfast prayer life?

Week #3 – Power of Prayer of Faith/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 unto **you**, What things soever **you** desire, when **you** pray, believe that **you** receive them, and **you** shall have them. And when **you** stand praying, forgive, if **you** have ought against any: that **your** Father also which is in heaven may forgive **you** your trespasses. But if **you** do not forgive, neither will **your** Father which is in heaven forgive **your** trespasses.”

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

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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 – Heb 11:1

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

God cannot 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 Gods 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 says God cannot lie, we know that truth, but meditate on them day and night, think it over in your mind, take time throughout your day.... **just think on: God is not a liar**...the Holy Spirit will give you new revelation, insight.... He will help you believe God. Remember the Holy Spirit is our helper!

Week #4 – Power of Agreement in Prayer

Group Discussion Question: Discuss instances where “prayer of agreement” would not work. Be specific (give a personal example).

Prayer of Agreement – Matt 18:18-19

Vs 18 – Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. POWER!

- Whatever you bind or loose...Heaven backs us up
 - We don't have to wait for someone else to bind or loose f us WE CAN DO IT OURSELVES

Vs 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!

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- More than one person getting into agreement about a thing they are believing God for.
- Must be in agreement – 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 ye shall ask any thing in my name, I WILL DO it" (John 14:14). Strong words/statements coming out of Jesus’ mouth.