

Foundations – Prayer

Identity - "I am anointed and sealed with the Holy Spirit."

I. Beginning the Study

- Read Jeremiah 33:3 “_____ to me and I will _____ you [...]”
- Read Ephesians 6:18
- *Examples of God working through prayer in Genesis:*
 - Genesis 18:16-33, Genesis 20:17, Genesis 24:12, Genesis 25:21, Genesis 32:9-12, 22-32,
- Definition of prayer:
- The busy husband and the neglected wife:
 - **** What you invest your time in, is what is important to you. ****
 - The first step to growing in prayer: _____
 - Summarize James 1:5:
- The 6 P's of the Lord's Prayer:
 - _____ (Matthew 6:9, Psalm 100:4)
 - _____ (Matthew 6:10, Proverbs 19:21, Matthew 10:7-8)
 - _____ (Matthew 6:11, Psalm 145:16)
 - _____ (Matthew 6:12a, Matthew 6:14-15, 1 John 1:8)
 - _____ (Matthew 6:12b, Ephesians 6:18)
 - _____ (Matthew 6:13, Psalm 91:4)

- Is God listening? John 1:45-51 “Found Under the Fig Tree”
 - The fig tree represents _____.
- You first learn to crawl before you learn to walk.
- Acts 4:24 - Why is praying out loud powerful?
- Revelation 5:8 – What is the harp and bowl style of prayer?

II. New Identities!

- I am *anointed and sealed with the Holy Spirit*. (2 Corinthians 1:21-22):

III. Small Group Questions

- 1) Where is your fig tree (place to pray in secret)? What time do you go there? If you don't have a fig tree, where are some possible places?
- 2) Share some of your most intimate times with the Lord in prayer.
- 3) Read Isaiah 1:15-17. What can distance us from God? How do we wash ourselves? Reflecting on Matthew 6:14-15, are there any people you need to forgive?
- 4) What does being “anointed” and “sealed” with the Holy Spirit mean to you? How should this set you apart from other people?
- 5) What are the identities we have covered so far? What does each mean for us?

Memory Verse of the Week –

Foundations – Prayer (Master)

“I am anointed and sealed with the Holy Spirit.”

I. Beginning the Study

- Read Jeremiah 33:3 “Call to me and I will answer you [...]”
- Read Ephesians 6:18
- *Examples of God working through prayer in Genesis:*
 - Genesis 18:16-33, Genesis 20:17, Genesis 24:12, Genesis 25:21, Genesis 32:9-12, 22-32,
- Definition of prayer: Fellowship with God, as in petition, thanksgiving, praise, or confession
- The busy husband and the neglected wife:

For most people, college is a time when people focus a lot on finding the “right one.” A lot of people are constantly on the lookout for their next girlfriend or boyfriend. Some people even read a bunch of books on relationships like *The Five Love Languages*, trying to prepare themselves for getting married.

In some of the reading material, you will find stories about wives who were unloved, as their only time to really talk with their husband was just before they would go to bed. These wives also confess that their husband would usually be so sleepy that he would not remember most of their conversation by morning. He was too busy working, relaxing, and taking care of things to spend quality time his wife.

When you read these stories, you shake your head, thinking about how negligent these husbands were. You might even think, “My husband/wife will be the most important person. I will be so much more faithful. I will want to spend time with him/her more than anyone else.” **What you invest your time in, is what is important to you.** Right? Let’s say that again, “**What you invest your time in, is what is important to you.**” Say this to the person sitting next to you.

When you parallel this with God, you may find God asking you, “**How important am I to you?**” Here the God of the universe, who sent His Son to die for our sins, is asking us how much He means to us. For many people, God is as important as about 15 minutes a night and Sunday morning.

If this is true, then something needs to change. Many people struggle with reading the *Bible*, finding it difficult or a waste of time. Prayer is a place to commune with God, but many people do not know how to have an effective prayer life, so theirs is weak. They have little fellowship with God.

So what do you do when you are in this position? You want to grow and you want to be disciplined, but you don’t know how to go about it? **The first step is: pray.** James 1:5 – “*If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.*” (ESV)

- **** What you invest your time in, is what is important to you. ****
- The first step to growing in prayer: pray
- Summarize James 1:5:

- The 6 P's of the Lord's Prayer:

- Praise (Matthew 6:9, Psalm 100:4)

Prayer should always start with praise. When you enter the courts of a king, you always enter with reverence and praise. Even great men in the *Bible* like David, Daniel, and Paul gave proper respect to the kings and men of authority. So much more are we to give proper respect to God. Praising God also helps get our focus off of ourselves and onto Him. We remember He is in control of everything. We also remember His character (He is our Father!) and that He is gracious and loving.

- Purpose (Matthew 6:10, Proverbs 19:21, Matthew 10:7-8)

After praise, this is the next most important part of the prayer. What is your purpose in life??? Why are you praying??? Is it for selfish reasons? Is it all about you? All about your future, your emotions, your needs? Or is it about God's kingdom? About living for Him? About discovering *His* will for you? About obeying His commands and callings in our lives and seeing His kingdom come?

If you want to grow in spiritual discipline, your priorities have to be straight. We don't, "become a better you," for our own sake, for our own benefit. We "become a better you" for God's sake, for His glory. It does not matter how great your motives might be in the world's eyes, if your motives are not for God, then God is not pleased and He is not going to use you. Proverbs 19:21 – "*Many are the plans in the mind of a man, but it is the purpose of the LORD that will stand.*" (ESV)

- Provision (Matthew 6:11, Psalm 145:16)

This one is the easiest for us; provision is when we lay down our prayer requests before God. We have already declared God is king and that He is holy. We have declared that we are living for His purposes. And now we ask for His help. Now we ask for more of Him, for spiritual growth, for His blessing.

- Pardon (Matthew 6:12a, Matthew 6:14-15, 1 John 1:8)

This is when we need to pray and ask God to examine our hearts and lead us to repent of any selfish motives and of any sins we may have committed.

- People (Matthew 6:12b, Ephesians 6:18)

Not only are we to repent for our own sins, but we are called to forgive those who have sinned against us. Ephesians 6:18 also tells us to continually intercede for the saints. In this part of prayer we are called to intercede for those around us, for our church, and for whatever else the Spirit lays on our hearts.

- Protection (Matthew 6:13, Psalm 91:4)

We aren't in heaven yet. The world is still a battleground between Satan's kingdom and God's kingdom. **We are advancing, but only through God's grace.** We need to ask for His protection, daily.

The "busy husband" analogy will also be uncovered in our prayer lives. Many of us put off our prayer time until bedtime when we are too tired to pray at our best. If this is you, allow God to convict you so that you may give Him the best time of your day and prioritize Him first. You may need to move your prayer time to an earlier time in the day when you are most alert and have a

good amount of time. God will bless this. As you grow in this, your intimacy with God will also grow, going deeper and deeper. When you invest time into someone, you are going to know them more. When you invest your time into someone wonderful, you are going to love them more and more. When you invest your time in God Almighty, He will not disappoint you.

- Is God listening? John 1:45-51 “Found Under the Fig Tree”

The fig tree in Israel was usually planted on the side of the road because they gave shade. Fig trees have branches that hang very low with large leaves, making it similar to an umbrella. You can go under the fig tree and not only have shade from the hot sun, but it also allows for privacy. Many of the Jews of the time would go under the fig tree to meditate, study the Word, and pray. The fig tree represents one’s quiet time. It represents one’s personal relationship with God. When Jesus said to Nathanael, “I saw you while you were still under the fig tree,” then Nathanael understood He was in the presence of God. Only God could see him hidden under the fig tree. Only God could know that Nathanael was eagerly seeking Him.

DO NOT NEGLECT your time with God! He is all that matters. He wants to love on you. He wants to strengthen you. He wants to send you out and use you for great things. More than anything, He wants a relationship with *you*.

- The fig tree represents our quiet times with God.

- You first learn to crawl before you learn to walk.

Don’t be discouraged if you start and can only pray 5 minutes a day. It’s a start. As you stay consistent, you will find the love of God growing within you. As His love and compassion grows within you, you will find your heart being moved to pray for more people and to pray longer, more specific prayers.

- Acts 4:24 - Why is praying out loud powerful?

One of the meanings of Satan’s name is, “Accuser.” He is like a prosecutor in court. He is constantly laying accusations against us. In court, if you are going to testify, you **MUST** speak out loud. The words that we speak have great power. When you speak out loud to God, you are not only declaring with your mouth that you love God and desire the things you are praying for, but you are also speaking to yourself. There are times when silent prayer is called for, but for most of Scripture God calls for us to “confess with our mouth” or to “speak to the mountains” in prayer. I encourage you all to pray out loud when you pray.

- Revelation 5:8 – What is the harp and bowl style of prayer?

The harp and bowl style of prayer is mixing praise and worship with intercession. While singing songs is not critical to have a good prayer time, having praise music on in the background or taking a moment to simply worship the Lord can greatly enhance your prayer time with the Lord.

II. New Identities!

- I am *anointed and sealed with the Holy Spirit*. (2 Corinthians 1:21-22):

We have been anointed by God to do good works. His anointing grants us the power to heal the sick, raise the dead, and cleanse the leper. 1 John 4:4 says that “He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.” Not only has God anointed you with the Holy Spirit, but He has also sealed the Spirit

within you. Nothing outside of you can take Him from you. The same Spirit that raised Christ from the dead lives within you.

Please read Romans 8:14-15. Abba means, “Daddy.” It is by the Holy Spirit working through us that we are able to have powerful and intimate prayer times with God.

Please read Romans 8:26-27. If you are at a loss as to what to pray, ask the Holy Spirit to lead you and simply praise God’s name. Prayer will come. If you have the gift of tongues, exercise it! We will cover the gifts of the Holy Spirit later in this course.

Understand that whenever you pray, you are anointed and sealed with the Holy Spirit. Please repeat after me, “I am anointed and sealed with the Holy Spirit.” Amen!

III. Small Group Questions

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Memory Verse of the Week – Isaiah 43:1b