

Prayer

YOUTH BIBLE STUDY

- **Supplies**
 - Bible, notes, handouts, prayer journal, books on prayer
- **Write Out Questions** (starting a Bible study – what do you want to learn?)
 - (Note: prayer is an inexhaustive study; this study is about personal, daily prayer)
 - Why **should I pray?**
 - What does prayer accomplish?
 - How **should I pray?**
 - out loud or silent?
 - long or short?
 - sitting, kneeling, standing?
 - formal or informal?
 - When **should I pray?**
 - Where **should I pray?**
 - How **many times a day should I pray?**
 - What **are hindrances to prayer?**
 - doubts
 - why are we telling God about burdens when He already knows?
 - will God not move if we don't pray?
 - **How can I have a more effective prayer life?**
 - (What are some other questions about prayer?)
- **Where to Start**
 - where would you start with this topic?
 - **Examples of prayer in the Bible**
 - Abraham – a man of prayer
 - "One of the first to erect a family altar, around which to gather his household and offer the sacrifices of worship, of praise and of prayer" (E. M. Bounds)
 - Hannah's prayer for a son
 - David's prayers
 - Pharisee's versus publican's prayers
 - **Scriptures** with the word "pray" (508) or "prayer" (128)
 - Strong's Concordance
 - Biblegateway.net
 - this is very broad (hundreds of verses)
 - **Famous prayers in the Bible**
 - The Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13)
 - David's Prayer for Deliverance (Psalm 3)
 - Hannah's Prayer of Praise (1 Samuel 2:1-10)
 - one website listed 222 prayers (many different situations)
 - **Possible study materials**
 - GodsAcres website (Resources, Study Materials)

- commentaries (bible.cc)
- books about prayer (many can be read online)
 - E. M. Bounds
 - Emerson Wilson
 - R. A. Torrey
 - A. W. Tozer
- start a prayer journal
 - write down questions, prayer requests, answers to prayer, Scriptures, quotes, etc.
- **Why Do We Pray?**
 - (Write down your thoughts)
 - Are we praying to remind God of burdens and needs? ("God, remember ... ")
 - possible reasons: direction, soul searching, awareness of needs of others (prompting to call, text, send a card, or visit), victory over the enemy (doubt, oppression, temptation), strength, healing
 - a time to worship and praise God (strengthens our relationship and love for Him)
 - a time of communication with God
 - to keep us humble (awareness of our inabilities)
 - prayer strengthens our bond with other Christians when we know they, too, are praying for certain burdens
 - prayer changes things and prayer changes us (Philippians 4:6-7 – "peace that passes all understanding")
 - Jesus and Blind Bartimaeus
 - Mark 10:51 " And Jesus answered and said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto him, Lord, that I might receive my sight."
 - Jesus knew what he needed; why did He prompt Bartimaeus to tell Him?
 - by making his request known, Bartimaeus was preparing his heart for the "peace of God" (R. A. Torrey)
 - Philippians 4:6-7 "... in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."
 - Prayer is to prepare our heart for what God wishes to give us.
 - After his healing, Bartimaeus followed Jesus (this was more than a physical healing)
 - prayer is not a magic formula to get our needs taken care of; it is a way of living, following Jesus
- **When Should We Pray?**
 - **Early in the Day** (Christ – our Example)
 - Mark 1:35 "And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed."
 - in the morning, before the busyness and cares of the day press in and fill the mind
 - need power and strength for the day – pray before temptations and problems arise
 - **Before Important Decisions**
 - Jesus "prepared for every important crisis by a protracted season of prayer" (R. A.

Torrey).

- before choosing the twelve disciples; before the sermon on the mount; before starting out on an evangelistic tour; before His anointing with the Holy Spirit and His entrance upon His public ministry; before announcing to the twelve His approaching death; before the great consummation of His life at the cross
- **After Victories**
 - after the miracle of feeding the 5,000, Jesus went up into the mountain to pray (Matthew 14:23; John 6:15)
 - just as important as praying before
 - prevents pride (must keep humble and give God all the glory)
- **When Life Gets Too Busy**
 - Often Jesus withdrew from the multitudes and went somewhere to pray
 - The busier Christ's life became, the more He prayed
 - "Don't spend so much time working for the Lord that you forget to spend time with Him" (Larry Dishman).
- **Before Great Temptations**
 - The victory at Calvary was won in Gethsemane
 - "Many temptations come upon us unawares and unannounced, and all that we can do is to lift a cry to God for help then and there; but many of the temptations of life we can see approaching from the distance, and in such cases the victory should be won before the temptation really reaches us" (R. A. Torrey)
 - "The reason why many fail in battle is because they wait until the hour of battle. The reason why others succeed is because they have gained their victory on their knees long before the battle came. Anticipate your battles; fight them on your knees before temptation comes, and you will always have victory" (R. A. Torrey)
- **Without Ceasing** (1 Thessalonians 5:17)
 - a life of prayer
 - constant communion with God
- **How Should We Pray?**
 - "Nowhere in the Bible did Jesus teach us how to preach, but He did teach us how to pray" (Prayer by Emerson Wilson)
 - Luke 11:1 – disciples said to Jesus, "Lord, teach us to pray"
 - Romans 8:26 – "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."
 - We need to recognize our inability to pray "as we ought"
 - We need God's Spirit to teach us how to pray
 - True prayer is inspired and led by God's Spirit
 - compare with rushing into prayer, giving God a list of burdens, and saying the first thing that comes to mind
 - begin prayer with a few moments of silence
 - Ephesians 6:18 – "praying always ... in the Spirit"
 - "Spirit" is capitalized; not our spirit, but the Holy Spirit
- **Unto God:**

- Acts 12:5 "Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him."
- Are there prayers that are not prayed "unto God"?
- "In order that a prayer should be really unto God, there must be a definite and conscious approach to God when we pray; we must have a definite and vivid realization that God is bending over us and listening as we pray" (R. A. Torrey).
 - often during prayer, there is little thought of God
 - mind is preoccupied with what we need
 - mind is wandering
 - prayer list – like a to-do list
 - before beginning to pray, we need a vivid consciousness of Whom we are talking to
- How to pray – we must pray UNTO GOD
- **Without Ceasing** (Acts 12:5)
 - " fervent and persistent" (AMP)
 - "earnest" (CEB); "intense" (CJB)
 - in the Greek, a pictorial word meaning "stretched outedly"
 - Hebrews 5:7 – Jesus "offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears"
 - Romans 15:30 – "strive together with me in your prayers"
 - "In other words, the prayer that prevails with God is the prayer into which we put our whole soul, stretching out toward God in intense and agonizing desire. Much of our modern prayer has no power in it because there is no heart in it. We rush into God's presence, run through a string of petitions, jump up, and go out. If someone should ask us an hour afterward for what we prayed, oftentimes we could not tell. If we put so little heart into our prayers, we cannot expect God to put much heart into answering them" (R. A. Torrey).
- **"Of the church"** (Acts 12:5)
 - power in united prayer (Matthew 18:19)
- **"With thanksgiving"** (Philippians 4:6; Colossians 4:2)
 - compare with a child who never says thank you but is always asking for more
 - (study what God thinks of being unthankful – what did He say about the nine lepers; "unthankful, unholy" 2 Timothy 3:2)
 - thanking God for blessings and answered prayers increases our faith
 - Jeremiah 32:27 "– Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh: is there any thing too hard for me?"
 - Bible men of prayer were also men of praise
 - David (psalms)
 - Paul
 - Apostles
- (Discuss/consider how: standing, sitting, kneeling AND formal, informal AND silent, aloud and long, short)
- **Where Should We Pray?**
 - where do you pray?

- prayer closet
- Matthew 6:6 – "But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret"
 - from Jesus' model prayer (instructing His disciples how to pray)
 - previous verses (context) – don't pray like the hypocrites (to be seen and heard), but pray in secret
 - where is your prayer "closet"?
 - sometimes Jesus went to the wilderness to pray (Luke 5:16)
 - Jesus prayed in a "solitary place" (Mark 1:35)
 - Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matthew 26:36)
 - does it have to be a literal closet?
 - principle of this verse: "personal prayer is to be strictly personal and private" (Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers)
 - "shut thy door" – more than a physical shutting of doors (mental doors must be shut as well; shut out the busyness of life)
 - Discuss: does it have to be the same place everyday? (Although this could form a good habit)
- **What Are Hindrances to Prayer?**
 - **Sin:** Isaiah 59:2 "But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear."
 - some unsaved say, "Oh, I talk to God all the time"
 - does He hear?
 - disobedience, sin, hinders prayer
 - Isaiah 59:1 – God is able to hear
 - if your prayers aren't getting through ...
 - Psalm 139:23-24 – "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."
 - **Idols:** Ezekiel 14:3 – "Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their heart, and put the stumblingblock of their iniquity before their face: should I be enquired of at all by them?"
 - an idol is anything that takes God's place in your heart
 - is God absolutely first (before people, before entertainments, before careers)?
 - **Failing to Please God:** 1 John 3:22 – "And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight."
 - "things that are pleasing in his sight"
 - more than just being obedient (above and beyond)
 - Ephesians 5:1 – "Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children"
 - we need to make a priority – studying and doing things that please God
 - (Attitude of some: "There's not a verse saying I have to do this; so I won't.")
 - "Here again we find the explanation of much unanswered prayer: We are not making it the study of our lives to know what would please our Father, and so our prayers are not answered" (R. A. Torrey).

- Psalm 145:18 – "The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth."
 - "in truth" – in sincerity, integrity, faithfulness (Strong's Concordance)
 - Are our prayers sincere, prayed from a life of integrity and faithfulness?
- **Asking Out of God's Will:** 1 John 5:14 "– And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us."
 - failing to understand God's will
 - God's will is revealed in His Word (importance of Bible reading and study)
 - find God's promises and claim them in prayer
 - Romans 10:17 – "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."
 - speak these promises aloud in prayer ("by hearing") to strengthen your faith
 - "Triumphant prayer is almost impossible where there is neglect of the study of the Word of God" (R. A. Torrey).
 - James 4:3 – "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts."
 - ask with the wrong purpose or motives (AMP)
 - are we praying selfish prayers?
- **Unforgiveness:** Mark 11:25
- **Failing to Give:** Proverbs 21:13
 - the mighty man of prayer is a generous man
- **Doubt:** James 1:5-7
- **How Can I Have a More Effective Prayer Life?**
 - **Create good habits**
 - open conversation with God when you wake up
 - same time of daily prayer
 - consider praying – same location (discuss/consider: pros and cons)
 - try praying out loud at least once a day
 - create a prayer journal
 - pray with others (family, friends, spouse, girlfriend/boyfriend)
 - **Build faith**
 - faith cometh by hearing ... the Word of God (Romans 10:17)
 - must study and read to know what the Word says
 - **Bible study and reading will strengthen your prayer life**
 - it will build your belief system (unbelief is a great hindrance to prayer)
 - know what you believe and why you believe it
 - study the prayers of Bible characters
 - what led up to that prayer?
 - how did they pray?
 - what actions did they take?
 - how did God answer those prayers?
 - **Add fasting to your prayer life**
 - fasting from food
 - fasting from entertainments

- fasting from social media sites
- the more you remove things of this world from your life, the closer you get to God
- camp meeting and revivals – why do we see more things accomplished?
 - less time for things of the world
 - more time spent in the Word and in prayer
 - fellowship with other Christians
- **Ask God to search your heart**
 - is there a wicked way in me (Psalm 139:24)?
 - are there things I need to lay aside or start doing?
 - am I living "pleasing" (not just a life of obedience)?
 - "Lord, help me to live this day pleasing to You."
- **Discuss Times of Answered Prayer**
 - the importance of testimony services

Sources

- **How to Pray** (R. A. Torrey)
 - <http://www.biblebb.com/files/prayer-torrey.htm>