

Prayer: Does It Make A Difference?

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Overview

We hope you are excited about this study on prayer. It is not only a study to help you improve your individual prayer life – but your family prayers as well. We’ve included a Prayer Journal as part of the curriculum. The Prayer Journal will be a really important tool throughout this course, that’s where you will jot down notes and ideas on prayer, meditate on select Bible passages, make application and use it as the basis for your family and personal devotions each week. For those of you whose family is not in the area – please get with a prayer partner (maybe a participant in this class) and pray through your thoughts and ideas with them.

We’ll use many resources for this study – they will be footnoted and displayed throughout the session notes, including, web site links. Our main reference will be the Bible and our main passage will be the Lord’s Prayer. The Lord’s Prayer is more than just a repetitive chant, used by many to end a prayer time – Jesus taught His disciples this prayer so they could understand the richness and holistic nature of prayer.

May your prayer life be truly enriched by this study. May you draw closer to the Lord because of it. And may you see mountains moved. In Jesus name, Amen.

The Lord’s Prayer Matthew 6:9-13

⁹ “Pray, then, in this way: ‘Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed be Your name.

¹⁰ ‘Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

¹¹ ‘Give us this day our daily bread.

¹² ‘And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

¹³ ‘And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

The ACTS acrostic follows the Lord’s Prayer and is a helpful tool in shaping our prayers:

A = Adore God: thank God for who He is - “Our Father in heaven, hallowed by Your name.”

C = Confession: ask God to forgive your sins – “Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors”

T = Thank God: for what He does – provider “daily bread”; forgive sins; protects us from temptation...

S = Supplication: prayer for God’s kingdom and will to be done in your life, others, church, world missions

Session 1: Approaching God in Stillness

Welcome and Introduction

What Does the Bible Say About “Approaching God in Stillness”:

1. **Approaching God with an Attitude:** before we even start to pray we need to examine our attitude: are we ready to pray to our Father in heaven with a heart that seeks to Listen and Be Still.

Usually we begin our prayers with a cursory acknowledgment of God’s goodness and grace, thanking Him for how He has helped in the past. Then we quickly move onto a list of prayer requests. Our attitude is on “self” not on our Father.

“We should build into our lives (and our families) times of deep communication and worship. This is a necessary part of being Christ’s disciple. Sometimes it just means sitting there, listening, and meditating on God’s goodness and love.” Dave Veerman

- a. What are the concerns addressed in Ecclesiastes 5:1-3 and Psalm 46:10 about approaching God in prayer? What principles do these passages teach regarding prayer?

Ecclesiastes 5:1-3 - ¹ Guard your steps as you go to the house of God and draw near to listen rather than to offer the sacrifice of fools; for they do not know they are doing evil. ² Do not be hasty in word or impulsive in thought to bring up a matter in the presence of God. For God is in heaven and you are on the earth; therefore let your words be few. ³ For the dream comes through much effort and the voice of a fool through many words.

Psalm 46:10 *“Be still, and know that I am God;
I will be exalted among the nations,
I will be exalted in the earth.”*

2. Approaching God with a different mindset:

- a. The old Nike ads use to end with “Just Do It!” That’s our Western mindset. If you see a problem, fix it. Our culture is self-reliant, self-determined and self-centered. A Western mindset goes to God in prayer with a plan already devised (nothing wrong with planning) and then praying for your plan to be approved without even considering that this may not be God’s plan.

Psalm 62:5-8 teaches us another way to approach God in prayer – what does it teach? What are the reasons to “wait in silence“ (per v. 6-8)?

Psalm 62:5-8 - ⁵ My soul, wait in silence for God only, for my hope is from Him. ⁶ He only is my rock and my salvation, My stronghold; I shall not be shaken. ⁷ On God my salvation and my glory rest; The rock of my strength, my refuge is in God. ⁸ Trust in Him at all times, O people; Pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us.

- b. Case Study: You have just received a wonderful job offer by another company for a plum assignment. However, it would require you to move out of state, sell your home, ask your children to leave their life long friends, and require you to pull out of a new church ministry that you and your spouse have just initiated. You want the job – but your spouse is not sure and your children are hesitant to leave their school and friends. How would you and your family pray “waiting in silence” to seek God’s will? What would that look like?

Application:

1. What was the most important idea you took away from today’s lesson for personal or family prayer time?
2. Before the next Session:
 - Complete your Prayer Journal and Family Prayer time
 - Study Session 2: The Foundation of Prayer

Closing prayer: pray for the ideas, thoughts, applications gained from today’s lesson

MY PRAYER JOURNAL

“Prayer invites us to rest in the fact that God is in control, and the world’s problems are ultimately God’s, not ours. If I spend enough time with God, I will inevitably begin to look at the world with a point of view that more resembles God’s own (*Prayer: Does It Make Any Difference*, p. 210).”

1. What I learned from Session 1 about myself and “Approaching God” in prayer: _____

2. What I learned from Session 1 about “Approaching God” for Family Prayer time: _____

3. Meditate and Reflect on the following Scriptures:

Ecclesiastes 5:1-7 - “Your Attitude Toward God”: ¹ Guard your steps as you go to the house of God and draw near to listen rather than to offer the sacrifice of fools; for they do not know they are doing evil. ² Do not be hasty in word or impulsive in thought to bring up a matter in the presence of God. For God is in heaven and you are on the earth; therefore let your words be few. ³ For the dream comes through much effort and the voice of a fool through many words. ⁴ When you make a vow to God, do not be late in paying it; for He takes no delight in fools. Pay what you vow! ⁵ It is better that you should not vow than that you should vow and not pay. ⁶ Do not let your speech cause you to sin and do not say in the presence of the messenger of God that it was a mistake. Why should God be angry on account of your voice and destroy the work of your hands? ⁷ For in many dreams and in many words there is emptiness. Rather, fear God.

Psalms 46:10 “Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.”

Psalms 62:5-8 - ⁵ My soul, wait in silence for God only, for my hope is from Him. ⁶ He only is my rock and my salvation, My stronghold; I shall not be shaken. ⁷ On God my salvation and my glory rest; The rock of my strength, my refuge is in God. ⁸ Trust in Him at all times, O people; Pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us.

First, You Listen **The Key to Seeking What's on God's Heart¹**

“But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on His own; He will speak only what He hears ... He will bring glory to Me by taking what is Mine, and making it known to you.” John 16:13-14

Waiting in Silence: "My soul waits in silence for God only; from Him is my salvation. . . . My soul, wait in silence for God only, for my hope is from Him" (Ps. 62:1, 5). There are different ways to wait on God, but perhaps the most intense is the one described here by David: waiting in silence. When we wait in silence, we give God an opportunity to communicate His thoughts to us. David closes Psalm 62 with two thoughts that God spoke to him during his silence: "Power belongs to God" and "Lovingkindness is Thine, O Lord" (vv. 11–12). Though distressed by his circumstances and the wickedness of men, David found assurance in the character of God because he took time to listen to God.

A group of us were trying to learn to pray from God's heart rather than from our own thoughts and emotions. One person described a very difficult home environment. Our first inclination was to rush into prayer to ask God to rescue our friend from her painful circumstances. Instead, however, we spent several minutes in silence to do what David did in Ps. 131:2 - "I have stilled and quieted my soul." In that silence, we asked God to prompt our hearts and minds to know what He wanted us to pray.

It was amazing how united we were in our asking. For about 15 minutes we built upon each others' prayers. When we finished praying, I turned to our friend and asked: "Did you notice what God did *not* lead us to pray?" Her immediate response was, "I certainly did. I think God must want to change me rather than my circumstances." We had entered the silence expecting God to use our prayers to change her circumstances, but God had something more important in mind for her. To accomplish His purpose, God changed what we asked of Him.

A Listening Attitude: Asking is the easy part of prayer; knowing *what to ask* is the difficult part. That's why waiting on God is so critical when we intercede for one another.

How can you learn to listen to God before you rush into asking? Begin by *placing yourself in a listening attitude*. Think of a time when you were listening intently to someone. You focused your attention on them, you were quiet, and you absorbed their thoughts. That's what you can do with God. Solomon urged, "Do not be quick with your mouth, do not be hasty in your heart to utter anything before God" (Eccl. 5:2). Instead of blurting out your list of requests, enter into this silence and stillness with one question: "Lord, what do You want me to ask of You concerning the need before me?"

Expect God to remind you of a Scripture passage or to put a thought in your mind. If you have already decided what you think God wants to say, you will close your heart to any other thoughts from Him, so give Him the opportunity to say anything He wants to you.

There is great safety when a group takes the time and effort to work toward finding God's will in prayer. From time to time, my wife and I do this with Mt. 18:19 in mind: "Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven." After a time of silence, we make a list of prayer requests that we agree we need to see God act on. By listening to God and coming to agreement, we enter prayer with greater faith and fervor.

Where's your focus?: Another key to listening to God is to *focus your attention on Him*. The most powerful prayer meetings I have experienced have been the ones where we focused first on God. The longer a group stays focused on God, the more united it is in prayer. Dwelling on God causes us to become absorbed in Him and His desires. This is a form of listening because our hearts are drawn into His heart and our wills are lost in His will. One way to focus on God is to look at how He has acted in biblical history.

¹ *First You Listen*, an article by Lee Brase, see link: www.navpress.com/magazines/archives/article.aspx?id=11404

In Acts 4, Jesus' followers faced great danger. Their lives were threatened by the same people who had condemned and crucified Jesus a few months earlier. The disciples were told "not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus" (Acts 4:18). What would you pray in these circumstances? I can imagine asking God, "Protect us from these evil people. Give us a more acceptable method to preach Jesus. Do away with those on the council. Don't let us get caught proclaiming Your name." But listen to what the disciples prayed (vv. 24–30): Sovereign Lord . . . you made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and everything in them. You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David: "Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth take their stand and the rulers gather together against the Lord and against his Anointed One." Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen. Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. Stretch out your hand to heal and perform miraculous signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus.

These threatened believers probably didn't know what to ask when they first approached God. So they recalled a time in biblical history when people made threats against God. Then they traced God's response in history. The disciples saw that Jesus' suffering and death in the hands of rulers was something that God "decided beforehand should happen."

After reviewing how God's victorious plan had involved suffering, the disciples did not ask God for safety, comfort, or an easy way out. They gained the courage to ask for those things that would best advance God's kingdom during their time on earth. They made two requests: one for boldness and one for miraculous works to give their bold words credibility. God answered their prayer.

Reviewing God's work in history can be a form of listening when it is done to discern His plan and purpose. It helps us look beyond immediate needs to see how God might be using the present difficulties for eternal good.

From God's Heart to Yours: If we are to co-labor with God through intercession, we need to learn to listen before we ask. Silence and waiting will not come easily at first, but as you practice this discipline, you will grow in it. Begin this week. During your time of intercession, wait silently before God before you speak. Begin with short segments of silence: They will expand as you become more comfortable with waiting. In time, you will discover that your prayers are coming right from the heart of God. You will be part of the magnificent process described by S. D. Gordon in his book *Quiet Talks on Prayer*: It begins in the heart of God, sweeps down into a human heart upon the earth, so intersecting the circle of the earth, which is the battlefield of prayer, and then it goes back again to its starting point, having accomplished its purpose.

Listening and the Word and the Spirit: How do we "listen" to the voice of God? This is not about hearing an audible voice of God. When you look at the word "listen" it refers to listening to God's Word. With reference to prayer – "listening" means perceiving what the Word of God is saying in the context of my life situation. By the power of the Spirit, working through the Word and prayer, God will give us insight into His will (John 14:26).

Buck Parsons says this in an article at www.ligonier.org – "Throughout the Bible, God commands us to listen, and in order to discern how God commands us to listen...I decided to engage in a semester-long study of what the Proverbs had to say about listening. One of the primary lessons I learned from my study is the root meaning of the infinitive "to listen." Throughout Scripture the word is employed in various ways, but it is primarily used in the imperative voice. That is to say, it is used largely as a command. In my study I noted that the word did not simply mean "to hear" but to perceive and to heed. When Jesus sovereignly and insightfully declared to His audience, "He who has ears to hear let him hear," He was not merely concerned that they simply heard the words coming out of His mouth but that they heeded His instruction promptly and sincerely."

Session 2: The Foundation of Prayer

“Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name”

Review: Please share an idea, thought or application from last weeks lesson, your Prayer Journal or personal/family devotions.

What Does the Bible Say About “Foundation of Prayer”:

1. **Prayer depends on who God is:** “No one can take a serious look at Jesus’ life and teaching without being struck by the absolute importance and constant centrality of the Father to all Christ said and did. Thus, when we begin to pray, our first question should be: ‘What is this God like to whom we pray?’ The character of the infinite, personal God is the foundation of all prayer, which is why the first petition in the Lord’s Prayer begins, “Our Father in heaven.” The better you know God the more certain it is that you will pray to Him?²”

a. Doug Kelly’s statement elicits three questions – how would you answer them?

- Is God the constant focus of my life in all I say and do?
- Am I consumed with a passion to really know Him?
- If God is the focus of my life and if I am consumed with a passion to know Him, how should that impact my prayer life?

b. What does Isaiah teach us about “who God is?”:

Isaiah 6:1-3 *I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple.* ² *Seraphim stood above Him...* ³ *And one called out to another and said, “Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory.”*

c. In addition to Isaiah 6:1-3, the Westminster Confession of Faith³ expands our knowledge of who God is: “There is only one living and true God, who is infinite in being and perfection...a most pure spirit...He is unchangeable, boundless, eternal, and incomprehensible. He is almighty, most wise, most holy, most free, and most absolute. He works all things according to the counsel of his own unchangeable and most righteous will, for his own glory. He is most loving, gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin, and He is the rewarder of those who diligently seek him. He is also most just and terrifying in his judgments, hating all sin, and will by no means acquit the guilty...He alone is all-sufficient...the fountain of all being...He has absolute sovereignty...His knowledge is infinite, infallible, and independent of his creatures.

2. Our Response to Our Awesome God:

a. What can we learn from Isaiah about responding to God in prayer from Isaiah 6:3-8

³ *And one called out to another and said, “Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory.”* ⁴ *And the foundations of the thresholds trembled at the voice of him who called out,*

² *Why Pray*, Doug Kelly (RTS Professor of Systematic Theology), p 15, 53

³ Westminster Confession Chapter 2 see web link: www.opc.org/documents/MESV_frames.html

while the temple was filling with smoke.⁵ Then I said, “Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I live among a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.”⁶ Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a burning coal in his hand, which he had taken from the altar with tongs.⁷ He touched my mouth with it and said, “Behold, this has touched your lips; and your iniquity is taken away and your sin is forgiven.”⁸ Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?” Then I said, “Here am I. Send me!”

b. Jesus says our response should be: “Hallowed be your name.”

“There is something unique about the first petition, “Hallowed be your name.” In this petition, we hear the one specific subjective response of the human heart that God expects us to give—the hallowing, reverencing, honoring, esteeming, admiring, valuing, treasuring of God’s name above all things. None of the other five petitions in the prayer tells us to pray for a specific human response of the heart. If you combine this fact with the fact that this petition comes first - my conclusion is that **this petition is the main point of the prayer** and all the others are meant to serve this one.⁴”

- What are practical ways to hallow God’s name in prayer?

c. There is another response that we cannot leave out. Our God is an awesome God, He is Holy and His name is to hallowed – but He is also our Father. What does Galatians 4:4-7 teach us about coming to the Father in prayer?

⁴ But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, ⁵ so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. ⁶ Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” ⁷ Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God.

Application:

1. What was the most important idea you took away from today’s lesson for personal or family prayer time?
2. Before the next Session:
 - Complete your Prayer Journal and Family Prayer time
 - Study Session 3: Why Pray if God Already Knows?

Closing prayer: pray for the ideas, thoughts, applications gained from today’s lesson

⁴ John Piper’s sermon notes on Matthew 6:5-15, Jan. 9, 2011, web link: www.desiringgod.org

MY PRAYER JOURNAL

1. What I learned from Session 2 about myself and prayer: _____

2. What I learned from Session 2 about Family Prayer time: _____

3. Meditate and Reflect on the following Scriptures:

Isaiah 6:1-8 ¹ In the year of King Uzziah's death I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple. ² Seraphim stood above Him, each having six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. ³ And one called out to another and said, "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory." ⁴ And the foundations of the thresholds trembled at the voice of him who called out, while the temple was filling with smoke. ⁵ Then I said, "Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I live among a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts." ⁶ Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a burning coal in his hand, which he had taken from the altar with tongs. ⁷ He touched my mouth with it and said, "Behold, this has touched your lips; and your iniquity is taken away and your sin is forgiven." ⁸ Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?" Then I said, "Here am I. Send me!"

Galatians 4:4-7 - ⁴ But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, ⁵ so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. ⁶ Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" ⁷ Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God.

Session 3: Why Pray if God Already Knows

“Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your Name Your Kingdom come, Your will be done”

Review: Please share an idea, thought or application from last weeks lesson, your Prayer Journal or personal/family devotions.

What Does the Bible Say About: “Why Pray if God Already Knows?”

1. **Our Father in heaven loves you.** Why pray if God already knows – because God loves us and desires to commune with His children in prayer. He longs for connection and delights in our prayers because He is our Father.
 - a. Richard Foster and Steve Brown address the question of “Why pray” in a unique way that you don’t always hear from others. As you read their comments – what are your reactions? Are these comments new, raise any questions, applicable?

“Prayer is not simply trying to find an answer or asking for help to overcome this or that. Prayer is mainly creating an open, empty space where God can come and we can enter into an intimate friendship with God so that we will have a greater and greater sense of what pleases Him. And that’s what we work on when we pray: we look for a life of intimacy with God, not for specific answers to requests. As we come into this intimacy, the other things begin to fall into place.⁶”

“...we forget the basic thrust of prayer is celebration. It is a child coming to spend time with a Father who loves the child...and who is pleased with the time spent together...When God invites His people to prayer, He invites them to the dance – a celebration of the relationship and who created it, a celebration of life and meaning and forgiveness and heaven. When the Father invites us to prayer, He issues an invitation to a joyous party.⁷”

- b. What does the following passage teach us about God’s love and His desire that we come to Him in prayer?

Matthew 7:7-11 - ⁷ “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ⁸ For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. ⁹ Or what man is there among you who, when his son asks for a loaf, will give him a stone? ¹⁰ Or if he asks for a fish, he will not give him a snake, will he? ¹¹ If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!

2. **“Your will be done”:** Why pray if God already knows – so we might understand and do God’s will. The Father loves you so much that He wants the very best for you – His will. In many life situations, we don’t know God’s will until we pray (Phil 2:12-13). God asks us to come to Him in prayer so that we might understand His will. The more we pray, the closer we draw to God and the clearer God’s will becomes.
 - Prayer is not about changing God’s mind – it is about changing us.
 - Prayer is the means by which God uses to change our hearts to align with His so we might understand and seek His will.

⁶ *Celebration of Discipline* by Richard Foster

⁷ *Approaching God* by Steve Brown, p. 161-163

- Seeking God's will shows us our dependency on the Father
- "A needy heart is a praying heart – dependency is the heartbeat of prayer."⁸

- a. Jesus knows that the will of the Father is to die on the Cross, yet goes to the Father in prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane. What do we learn about prayer from Jesus in Luke 22?

Luke 22:40-46 - ⁴⁰ *When He arrived at the place, He said to them, "Pray that you may not enter into temptation."* ⁴¹ *...and He knelt down and began to pray,* ⁴² *saying, "Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done."* ⁴³ *Now an angel from heaven appeared to Him, strengthening Him.* ⁴⁴ *And being in agony He was praying very fervently; and His sweat became like drops of blood, falling down upon the ground.* ⁴⁵ *When He rose from prayer, He came to the disciples and found them sleeping from sorrow,* ⁴⁶ *and said to them, "Why are you sleeping? Get up and pray that you may not enter into temptation."*

- b. In the following passages Jesus is speaking about doing the will of the Father and going to the cross (John 12:27-28). In John 14:7-8, Jesus speaks about our abiding in Him and prayerfully seeking out the will of the Father. These passages teach us a key reason why we need to pray – even when God already knows. What do these passages teach:

John 12:27-28 ²⁷ *"Now My soul has become troubled; and what shall I say, 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour.* ²⁸ *Father, glorify Your name."* Then a voice came out of heaven: *"I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again."*

John 14:7-8 - ⁷ *If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.* ⁸ *My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples.*

- c. **Transforming your Prayer Life:** Would you like to better understand God's will for your life? Are you tired of a ho-hum prayer life – where you see prayer as a ritual or an obligation; you feel guilty because you have forgotten to pray; you know you need to pray as a family but haven't done so in awhile; and the list of items goes on. God's word gives us hope and a tremendous key on prayer - what do the following passages about transforming your prayer life:

- 2 Corinthians 3:17-18 - ¹⁷ *Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.* ¹⁸ *But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.*
- Ephesians 6:18 - *With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints,*

Application

1. What was the most important idea you took away from today's lesson for personal or family prayer time?
2. Before the next Session:
 - Complete your Prayer Journal and Family Prayer time
 - Study Session 4: How to Pray

Close in prayer – pray for the ideas, thoughts, applications gained from today's lesson

⁸ *A Praying Life* by Paul Miller, p. 24

MY PRAYER JOURNAL

“Prayer invites us to rest in the fact that God is in control, and the world’s problems are ultimately God’s, not ours. If I spend enough time with God, I will inevitably begin to look at the world with a point of view that more resembles God’s own (*Prayer: Does It Make Any Difference*, p. 210).”

1. What I learned from Session 3 about myself and prayer: _____

2. What I learned from Session 3 about Family Prayer time: _____

3. Meditate and Reflect on the following Scriptures:

Matthew 7:7-11 - ⁷ “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ⁸ For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. ⁹ Or what man is there among you who, when his son asks for a loaf, will give him a stone? ¹⁰ Or if he asks for a fish, he will not give him a snake, will he? ¹¹ If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!

Luke 22:40-46 - ⁴⁰ When He arrived at the place, He said to them, “Pray that you may not enter into temptation.” ⁴¹ ...and He knelt down and began to pray, ⁴² saying, “Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Yours be done.” ⁴³ Now an angel from heaven appeared to Him, strengthening Him. ⁴⁴ And being in agony He was praying very fervently; and His sweat became like drops of blood, falling down upon the ground. ⁴⁵ When He rose from prayer, He came to the disciples and found them sleeping from sorrow, ⁴⁶ and said to them, “Why are you sleeping? Get up and pray that you may not enter into temptation.”

John 12:27-28 ²⁷ “Now My soul has become troubled; and what shall I say, ‘Father, save Me from this hour’? But for this purpose I came to this hour. ²⁸ Father, glorify Your name.” Then a voice came out of heaven: “I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.”

John 14:7-8 - ⁷ If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸ My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples.

2 Corinthians 3:17-18 - ¹⁷ Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. ¹⁸ But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.

Ephesians 6:18 - With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints,

God's Will – It's No Secret

NavPress Journal (Jan/Feb 1996) by Gerald Sittser

I have always had difficulty making decisions. Pondering what to order from a menu immobilizes me. Deciding where to go on a vacation preoccupies me for weeks. Weighing which academic project to give a summer's vacation to makes me reflective and anxious. It gets even more complicated and I get more confused when I consider what *God* wants me to do.

What, I keep asking myself, is the will of God for my life? Does God want me to take a new job or to stay where I am? Does God want me to speak at a family camp next summer or to spend the week at home with my kids? Does God want me to write another book or to do more administrative work at the college? Does God want me to marry or to remain single?

I may be asking the wrong question. When we ask, "What is the will of God for my life?" we usually have in mind some decision we made in the past and now regret, or some decision we must make in the future about which we are uncertain. But the will of God has less to do with the past or future and more to do with the present. We have no power to reverse decisions we have made in the past, and we may not know in precise terms what God wants us to do in the future. But we *do* know what God wants us to do in the present. We already know the will of God! Thus, no matter what we have done in the past or will do in the future, we can always, always give ourselves to the will of God we know now.

The Bible and God's Will

The biblical authors do not seem to agonize much over the will of God, at least as it is popularly understood today. When they explore the subject, they do not, as we often do, struggle, waffle, and question for days on end. If anything, the question itself is often a rhetorical one that leads to a simple and unequivocal answer. For example, when a crowd of people asked Jesus about the will of God, Jesus replied, "What God wants you to do is to believe in the one He sent" (**John 6:29**).

Paul was equally clear. He concluded his great theological treatise of **Romans 1–11** by spelling out the most important and immediate implication. "Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will" (**Ro. 12:1–2**).

To believers in Thessalonica Paul exhorted, "Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus" (**1 Thess. 5:16–17**). The will of God, as it turns out, is not something we need to *discover*, for it is as plain as the nose on our face. Rather, it is something we need to *do*. God wills that we repent of our sins, believe the gospel (**Mk. 1:15**), and obey God's commands, especially that we love God and love one another (**Mt. 22:37–40, Jn. 15:12**).

If in the minds of biblical authors there is agony involved, it is not in the process of discovering the will of God, but in the difficulty of doing it. Jesus knew what His mission was. He knew that it would culminate in His crucifixion. He asked His Father in heaven to "remove the cup" before His execution, yet submitted to God's will, obediently embracing His destiny of suffering and death.

Likewise, the Apostle Paul did not seem to wrestle much with the problem of discerning the will of God for his life. It was doing the will of God that created such zeal and even fear in him. He spoke with great foreboding about disobeying God's will for his life: "Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!" (**1 Cor. 9:16**).

In the rare moments when I am ruthlessly honest with myself, I realize that my anxious efforts to discover the will of God distract me from facing the real issue. I simply do not do the will of God that is already clear to me. I would rather assign the will of God to the far-off future, where I can safely or anxiously contemplate it as a range of options from which I must choose one. That option seems far safer than treating it as it really is, a set of commands (e.g., the general principles of the Ten Commandments) that show me in no uncertain terms

how I should live my life every day in the light of God's grace. My problem is not that I do not know the will of God; it is that I do not do the will of God I already know. It is not ignorance that plagues me; it is lack of faith and stubbornness of heart. I am like a child who worries about what she is going to do on the weekend as a convenient excuse for not doing the chores assigned for the day.

Past, Present, and Future

We may have difficulty discovering the will of God for our lives because we misunderstand the biblical concept of time. God dwells in eternity (**Psalm 90**); He is therefore not bound by time. There is no past or future to God. All times are the present to Him. But we are bound by time. There is a past to our experience, just as there is a future. We carry the past with us in the form of consequences of decisions that we have no power to change; we anticipate the future as a range of possibilities that may or may not be realized. But we can only live in the present. "I tell you," Paul wrote, "now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation" (**2 Cor. 6:2**). We have only the present in which to love, trust, and obey God.

How we view time, then, will affect how we understand the will of God. If the will of God is associated in our minds with a bad decision we made in the past, we will become preoccupied with the past and live with regrets. "If only I had not taken that job," we will say to ourselves. "If only I had not married so quickly and impulsively." "If only I had not drunk so much that night." Soon we will begin to believe that we missed the will of God for our lives because of bad decisions we made in the past, and we will be left only with longing and regret. The past will be like the dust stirred up by a speeding car on a dirt road, which then lingers in the air and suffocates us.

If, on the other hand, we associate the will of God with a decision we must make in the future, we will become preoccupied with the future and live in anxiety. What if there is no clear direction? What if all our options are good ones, every one of which could be the will of God? What if we simply cannot decide? What if we made the wrong choice, though we have no way of knowing whether or not it is wrong? This uncertainty will cause us to keep looking ahead, always to the future, and obsess about decisions that have to be made. The future will be like a mirage that appears in the distance, shimmering, inviting us to rush toward it. But it keeps receding from us, always remaining just out of reach, refusing to yield to us.

But if we associate the will of God with decisions we can make in the *present*, we will be empowered to do the will of God we already know. We will direct all of our energies into the now. What is more, we will receive grace for the past. Though there is nothing we can do to reverse the past, there is much we can do to change how we respond to the past. Only God through Christ can forgive us for past sins and redeem the past by using it as a tool in the present to transform us. Thus we never have to live outside the will of God in the present if we repent of our sins and cast ourselves on the mercy of God. A person could be in prison for crimes committed in the past but still do the will of God in the present. If we do the will of God we already know, we will no longer have to live with regrets over past misdeeds but instead be able to embrace the grace of God given in the present moment. Paul describes this kind of grace as the grace of no regrets. Godly repentance will lead us into that kind of radical grace (**2 Cor. 7:5–12**).

We will also experience the peace of God concerning the future. Of course, there is nothing we can do to control the future. It will continue to loom before us, forever eluding our grasp, surprising us with strange twists and turns. Worrying about the future will not change it. If anything, worry will keep us from doing what holds the greatest promise to influence the future: Prepare for it in the present.

I have met people who worry so much about whether they will be able to find a stable job in the future that they never prepare themselves for the job they want. I have talked with people who fret so much over whether they will find a suitable marriage partner that they never become the kind of person a suitable marriage partner would want to marry.

Worry erodes the spirit, distracts the mind, dulls our creativity. It keeps us from embracing this present moment, which is the only one we have. If we use the present wisely and trust that, no matter what happened in the past or may happen in the future, God will work all things together for good for those who have been called according to His purposes (**Ro. 8:28**), we can believe that God will redeem the past and prepare us for

the future. As Jesus said, "Do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own" (**Mt. 6:34**).

Decisions, Decisions

Still, we cannot avoid decisions about the future. That decisions have to be made is obvious. That the will of God may be unclear is equally obvious. So what do we do? When I reflect on Scripture, a pattern emerges. We can make decisions about the future in *freedom* and with *security*, trusting that our decisions are within the will of God, provided we fulfill four criteria: that we seek God above all else, that we pursue our unique sense of calling, that we live within the moral boundaries prescribed in Scripture, and that we remain open to God's divine interruptions.

Seek God.

The most important principle is the first: We must seek God above all else (**Mt. 6:33**). We should pray for God's will to be revealed. Praying itself *is* the will of God (**1 Thess. 5:17–18**). We should get advice from godly counselors about the will of God. Learning from wise people is the will of God (**Prov. 19:20, Prov. 20:18**). We should wait for God (**Ps. 27:14**), grow in wisdom (**Prov. 3:6–7**), ponder the Word of God (**Psalms 1**), and worship God (**Eph. 5:18**). *These disciplines are the will of God.* In other words, seeking God for the purpose of discovering the will of God is really a secondary concern. Seeking God is itself our fundamental purpose in life. Seeking God to know His will for the future is part of a larger whole.

Pursue your calling.

We should also pursue a unique sense of calling. Each person's calling (or "vocation," as it is sometimes referred to) involves more than a specific job or career, which is often what we associate with the idea of a calling.

When we ask young Sarah, "What do you want to do when you grow up?" we expect her to say something like, "I want to be a doctor." Yet when Sarah reaches adulthood she will learn, as all of us learn, that a calling is really a set of multiple responsibilities based on circumstances, talents, vision, and intuition.

I am, for example, a widower and father. Circumstances require me to manage my home alone and to function as the only living parent of three children. I am also an active member of a church, a volunteer in the community, and a college professor. And I feel a deep burden to help prepare a younger generation of Christians for leadership in the world.

Doing the will of God requires that I make choices that are congruent with these various responsibilities, all of which reflect the will of God for me. I cannot in good conscience do something that would, for example, sacrifice the well-being of my children or compromise my desire to train leaders.

Obey God's moral commands.

Scripture establishes moral boundaries within which we come to know the will of God. Some actions are clearly out of line. I do not have to pray for God's will if I am considering marriage to an unbeliever (**2 Cor. 6:14**). Some motives are unacceptable, too. It is not God's will for me to become, say, a lawyer if I am motivated by avarice and pride, although being a lawyer is itself a worthy occupation. In this case God cares more about who I am than about what I do. Some positions of responsibility are off-limits, too, if in pursuing them we neglect to do the will of God we already know. I have chosen, for example, not to serve as a senior pastor in the near future because I believe it would deprive me of the time I need to raise my children.

Be open to God's interruptions

Finally, we should always remain open to and even pray for God's interruptions. It appears that God does at times speak clearly and directly to us about the future, showing us in no uncertain terms what we should do. On some occasions that sense of unequivocal guidance comes to us through circumstances: Many doors close, one door opens. On other occasions such guidance comes to us intuitively: We simply know what we are supposed to do. On still other occasions, God speaks to us through the prophetic voice of a fellow believer, or through a dream or vision. When God speaks so directly, we must be open to what He says and ready to do what He commands.

But God does not always interrupt. If anything, God may at times seem very quiet and distant. Does that mean He is unconcerned or disconnected? Does that imply we could actually make a bad decision, a decision

contrary to the will of God, yet not even know we were making it? In such situations I think it is wise to assume that God is always clear when He needs to be, even when He is silent. Perhaps His apparent silence is the result of misguided expectations on our part.

Let's say, for example, that we want to know if option A or option B is the will of God for our lives. We pray, fast, seek counsel, study Scripture, wait on God. But still no answer comes. Could it be that both options are within the will of God, that God will bless us no matter which one we choose?

I have gone on many backpacking trips over the years. During some of those trips I have come to an intersection where the trail I was following forked, and I could find no marker indicating which path I was supposed to take. I have learned that the National Forest Service posts signs only when it is necessary. If there are no signs, as is often the case, it is because no signs are needed. Both paths will eventually lead to the same destination. I am free to choose either one with confidence that I will arrive at my chosen destination.

Some decisions we make, in other words, are not as important as we think. Or perhaps it is better to say that some decisions, however important they seem to us, are neutral if we make other, more fundamental decisions first. Option A and option B may both be acceptable, both within the will of God for the future, if we have already decided to do the will of God we know in the present.

Paul's Decision Making

The life of the Apostle Paul illustrates this point. After Paul became a Christian he gave himself to seeking God, even to the point of withdrawing into the wilderness for a time. His greatest passion in life was to know Jesus (**Phil. 1:21**). Moreover, Paul was faithful to his calling as an apostle to the Gentiles. Obviously Paul honored God's moral law, even to the point of suffering (**1 Cor. 4:8–13**). Finally, Paul was open to God's interruptions. He set off on his first missionary journey at the prompting of the Holy Spirit (**Acts 13**). He traveled to Macedonia when God called him through a dream to begin evangelistic work there (**Acts 16:6–10**). Still, Paul seemed to make many decisions without such direct guidance. He used common sense, made decisions when necessity required them, and never doubted that they were the right ones, regardless of the outcome. He exercised freedom in the choices he made, and he lived in the security that God was with him. Paul could have chosen to travel to Alexandria first to begin his missionary work rather than to Crete. Such a decision would have set him on a different course. But the outcome would have been the same, the evangelization of the Mediterranean world.

Free to Do God's Will

God's will is revealed to us in Scripture; it is what God calls us to do day by day. But by His providence it is also being worked out mysteriously so that even human beings at their worst and human history at its lowest will still lead inexorably to a grand conclusion, thus fulfilling the eternal plan of God. We will comprehend the whole of God's plan only at the end, when we see all things clearly from heaven's perspective. But even in this life we may catch glimpses of it as we look back on the course of our lives and see how God's hand has been at work.

In the meantime, there is work to be accomplished, life to be lived, the will of God to be done. We are freed from bondage to the past and freed from worry about the future. We are free to do the will of God in the present, the only moment we truly have to know God, trust God, and obey God.

Session 4: How to Pray
“Give us this day our daily bread”

Review: Please share an idea, thought or application from last weeks lesson, your Prayer Journal or personal/family devotions.

What Does the Bible Say About “How to Pray”:

Today’s lesson is about helping you develop a plan for your Prayer life. During your Family Devotions you’ll discuss developing a Family Prayer time.

1. When the question is asked “How do I pray?” Jesus gives this advice to His disciples:

Luke 11:1-2 ¹ *It happened that while Jesus was praying in a certain place, after He had finished, one of His disciples said to Him, “Lord, teach us to pray just as John also taught his disciples.”* ² *And He said to them, “When you pray, say...”* Jesus proceeds to teach them the Lord’s Prayer. This is the foundation for our prayers because it teaches us the fundamental elements that should be included in prayer as we have examined throughout this study.

2. The better question for this lesson is what should a follower of Christ’s prayer life look like? Philip Yancey states:

“For years I resisted a regular routine of prayer, believing that communication with God should be spontaneous and free. As a result I prayed infrequently and with little satisfaction. Eventually I learned that spontaneity often flows from discipline. Athletes and musicians never become great without regular practice. I found that I needed the discipline of regularity to make possible those exceptional times of free communication with God...As with physical exercise, much of the benefit of prayer comes as a result of consistency, the simple act of showing up...The common danger we face...is getting so absorbed in daily life that we simply fail to show up. Any visitor to a Muslim country can see the difference. Five times a day, when the call to prayer goes out, all work and commerce stops, buses and trains empty, and faithful Muslims roll out a prayer rug, bowing low to say their prayers. Christians have no such ritual to stop and remember God. It’s up to us.”⁹

- a. Are you spontaneous or disciplined - do you like a plan or do you play it by ear? How about others in your family?
3. Exercise: gather in a group of 3-4 and talk about ideas on how prayer works best for you. What are some things that make prayer work for you? What type of setting do you find best for regular communication with God? What time of day works best for you and why? How beneficial to your communion with God is it to have inner conversations with God all day long? Ideas you come up with may include:
 - Setting aside at least one specific time each day for prayer
 - Creating an environment for prayer — perhaps lighting a candle or playing music in the background while you pray
 - Discovering a specific place that stimulates you to pray — an outdoor garden, a quiet corner in your local library, a particular chair in your home, sitting in your car during your lunch break
 - Meditating on how God must feel about the issues and people for whom you pray
 - Daily reviewing with God what happened in your life that day
 - Identifying reminders that encourage you to pray continually

⁹ *Prayer: Does It Make Any Difference* Philip Yancey, 166, 182

4. Individual Exercise: Have you ever wondered why life conspires against having regular, satisfying prayer times? It's easy to get "too busy" to pray or to conclude that effective prayer is too complicated. It's easy to lose sight of who God really is and assume God can't possibly care about our prayers. Add in other hindrances such as the barrage of "noise" in our fast-paced, information- and entertainment-driven society, and prayer often gets overlooked or simply drowned out. Fortunately, we have the freedom to find our own ways to pray - ways that fit who we are, our circumstances, our needs and not those of someone else. During the next few minutes write some notes about the following questions:

- Think about who God is and why daily prayer is important to you (and to God).
- Using the info from the previous exercise, plan how to create/expand space in your day for prayer.
- What could you do to remind yourself to pray continually and "tune in" to God's presence as you go through each day.
- Choose what you will try this week - something you've never tried before - to stimulate your prayer life.
- Most important, commit yourself to faithfully "show up" and pray - not just think or talk about prayer. What are some things that might help you commit to prayer:
 - prayer partner – your spouse, son/daughter, friend
 - set regular prayer times on your cell phone, calendar...
 - join a small group or prayer group
 - join the email prayer chain at church
 - pray for world wide missions – go to www.operationworld.org and join the 60 Day Prayer Movement, receiving email prayer notes for people groups around the world. Voice of the Martyrs is another site for prayer for the persecuted church: www.persecution.com
 - pray for our church staff, officers, and missionaries we support
 - pray for our church ministries – go to www.crosscreekchurch.us
- Ask for guidance and encouragement as you seek to keep company with God.
- Write your prayer plan in your Prayer Journal.

Application:

1. What was the most important idea you took away from today's lesson for personal or family prayer time?
2. Before the next Session:
 - Complete your Prayer Journal and Family Prayer time
 - Study Session 5: Prayer Problems

Closing prayer: pray for the ideas, thoughts, applications gained from today's lesson

To a More Fulfilling Prayer Life Taking a Look at Prayers of the Bible

“Prayer is a way of relating to God, not a skill set like double-entry bookkeeping.” So learning to pray takes time. It involves discovery, successes, and setbacks. The intimacy we long for in our prayer relationship with God will ebb and flow. Fortunately, people have been praying for a very long time, so we have many mentors to instruct, guide, and encourage us as we continue on our personal prayer journey.

1. The Bible includes approximately 650 prayers of faithful believers who have gone before us. These prayers show how people experiencing a variety of moods and circumstances have talked to God about important matters throughout history. They offer insight into prayer and how to pray. During the coming weeks, begin reading the prayers of the Bible. To get started, here and on the next page is a list of a few of the Bible’s great prayers:

- Genesis 18: Abraham’s plea for Sodom
- Exodus 15: Moses’ song to the Lord
- Exodus 33: Moses meets with God
- 2 Samuel 7: David’s response to God’s promises
- 1 Kings 8: Solomon’s dedication of the temple
- 2 Chronicles 20: Jehoshaphat prays for victory
- Ezra 9: Ezra prays about the people’s sins
- Psalm 22: A cry to God for help
- Psalm 104: A prayer of praise
- Daniel 9: Daniel prays for forgiveness and Jerusalem’s restoration
- Habakkuk 3: A prophet’s prayer of acceptance
- Matthew 6: The Lord’s prayer
- John 17: Jesus prays for himself, his disciples, and all believers
- Colossians 1: Paul’s prayer of thanksgiving

2. In addition to studying the prayers of the Bible (and perhaps even memorizing them), we can gain helpful insights when we compare the prayers of different Bible characters. For example, read Ezra 9:6 – 15 and Nehemiah 1:5 – 2:5. Notice the differences between these prayers.

- Which approach to God is most like your own?
- What did each man pray for that was close to the heart of God? (Note how each man understood his place in the stream of what God was doing at the time.)
- In what ways do you think each man’s relationship with God may have affected his everyday life, and how might these insights affect your everyday experience with God?

3. Paul’s prayers, like the Psalms, give us a template for our own (see Ephesians 1:15 – 21; 3:14 – 21; Philippians 1:3 – 11; Colossians 1:9 – 12; 2 Thessalonians 1:11 – 12; Philemon 4 – 7). As you read them in his letters:

- *Ask*: What does Paul pray for? In what ways do his prayers reflect the truth that Jesus Christ is the center of the universe? For what is he thankful? About which practical matters does he pray?
- *Feel free* to use his prayers as a searchlight on yourself. Is your love abounding more and more in knowledge and depth as happened when Paul prayed for the Philippians?
- *Try inserting* the names of people you love into Paul’s prayers. For example, if someone struggles with doubts, add his or her name into the sequence of Paul’s prayer for the Ephesians.

Session 5: Prayer Problems

Review: Please share an idea, thought or application from last weeks lesson, your Prayer Journal or personal/family devotions.

What Does the Bible Say About Prayer Problems?

The problems we encounter in prayer are never with God, they are always with us. We'll look at a few problems that arise because we are not approaching prayer from a Biblical perspective.

1. The Challenge to Persevere:

Luke 11:5-13 - ⁵ Then He said to them, "Suppose one of you has a friend, and goes to him at midnight and says to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves; ⁶ for a friend of mine has come to me from a journey, and I have nothing to set before him'; ⁷ and from inside he answers and says, 'Do not bother me; the door has already been shut and my children and I are in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything.' ⁸ I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will get up and give him as much as he needs. ⁹ "So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ¹⁰ For everyone who asks, receives; and he who seeks, finds; and to him who knocks, it will be opened. ¹¹ Now suppose one of you fathers is asked by his son for a fish; he will not give him a snake instead of a fish, will he? ¹² Or if he is asked for an egg, he will not give him a scorpion, will he? ¹³ If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?"

- a. What prayer problem is Jesus addressing?
- b. What does He teach us about persevering prayer?
- c. Do you know of faithful Christians who have prayed for weeks, months and maybe years and had their prayers answered? Could you share this with the class?

2. Wrestling in Prayer:

Genesis 32:24-31 - ²⁴ Then Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him until daybreak. ²⁵ When he saw that he had not prevailed against him, he touched the socket of his thigh; so the socket of Jacob's thigh was dislocated while he wrestled with him. ²⁶ Then he said, "Let me go, for the dawn is breaking." But he said, "I will not let you go unless you bless me." ²⁷ So he said to him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Jacob." ²⁸ He said, "Your name shall no longer be Jacob, but Israel; for you have striven with God and with men and have prevailed." ²⁹ Then Jacob asked him and said, "Please tell me your name." But he said, "Why is it that you ask my name?" And he blessed him there. ³⁰ So Jacob named the place Peniel, for he said, "I have seen God face to face, yet my life has been preserved." ³¹ Now the sun rose upon him just as he crossed over Peniel, and he was limping on his thigh.

Sometimes it takes effort and determination to see things change. Think how tirelessly a parent, spouse, friend has prayed for a person who has lost their way and seen God intervene in this persons life to restore them. That is not the prayer hastily uttered before you go to bed, but prayers offered to God with intensity and heart. In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus prayed with intensity – "And being in agony He was praying very fervently; and His sweat became like drops of blood, (Luke 22:44)"

- a. What prayer problem is Genesis 32:24-31 addressing?
- b. What does this passage teach us regarding wrestling with God in prayer?

3. When God Appears to Say No:

What happens when you persevere in prayer and you wrestle with God, yet after all of this your friend is not healed or a home is foreclosed or the injury is so severe that a person lies comatose? It appears that God has answered your prayers, “No.”

“Even when God says no to one of our requests, He still uses our holy desires and our acts of praying to bring in His kingdom, accomplish His will, and to provide for, pardon, and protect His people. Looking at it this way, we understand that when God says no, He is still saying yes but in a higher, more mysterious way than we first thought. Temporary setbacks should not discourage us because there is every reason to continue in the mighty work of prayer.¹⁰”

- a. Why is it that answers to specific requests, which appear to accord with the glory of God, are often delayed for so long? What is one reason that Paul gives in 2 Corinthians 12:7-10

“⁷Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me—to keep me from exalting myself!⁸ Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me.⁹ And He has said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.” Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.¹⁰ Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ’s sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong.”

4. **The Power in Prayer:** Power in prayer is found not by looking at ourselves, but by looking on the One who has absolute power, Jesus Christ. We gain entrance into the throne room of the Father by way of the wounds of the Savior, received on Calvary on our behalf. Jesus ushers us into the presence of the Father and intercedes for us. No matter how difficult life may be – we and amazing God who desires to hear our prayers. Keep the faith, never lose heart – He cares. This week during your devotions, please meditate on the following passage from Romans 8. May it give you hope, patience, confidence, and courage in prayer.

Romans 8:26-39 - ²⁶ *In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words...²⁸ And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose...³¹ What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us?³² He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?...³³ Who will bring a charge against God’s elect? God is the one who justifies;³⁴ who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.³⁵ Who will separate us from the love of Christ?...³⁷ But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers,³⁹ nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Application:

1. What was the most important idea you took away from today’s lesson for personal or family prayer time?
2. Before the next Session:
 - Complete your Prayer Journal and Family Prayer time
 - Study Session 6: Does Prayer Change Anything?

Closing prayer: pray for the ideas, thoughts, applications gained from today’s lesson

¹⁰ *Why Pray If God Already Knows* Doug Kelly, p. 185

Why We Need Both the Holy Spirit and Word in Prayer¹¹

I was empty. Too many long days, a stressful funeral, and helping someone move had left me drained. Focusing on the Lord early that morning seemed next to impossible. I knelt beside my bed, but couldn't connect. I lay on the floor and confessed, "Lord, I humble myself before You. I've positioned my body as low as it can go. Please send Your grace!"

A few minutes later, I rose to shake off the lethargy. I opened my Bible to follow a long-held routine of praying through the Psalms. That day I was led to **Psalm 143**. The verses penetrated my soul: "O Lord, hear my prayer, listen to my cry for mercy; in your faithfulness and righteousness come to my relief... Let the morning bring me word of your unfailing love" (vv. 1, 8). One short psalm, and I knew I was hearing the Father's voice and He was hearing mine. Connection!

As I continued praying through each verse of this psalm, I realized that the words expressed the substance of my heart. Then I came to verse 10: "Teach me to do your will... may your good Spirit lead me." Now, instead of telling God my thoughts, I was ready for Him to tell me His thoughts. The Holy Spirit brought to mind people and situations needing prayer. He even gave me ideas about decisions I needed to make later that day. What began as a dry, lifeless effort ended as a vibrant encounter with the living God. Together, God's Word and the Holy Spirit moved me into a potent time of prayer.

What the Word of God Brings to Prayer

When we hold our Bibles, we are holding a collection of God's very thoughts, will, and ways. Here are four ways in which the Word empowers our prayers with depth and accuracy:

Nourishment and food. The Bible uses words such as *seed* (**1 Pet. 1:23**), *milk* (**1 Pet. 2:2**), *honey* (**Ps. 19:10**), and *meat* (**Heb. 5:12, KJV**) to describe its nurturing qualities. When I am weak in prayer, the Word feeds me and helps my faith grow. When I become weary of pounding away with the same request, the Word revives and sustains me, much like food does when I'm famished.

Conviction and guidance. The Bible is like a mirror (**Jas. 1:23–25**) and an ox-goad (**Eccl. 12:11**). When I'm not seeing things clearly, the Word brings conviction and reflects truth back to me. When I'm apathetic about seeking God or I'm praying in the wrong direction, the Word, like a prod, pushes me back on track.

Power and stability. The Bible compares itself to a nail (**Eccl. 12:11**), a sword (**Eph. 6:17**), a hammer (**Jer. 23:29**), and gold (**Ps. 19:10**). When fears hinder my praying and I need to be anchored, the Word, like a nail, secures me. When I'm in intercessory battle, the Word pierces through the enemy's defenses like a sword. When I'm up against an obstacle, the Word, like a hammer, smashes it to pieces. When what I'm praying for is out of whack, the Word gives me the "gold standard."

Cleansing and purifying. The Bible possesses qualities similar to water (**Eph. 5:26**) and fire (**Jer. 23:29**). When I become contaminated by the world and don't feel I can pray, the Word washes me like water. When my motives are polluted, the Word purifies me with fire.

What the Holy Spirit Brings to Prayer

According to **Ro. 8:26–27**, the Holy Spirit helps us pray, even when we don't know what to say. The Holy Spirit inspires our prayers with:

Presence and intimacy. When I feel far from God, I trust the Holy Spirit to usher me into the Father's presence: "We... have access to the Father by one Spirit" (**Eph. 2:18**).

Security and confidence. When I am battling insecurity and unworthiness, I ask the Holy Spirit to confirm the reality of my adoption by the Father so I can pray as God's confident child: "The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children" (**Ro. 8:16**).

Strength and vitality. When I am weary, I ask God to infuse me and "strengthen [me] with power through his Spirit in [my] inner being" (**Eph. 3:16**).

¹¹Article by Joseph Winger – web link: www.navpress.com/magazines/archives/article.aspx?id=21369

Instruction and revelation. When I don't know what to pray, I quiet myself and listen for the Holy Spirit's instruction: "God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God" (1 Cor. 2:10).

Purity and obedience. When I am struggling with sin and my heart becomes hardened toward prayer, I draw on the Holy Spirit's power to overcome disobedience: "If by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live" (Ro. 8:13).

Praise and thanksgiving. When I wrestle with doubt, negativity, or spiritual dryness, I ask the Holy Spirit to fill my life with praise and gratitude: "Be filled with the Spirit. Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs" (Eph. 5:18-19).

Edification and faith. When my faith wavers, praying with the Holy Spirit edifies me and builds my faith: "Dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit" (Jude 20).

God-Focused Prayer

Word praying alone can become mechanical if we focus too much on form. Spirit-led praying alone can become subjective if we focus too much on impressions. Life-transforming prayer, however, focuses on God, both Word and Spirit. When prayer is centered on Him, we focus on His thoughts through His Word to keep on track, find His counsel, and discover what pleases Him. We will also listen to His Spirit, who will highlight words in Scripture, bring supernatural inspiration, and enable simple acts of prayer.

The stark reality is that we are dependent creatures who need the Spirit's support and the truth of God's Word in all aspects of life, including our prayers. When we pray with both the Spirit and the Word, we participate in a dynamic interplay between God and our thoughts, emotions, and spirit. Prayer was never meant to be a formula or an experience, but a way to connect and commune in the deepest longings of God and humans.

What a blessing that we are never on our own when we pray. The Lord is so intent on having a vibrant relationship with us that He has given us two indispensable resources to make prayer alive, authentic, and accurate. One is a book filled with the eternal thoughts of the One who loves us most. The other is the eternal Spirit who lives within us and loves to make us fruitful.

Session 6: Does Prayer Change Anything?

“Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven”

Review: Please share an idea, thought or application from last weeks lesson, your Prayer Journal or personal/family devotions.

What Does the Bible Say:

The beginning of the Lord’s Prayer is focused on God: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” Jesus teaches us that the primary focus of prayer is for Christians to be riveted upon the supreme glory of God and the coming of His kingdom. “Your kingdom come” asserts that God both possesses and presides over His vast kingdom. He is the sovereign king, who exercises supreme authority and unrestricted dominion over an immense empire. He commands all the affairs of mankind, even the intricate inner workings of the entire universe. God is sovereign and He is working out His sovereign plan.

This will be the most important lesson in this series. Its premise is that your prayers do matter – in fact they are so critical that they are woven into God’s eternal plan for all of life. Your prayers change lives and history for the glory of God.

1. God uses our prayers in His sovereign plan:

“God...has planned all things from the beginning to the end, has arranged His plan in such a way that the prayers of the saints are the one major means He uses to accomplish His final goal. Instead of the sovereignty of God clashing with the prayers of believers, the two actually presuppose one another and fulfill and undergird one another...We may be forced to our knees in desperation by an emergency, or we may pray daily and regularly bring certain requests to the King. Whatever it is that prompts us to come to Him, the fact is that God Himself has ordained that these prayers of His people begin to release predestined blessings which would not have flowed down at all had the prayers not occurred.”¹²

God has ordained everything that comes to pass – it is fixed and does not occur by chance. God also ordains our prayers – that is my prayers are the means* by which God acts to bring about His ordained plans. Our prayers are used by God to change history. (*The Westminster Confession of Faith terms this “second means” - see page _____ for further study on prayer and God’s sovereignty)

- a. **God preserves our prayers.** What does the following passage teach us about what God does with our prayers?

Revelations 8:1-5 – “¹ When the Lamb broke the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour. ² And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them. ³ Another angel came and stood at the altar, holding a golden censer; and much incense was given to him, so that he might add it to the prayers of all the saints on the golden altar which was before the throne. ⁴ And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, went up before God out of the angel’s hand. ⁵ Then the angel took the censer and filled it with the fire of the altar, and threw it to the earth; and there followed peals of thunder and sounds and flashes of lightning and an earthquake.”

¹² *Why Pray*, Doug Kelly p. 62, 64

b. Why does He preserve our prayers:

Jesus taught us to pray like this: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” The coming of God’s kingdom and the doing of his will on earth the way the angels do it in heaven is the victory of God. This is the consummation of the ages. This is what everything is moving toward. And Jesus says, Pray for it. Pray for it! Ask God to hallow his name. Ask him to bring in his kingdom. Ask him to make his will be done. Therefore prayer is God’s way of winning his victory through you. What do the following passages teach us about how God works out His plan through prayer:

2 Corinthians 1:8-11 – ⁸ *For we do not want you to be unaware, brethren, of our affliction which came to us in Asia, that we were burdened excessively, beyond our strength, so that we despaired even of life; ⁹ indeed, we had the sentence of death within ourselves so that we would not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead; ¹⁰ who delivered us from so great a peril of death, and will deliver us, He on whom we have set our hope. And He will yet deliver us, ¹¹ you also joining in helping us through your prayers, so that thanks may be given by many persons on our behalf for the favor bestowed on us through the prayers of many.*

Romans 15:30-31 - ³⁰ *Now I urge you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together with me in your prayers to God for me, ³¹ that I may be rescued from those who are disobedient in Judea, and that my service for Jerusalem may prove acceptable to the saints; ³² so that I may come to you in joy by the will of God and find refreshing rest in your company. ³³ Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen.*

3. How can we pray for our family and others for God’s kingdom and will to be fulfilled in their lives:
What do the following passages teach:

- a. Colossians 1:9-12 - ⁹ *For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, ¹⁰ so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; ¹¹ strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously ¹² giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light.*

- b. Philippians 1:9-11 - ⁹ *And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment, ¹⁰ so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ; ¹¹ having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.*

- c. 2 Thessalonians 1:11-12 - ¹¹ *To this end also we pray for you always, that our God will count you worthy of your calling, and fulfill every desire for goodness and the work of faith with power, ¹² so that the name of our Lord Jesus will be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

- d. Ephesians 3:14-21 - ¹⁴ *For this reason I bow my knees before the Father,* ¹⁵ *from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name,* ¹⁶ *that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man,* ¹⁷ *so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love,* ¹⁸ *may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth,* ¹⁹ *and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.* ²⁰ *Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us,* ²¹ *to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.*

Application:

1. What was the most important idea you took away from today's lesson for personal or family prayer time?
2. Before the next Session:
 - Complete your Prayer Journal and Family Prayer time
 - Study Session 6: Does Prayer Change Anything

Closing prayer: pray for the ideas, thoughts, applications gained from today's lesson

MY PRAYER JOURNAL

1. What I learned from Session 6 about myself and prayer: _____

2. What I learned from Session 6 about Family Prayer time: _____

3. Meditate and Reflect on the following passages:

Colossians 1:9-12 - ⁹ For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, ¹⁰ so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; ¹¹ strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously ¹² giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light.

Philippians 1:9-11 - ⁹ And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in real knowledge and all discernment, ¹⁰ so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ; ¹¹ having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

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Ephesians 3:14-21 - ¹⁴ For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, ¹⁵ from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name, ¹⁶ that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, ¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸ may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, ¹⁹ and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God. ²⁰ Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, ²¹ to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.

The Westminster Confession of Faith
Chapter 3 - God's Eternal Decree

The Westminster Confession of Faith - chapter 3.1 states: "God, from all eternity, did—by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will—freely and unchangeably ordain whatever comes to pass. Yet he ordered all things in such a way that he is not the author of sin, nor does he force his creatures to act against their wills; neither is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established.¹³"

What does this mean: God's plan is eternal and unchangeable and He is the first or primary cause of all things that occur in life. In relationship to Him everything happens unchangeably and infallibly. However, by this same providence, He orders things to happen according to secondary causes (prayer being a secondary cause). See Ra McLaughlin's article in Third Millennium that follows:

Predestination vs. Prayer

by Ra McLaughlin

see web link: <http://thirdmill.org/answers/answer.asp/file/40125>

Question

I have prayed for a long time that my grown-up children will somehow come to faith in Christ. As God predestines who will come to faith, should I go on praying about this? If God wants this to happen, then it will happen in his own good time, but maybe he has not preordained their salvation. Can prayer change his mind?

Answer

You certainly should continue to pray for your children. As odd as it may sound in light of predestination, prayer really is effective.

There are two doctrines that it is often hard to balance. The first is the doctrine of God's eternal decrees; the second is the doctrine of providence. The Bible teaches that God's eternal decrees, such as predestination, are immutable. God's eternal decrees, which he made before he created the world, are immutable. They can never be altered. If someone is predestined to salvation, that person will not fail to be saved, and if that person is not predestined to be saved, that person will never be saved.

But here on earth we almost never know what God's eternal decrees are before they are fulfilled. Most of the time, we only know what God eternally decreed by looking at what has already happened. Since God decrees everything that happens, so we can clearly see his decrees after they have come to pass. God's eternal decrees are, for the most part, secret. They can offer us assurance and hope in many cases, such as when we evangelize. We know that God will not fail to save his own, and that we have no power to compel anyone to be saved. This helps us not to feel guilty when someone rejects our gospel presentations, and to hope for them no matter how hardened they may seem.

Generally speaking, though, the Bible instructs us to live our lives with our eyes focused primarily on the doctrine of providence. Providence is God's governance of creation, it is his interaction with creation in time and space. When we compare it to God's eternal decrees, it helps to think of providence as one perspective on God's relationship to the world, and eternal decree as another perspective. They both describe the same things, but from different points of view. For example, whereas nothing ever changes God's mind about his eternal decrees, God changes his mind all the time from the perspective of providence.

Consider the example of Moses when God said that he was going to destroy the Israelites because of their sin (Exod. 32:9-10). Moses interceded on behalf of Israel, that is, he prayed for them (Exod. 32:11-13). In response, God changed his mind and did not destroy Israel (Exod. 32:14). From the perspective of his eternal decree, God ordained that he would want to destroy Israel, he ordained that Moses would intercede, and he ordained that when Moses interceded he would change his mind and not destroy Israel (note that God

¹³ Westminster Confession of Faith – see web link: http://www.opc.org/documents/MESV_frames.html

ordained that Moses' prayer would be the means by which God brought to pass his eternal decree to change his mind). But Moses didn't know any of this ahead of time. He was living in the perspective of providence, and from his eyes from this perspective, God really did change his mind -- he was planning one thing, and then he changed his mind and planned something else instead.

There is another biblical example that relates pretty closely to your situation. It's found in Luke 18:1-8, and it's commonly called the Parable of the Unrighteous Judge. Jesus told that story to show that at all times people ought to pray and not lose heart. Now, he was thinking primarily of praying for protection and deliverance from those who persecute us, but his point applies to other prayers as well. In that parable, a widow petitions the unrighteous judge constantly, until finally the unrighteous judge gives her protection simply to stop her constant requests. Jesus then makes the point that God is righteous, so he is much more likely to respond to our righteous petitions than the unrighteous judge would be. If even the unrighteous judge finally did the right thing because of the woman's petitions, imagine how much more likely God will be to answer the righteous prayers of his children!

There is another doctrine worth noting here too, and that is that God loves believers, and he often does good things for the children of believers because of his love for their parents. For example, God blessed Isaac for the sake of his father Abraham (Gen. 26:24), and he chose the nation of Israel because he loved their ancestors (Deut. 4:37). Since you are a believer, God loves you too, and that makes him more likely to answer your prayer to save your children.

Also, I mentioned a moment ago when discussing Exodus 32 that God had ordained not only that he would relent from destroying Israel, but also the means by which his mind would be changed, namely Moses' intercession. In fact, most things that God ordains he ordains to happen by particular means and mechanisms. It may well be that God has ordained that the thing that will inspire him to save your children will be your diligent intercessory prayers on their behalf.

So then, yes, you are right that if God has predestined your children to salvation they will be saved. But that is not quite the same thing as saying that they will be saved no matter what. Rather, it is to say that they will be saved by the means that God has ordained to save them, such as intercessory prayer, evangelization, etc. From the perspective of providence, God will do it in the time he has set to do it. But from the perspective of providence, your prayers may speed the process.

In short, don't stop praying! It does make a difference. It influences God's actions in providence, and may serve as his ordained means to bring your children to faith.

About Third Millennium: website – www.thirdmill.org

Third Millennium Ministries' Mission

Our mission is to prepare Christian leaders to lead a transformation of the world into God's Kingdom by providing Biblical education, for the world, for free.

Our top priority is to spread the will of God to every corner of the earth through the gospel of Christ. So, Third Millennium Ministries is preparing an in-depth Biblical education for Christian leaders around the world in their languages, for their lands, and absolutely free.

Our mission is being fulfilled at this very moment. DVD, online streaming, radio, TV broadcast — we do it all.

Our Story

Third Millennium Ministries was envisioned by Janie Pillow as she came to realize that Christian leaders around the world needed to be trained in their own lands. With the help of Dr. Richard Pratt and a number of others who shared her vision, Third Millennium Ministries was launched in 1997 to create multimedia curriculum for Christian leaders everywhere. Today Third Millennium Ministries employs a team of over 20

full-time employees and over 16 translators from around the world. We focus on five target languages: English, Arabic, Mandarin Chinese, Russian, and Spanish. These languages cover 42 percent of the world's population. Our materials are also translated into other languages including Farsi (Iran), Turkish, French, Mongolian, several African Arabic dialects, Amharic (Ethiopia), Hindi, and several other languages of India.

The Need

Just imagine the kinds of troubles that come when Christian leaders know little about the Scriptures. But where the church is growing quickly, there are very few well-prepared men and women to lead God's Kingdom. By the year 2050 more than half of the world's Christians will live in Russia, Latin America and Africa. Between 80 and 100 million Christians live in China today. Christian minorities are growing throughout Muslim nations in the Middle East and along the Pacific Rim. But at least two million functioning pastors outside of North America do not have Biblical and theological education. This is a big problem.

Historically, the church has tried to solve this problem in these ways:

1. *Bring Leaders to the West*
But only 10% of these leaders return to their homelands after completing their studies, robbing Christians in other lands of some of their best leaders.
2. *Send Missionaries to Teach*
But today missionaries only stay on the field an average of 5 years, and it takes several years just to learn the language and culture.
3. *Build Seminaries*
But it is estimated that this would take an additional 15 billion mission dollars each year. Moreover, the need is so great that if everyone that graduated from a doctoral program in an Evangelical seminary joined the staff of a foreign seminary, it would take over 100 years to meet the current need!

Our Solution

Traditional strategies are important and should continue, but the need is far too great to be met with these strategies alone. Third Millennium Ministries works with traditional efforts, but also has a new way of meeting the urgent need for well-trained leaders throughout the world.

We are saturating the globe with a multimedia, masters-level education for Christian leaders. Our lessons are used through print, audio, the internet, DVD video, as well as radio and television satellite broadcast.

In our day could there be anything more important than Biblical education, for the world, for free?