

# **RESOLVED IN 2022: TO PRAY MORE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Bible tells the story of how God has acted in history and it outlines God's plan for our salvation. But if we focus solely on the Bible, we only tell the story of what God has already done. Prayer puts us in touch with the Holy Spirit at this moment and helps us to understand how the Lord is moving in our lives and in the world today. Prayer is essential to our spiritual well-being, because it puts us in touch with the Living God who has the power to bless and transform.

In this study we will learn about prayer. We will talk about what prayer is and the connection between prayer and faith. We will discuss who and what to pray for and the tools that are available to help us pray. We will talk about various kinds of prayer such as thanksgiving, praise, blessing, complaint and lament. We will look briefly at the practices of fasting, meditation and prayers of submission.

In this study we will learn about prayer, but we will also be practicing prayer. We will be encouraging all who undertake this study to become more regular in their prayer lives and to experiment with different kinds of prayer techniques. Prayer is one of the spiritual disciplines and there are practices that can help us to improve and grow in our walk with Jesus.

It is my hope that this study will be an opportunity for you to grow in the faith and to enjoy a fuller relationship with the Lord. I hope that you will commit to a season of prayer that will help you grow.

God Bless,  
Pastor John





3) To what degree is the Lord's Prayer a model prayer for you?

4) How persistent are you in prayer?

5) To what degree do you believe prayer to be a powerful force for change?

## **PRAYER**

Heavenly Father, I pray that in the power of Your Holy Spirit I may live my life as Christ lived His - which was in continuous, prayerful fellowship with our Father in heaven. May I learn to live in total dependence upon You, only saying and doing those things that I hear from You. May I learn to walk daily in spirit and truth. Living in submission to the inner promptings of the Holy Spirit and remaining in unbroken fellowship with You. May my life become one of dependent humility, goodness and grace without compromising the good news of the gospel of God - but may I speak out the truth in goodness and love to Your praise and glory.

This I ask in Jesus name, AMEN.

Source: <https://prayer.knowing-jesus.com/Luke/11/1>

## **PRAYER EXERCISE**

Your challenge for this week is to pray daily. Set aside time each day to pray. Mealtimes do not count. Pray for at least ten minutes a day.

**LESSON TWO**  
**PRAYER AND FAITH**  
MARK 9:14-29 AND  
MATTHEW 21: 18-22

**INTRODUCTION**

What is the connection between our faith and the power of our prayers? Obviously there is some connection. If I offer a prayer in a foreign language that I do not understand, or speak meaningless words that I do not believe, how could that prayer have any power or significance? Such a prayer is just a magical incantation of nonsense words. Yet our faith is always such a fragile and imperfect thing. Hopefully the power of prayer is not rooted primarily in us and our faith, but in the grace and goodness of God.

**PART ONE: WHAT DID WE READ?**

1) In the prelude to the story of the boy with a demon, where was Jesus and what was he doing?

2) What reasons did Jesus give as to why the disciples were unable to cast out the demon? (see also the story in Matthew 17:20-21)

3) Whose lack of faith is referenced by Jesus? The father's? The disciples'? The boy's?

4) How does the father respond when asked about the state of his faith?

5) In the story of the fig tree withering, how much faith does it take to move a mountain?

6) What is it important not to do according to Mathew 21:21?

## **PART TWO: WHAT DOES IT MEAN?**

1) Why were the disciples unable to cast out the demon?

2) Why do you think the father was questioned as to the status of his faith?

3) What do you think of the answer, "Lord I believe. Help me in my unbelief."?

4) In Mark 9:29 Jesus says, "This kind can come out only by prayer." What does that mean?

5) In the story of the fig tree, Jesus says that prayer can move mountains. Do you believe that to be true? In what way?

### **PART THREE: HOW DOES THIS APPLY TO US?**

1) We pray for lots of people in lots of ways. Whose faith and power activates prayer? Is it all about God's power, regardless of our faith? Is about our faith? The faith of the person we are praying for? The faith of others? What do you think?

2) It is easy for some people to get in a mindset of saying, "we will believe so hard that things will come out our way". Is this what Jesus wants us to do?

3) Do you think that "everything is possible for him who believes"?

4) When you pray, how much do you believe what you are asking for?

5) Have your prayers ever moved mountains?

## **PRAYER**

Heavenly Father, thank You for the lessons we can learn from the man who cried out to the Lord Jesus for help. He was reminded that, "all things are possible to him who believes." May I never forget that You are the same yesterday, today, and forever, and that Your power to heal and help in every situation is as sure today as it was when You healed the sick and turned water into wine. Thank You that by grace through faith in Jesus, I can come to the throne of grace for mercy to find help in time of need. Keep me from doubting Your Word, increase my faith in the days ahead, and prevent me from being adversely influenced by the mountainous situations I seem to be facing and the difficulties and dangers that are looming ahead. Lord, I do believe - increase my love and trust for You. This I ask in Jesus' name, AMEN.

*Source: Verse of the day for Mark 9:23 :<https://prayer.knowing-jesus.com/Mark/9/23>*

## **PRAYER EXERCISE**

This week your challenge is to think of different objects, rooms you use or activities that you are involved with and to pray over them. For example, if you drive a lot, why not pray over your car. Actually go in your garage, put your hands on your car and pray over it. Ask for skill and courteousness when driving. Pray for the safety of yourself and others, etc. That's one example. Think of a different object, room or activity each day and pray over it.





3) The 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm speaks to the comfort, courage, hope and trust that believers find in their relationship with God. Which of those do you need the most?

4) List your favorite line of the Psalm?

5) Does the prayer of Jabez speak to you? Which part of the prayer do you think you most need to pray?

### **PRAYERS : Pray these two prayers.**

#### Prayer #1

**“Oh that You would bless me and enlarge my territory! Let your hand be with me, and keep me from harm so that I will be free from pain.” And God granted his request**

#### Prayer #2 ( Psalm 23)

**1** The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

**2** He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

**3** He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

**4** Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

**5** Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

**6** Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

### **PRAYER EXERCISE**

This week your challenge is to pray for yourself. You can pray for forgiveness and grace. You can pray prayers of thanksgiving and praise. You can pray for the concerns and worries of your life, but pray for yourself.



## **PART TWO: WHAT DOES IT MEAN?**

1) When Paul asks for prayer, what does that tell us?

2) What kind of prayers would you ask for if you were in prison? Are those the prayers Paul asked for?

3) What kind of faith did the paralytic's friends show in the story?

4) Who does Jesus intercede for in the story?

5) Is forgiveness or healing more important?

## **PART THREE: HOW DOES IT APPLY TO US?**

1) Who do you regularly pray for? Anyone?

2) Who do you think is praying for you?

3) How does prayer for others effect them? How does it effect you?

4) What is the connection between your prayers and action?

5) What are you praying for and what are you doing to change your world today?

## **PRAYER**

Lord, I have felt paralyzed at times, without the courage to act because of some failure or criticism that took the heart out of me. At such times, may I rely on the help of good friends, like the four stretcher bearers, to bring me to the point where I can hear you say, "Your sins are forgiven. Get up and walk." May I also reach out to my friends, for my friends, interceding for them in a time of need. Amen!

## **PRAYER EXERCISE**

This week we encourage you to try flash prayers. For certain hours of the day, try to pray for everyone you encounter. The prayers should not be long or spoken out loud, rather the prayers should simply flash across your mind. At an intersection pray, "Lord, bless the driver in the car next to me." At the supermarket when someone coughs. "Jesus, give health to this stranger." You get the idea. Try to lift up all those you encounter in prayer. See how it changes them. See how it changes you.



5) Does our forgiveness matter?

## **PART TWO: WHAT DOES IT MEAN?**

1) What was wrong about the hypocrite's prayer? Was it wrong because he was praying in public, or was it wrong because of the motivation and aim of his prayer?

2) Does it really matter how many words you use in your prayers? If it does, why does it matter?

3) Is the Lord's Prayer meant to be a prayer that we say or a model for our prayers?

4) Can saying the Lord's Prayer ever be just a meaningless exercise of empty words?

5) The Lord's Prayer never once uses the word "I". What does that tell us about community?

### **PART THREE: HOW DOES IT APPLY TO US?**

1) Are your prayers ever about projecting a pious appearance?

2) Do you use a lot of words in your prayers? Do you use the words of others (Maybe from a devotional or prayer book), or do you struggle to find the words?

3) Is the Lord's Prayer a model for your prayer life? If it is, in what way is it a model?

4) Do you say the Lord's Prayer when you are by yourself? Why or why not?

5) Is there any part of the Lord's Prayer that you struggle with?

## **PRAYER**

**9** “This, then, is how you should pray:

“Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,

**10** your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.

**11** Give us today our daily bread.

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

**13** And lead us not into temptation,[a]  
but deliver us from the evil one.[b]’

## **PRAYER EXERCISE**

Try praying using different postures, hand gestures and locations. For example, pray standing up with head raised and palms open. Pray while kneeling and head bowed. Pray in your house. In your bed. How do these different postures and locations feel to you? Do they help to bring you into the presence of God?



## **PART TWO: WHAT DOES IT MEAN?**

- 1) Who is the man of affliction?
  
- 2) What does the man of affliction focus on in describing his condition?
  
- 3) In this section does the man of affliction say why he is being afflicted?
  
- 4) Do you think this man has any hope?
  
- 5) What does it mean for us to read a prayer like this in the Bible? What do we learn about the kind of prayers we can or should offer to God?

## **PART THREE: HOW DOES IT APPLY TO US?**

- 1) Do you ever offer prayers of lament to God? How about prayers of complaint, question or challenge?

2) Do you find that you sanitize your prayers to God, lifting up only those things that you think are appropriate? Why do you think you do that?

3) If honesty is the most important thing we can offer to God in prayer, how would you describe the level of honesty in your prayers?

4) Has there been a time in your life when you would have benefited from lifting up a prayer of lament, complaint or challenge?

5) What could you do to make these prayers a more prominent part of your spiritual life?

### **A Prayer of Lament:**

Lord, I know that you are faithful over all things, even the hard, dark times of my life. Help me not back away from you in my time of grief. Help me instead to lean into you and trust you, even when I do not understand your ways. Please keep my head above the waters of anguish and my feet from slipping off the ground of truth. Help me see you in these hard moments and glorify you in my response. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

*BY Debbie Przybylski*

### **PRAYER EXERCISE**

Try praying some prayers of question, complaint and challenge. Pray prayers of anger. If you have trouble doing this, look to the Psalms and the book of Lamentations for examples.



5) Verse six describes what laws lasting and what as ephemeral?

## **PART TWO: WHAT DOES IT MEAN?**

1) This scripture marks out a clear separation between the righteous and the wicked. How do you fit that in with Christian theology?

2) Is delighting in the scripture a sure sign of being a Christian?

3) What scripture in the New Testament is reminiscent of the one that describes the believer as being “like a tree planted by streams of water?”

4) The wicked are described as being like chaff? What does that mean?

5) The LORD is described as watching over the righteous, the implication being that He does not watch over the wicked in the same way. How does the watching of God differ?

## **PART THREE: HOW DOES IT APPLY TO US?**

1) What would be your primary take away from Psalm One?

2) Why do you think this is the first Psalm?

3) This Psalm associates deep thinking on the scriptures with being righteous and with being a solid person. Do you think that is true? Is it true for you?

4) This Psalm associates being wicked with not taking the word of God seriously. It also says such people are not substantial or lasting. Do you think that is true?

5) How do you think God's attitude varies as He looks upon the wicked and the good? What does it mean to be wicked or good?

## **PRAYER**

When I see, O Lord, the power of your Word, I wonder if I can see the power in my own life. I see the mistakes, and all of the times I walked in the way of the wicked. Forgive me. I have sat down at the table of the ungodly. Your law reveals the path away from evil. Your word is my delight, my satisfaction. I can find no other thing to fill me. Sinful habits, selfish ambitions, unbridled pride all try to fill me up with good things. Like the chaff, the wind blows away the pleasures and I'm left empty and alone. For God, you see my life when I walk in righteousness. Not because I have to be perfect, but because walking with you makes me righteous. Help me to walk. Help me to meditate. Help me to grow in your instruction. My joy, my fruit, my peace will come from the streams of your living waters. Amen.

*By Sarah E. Frazer*

## **PRAYER EXERCISE**

*Try both types of meditation this week. Choose a scripture passage to really think about. Then choose another and try to imagine yourself into the story. Use your senses. What are you seeing, feeling, tasting, hearing and smelling.*

# **LESSON EIGHT**

## **FASTING**

LUKE 4:1-4 /MATTHEW 6:16-18 /ISAIAH 58:1-9

### **INTRODUCTION**

Fasting in the Bible, like prayer, is not defined so much as it is simply assumed as a normal and positive spiritual discipline. However, for most of us today, it is uncommon and even its motivation and purpose seems obscure and hard to define. In this lesson we will look at a few of the bible passages that refer to fasting, but we will also talk about its aim and how it is practiced by people today.

### **PART ONE: WHAT DID WE READ?**

1) In the gospel of Luke, when does Jesus engage in this forty day fast?

2) What temptation faced Jesus at the end of His fast?

3) What does motivation does Matthew warn against when we fast?

4) How does Matthew say we should fast?

5) According to Isaiah, what do the worshipers who are fasting expect?

6) In Isaiah, what does God say their fasting should result in?

## **PART TWO: WHAT DOES IT MEAN?**

1) If Jesus practiced the spiritual discipline of fasting, doesn't that fact imply that we should as well?

2) In what ways is it a good thing to experience hunger?

3) What should be our motivation in fasting?

4) What could be our motivation in fasting or in any spiritual discipline?

5) What should fasting create in our lives?

### **PART THREE: HOW DOES IT APPLY TO US?**

1) What do you think are the benefits from fasting?

2) Do you ever fast? Why or why not?

3) Have you ever experienced real hunger?

4) What could you gain from adopting this practice?

5) What would be the dangers or difficulties of fasting for you?

6) Do you think that fasting should be recommended as a corporate practice?

## **PRAYER: Prayer Before a Fast Begins (A Pre-Fast Prayer)**

Lord, as I begin this time of fasting, fill me with your strength. Help me to use this as a time of growth, renewal, and healing. Calm my anxiety about what I might be giving up or times of discomfort that I might face.

Provide me with assurance that You will strengthen me during the difficult times and meet me for sweet moments of spiritual growth and surrender

Help me focus not on what is being taken away, but what I'm gaining as I use this as a spiritual discipline. With you leading, Holy Spirit, I am ready.

I dedicate this fast to You, Lord, and to Your glory.

In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

*From theholymess.com*

## **PRAYER EXERCISE**

If fasting would not present a medical problem for you (do not fast if you are ill or pregnant or if you have problems with hypoglycemia or diabetes, etc.). Fast for the daylight hours as a starting point. Reserve your meal time for prayer. See how this blesses your life.



## **PART TWO: WHAT DOES IT MEAN?**

1) Jesus urged the disciples to pray that they would not enter into temptation. Why was that an important thing for them to pray?

2) What was the content of Jesus' prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane?

3) In Romans, how can the offering of our physical bodies be a spiritual sacrifice?

4) What does it mean to be transformed by the renewing of your mind?

5) Why is the submission of our lives discussion immediately followed by talk of finding your place in the body?

## **PART THREE: HOW DOES IT APPLY TO US?**

1) Jesus prayed, "Not my will, but thy will be done." What does that tell you about the importance of submission?

2) The disciples slept rather than pray. What does that tell you?

3) What does it mean to you to offer your body as a living sacrifice to God?

4) What are you doing to renew your mind? How does one do that spiritually?

5) Do you think that you can get to know what is good and pleasing to God?

## **PRAYER**

Most Holy and gracious Lord I submit my will to you. I give up my agenda and my plan for yours. I place my will into your hands.

Father, I repent of my wrong and my error in following my own thoughts and plans. I know full well that not only are your thoughts higher than mine, but I also know that your will is what is best for my life.

I surrender my will in exchange for the divine purpose that is locked inside of me. Lord, I submit to your Lordship and sovereignty. I submit myself to you as all of creation does. I freely give you access to move unhindered in me and through me.

Lord, help me to submit not just my mind but my body, my speech, and my emotions to you.

Help me to submit so that you can have your rightful place as the head of my life. I give no place to the enemy or to idols, but I cast down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.

From [withoutceasingwoman.com](http://withoutceasingwoman.com)

## **PRAYER EXERCISE**

In prayer submit parts of your life that you have kept hidden from Christ.