

Prayer

Lesson One: *What Is It and Why Do It?*

Memory Verse: 1 Samuel 12:23

LESSON OBJECTIVES:

The goal of this lesson is to introduce the subject of prayer and emphasize its importance.

WHAT IS PRAYER?

1. Write a definition of prayer.

WHY PRAY?

2. What do the following verses say about why we should pray?

a) 1 Samuel 12:23

b) Psalm 34:4-6

c) Matthew 26:41

d) Luke 18:1

e) John 15:4-5

f) John 16:24

g) Romans 15:30-32

h) 1 Timothy 2:1-2

i) James 4:2

Connect To Life:

Each day this week begin your prayer time by reading one of the "why pray" passages. Ask the Lord to give you an increased desire to pray as you enter this series of studies on prayer.

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Lesson Two: *Relationship and Communication*

Memory Verse: **Philippians 4:6-7**

LESSON OBJECTIVES:

In this lesson you will be challenged to think about the various ways the Bible illustrates God's relationship with His people.

Before two people can communicate effectively, they must correctly understand and agree on their relationship. For example, a man will communicate differently with his wife than he does with superiors at work or with his children or with a police officer.

Prayer is communication between human beings and God. Our relationship with God is multi-faceted. In this lesson we will consider several of the different ways we are related to God and then discuss how understanding that relationship should affect how we communicate with Him.

In order to communicate most effectively with God, we must understand our relationship with Him. Consider how the following passages define various aspects of our relationship with God. Read each passage, then write how a proper understanding of that relationship should affect your communication with God? How are you going to approach God? How should you speak to Him? How might you listen to Him and respond to what He says?

1. 1 John 1:8-10 God is the Forgiver, we are the ones in need of forgiveness.
2. Romans 8:15-17; 1 John 3:1 God is our Father, we are His adopted children.
3. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 God owns us, having purchased us with the blood of Jesus Christ.

4. 1 Corinthians 4:1-2 God is the Master, we are stewards of God's possessions.
5. Job 42:5-6; Job 40:4 God is holy and sovereign, we are sinful and insignificant before Him.
6. Philippians 4:6-7 God is the source of true peace, we are often anxious and in need of peace.
7. Matthew 28:18-20; John 17:18 God is the authoritative Sender, we are those who are sent.

Connect To Life:

While you want to keep all of the various aspects of your relationship with the Lord in mind while praying, concentrate on a different relationship during prayer each day during the next week. Record your prayer or some impressions you have while you pray each day. Come prepared to share some of these next week.

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Lesson Three: *Overcoming Barriers to Prayer*

Memory Verse: John 15:7-8

LESSON OBJECTIVES:

The Bible teaches us that there are numerous barriers that can interfere with our prayers. These barriers inhibit prayer in at least two ways. First, they keep us from praying, and second, they keep our prayers from being effective.

To overcome these barriers, we must know what they are and how to overcome them. This lesson will direct you to identify these barriers and to overcome them.

What barriers to prayer are identified in the following passages of scripture? How do these barriers keep us from praying? How do they keep our prayers from being effective? What can you do to overcome these barriers in your prayer life? Use Scripture to support your answers.

1. Psalm 66:18; Isaiah 59:1-2

2. Matthew 6:5-8

3. Matthew 21:22; James 1:6-7

4. Matthew 26:40-43

5. James 4:3

6. John 16:23-24

7. John 15:7; 1 John 5:14-15

8. Matthew 5:22-24, 1 Peter 3:7

Connect To Life:

Identify one or two of the barriers that you know pose the greatest challenge to your prayer life. Work specifically on them this week. Be prepared to share how you did next week.

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Lesson Four: Motivation

Memory Verse: James 4:2-3

LESSON OBJECTIVES:

For many in the world, the end justifies the means. That is not true for God, nor is it to be so with those who love Him. The ends are a part of the means. Doing the right thing with the wrong motives will seldom yield the desired result.

In this lesson we will consider the motivation behind our prayers and what motivates God to answer.

James tells us that we do not receive all that God is willing to give us because we do not ask [pray]. He goes on to say that often when we do ask [pray], we still do not receive because our motives are amiss.

WHAT MOTIVATES YOU TO PRAY?

1. Look at the following verses. 1) Identify what incorrect motive for prayer is revealed in each. 2) How does this motivation creep into our prayer lives? 3) What can you do to remedy the situation?

a) Matthew 6:5

b) Matthew 6:7-8

c) Luke 18:9-14

d) James 4:2-3

2. Look at the following verses. (1) Identify what correct motive for prayer is revealed in each. (2) How does this motivation ever guide your prayers? (3) What can you do to cultivate this motive in prayer?

a) Matthew 6:6

b) Luke 18:9-14

c) Philippians 4:6

d) 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

e) James 1:5-8

WHAT MOTIVATES GOD TO ANSWER?

3. Why isn't God motivated to answer the following kinds of prayer?

a) Matthew 6:5

b) Matthew 6:7

c) What practical lessons can you teach others about prayer based on Matthew 6:5-8?

4. People often pray for a friend or a loved one recalling to God how "good the person is." What does a person's "goodness" do to motivate God to answer our prayers on that person's behalf? Why?

- a) If the basis for God to answer our prayers for others is not how “good” they are, on what basis should we pray?

- 5. The best reason [motive] to pray is a recognition of our need of God. When we do not pray, what does our prayerlessness say about our perception of our need for God? How does this general prayerlessness motivate God to answer occasional prayers?

Connect To Life:

As you pray each day this week, take note of what heart motivations cause you to pray as you do. Come prepared to discuss what you have learned about your motives.

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Lesson Five: According To God's Will

Memory Verse: 1 John 5:14-15

LESSON OBJECTIVES:

As 1 John 5:14-15 clearly states, the way to have confidence concerning answers to prayer is to pray according to God's will. How do we pray God's will? How do we know what God's will is so that we can pray according to God's will? This lesson will provide some answers and practical instruction on how we can be sure that we are praying God's will so that we will receive answers to our prayers. Please note the progression of this lesson:

- 1) The way to be sure that God hears and answers our prayers is to pray God's will.
- 2) The way to be sure that we are praying God's will is to pray God's Word.
- 3) There are three methods of praying God's Word:
 - a. Pray prayers that are found in the Bible.
 - b. Pray, claiming the promises of God.
 - c. Pray passages that reveal God's will.
- 4) Why we should pray for what God has already said He would do.
- 5) When we do not know how to pray, the Holy Spirit, who is in us, prays for us and He always prays the will of God.

PRAYER AND GOD'S WILL

1. Read 1 John 5:14-15. What is the confidence we have in God? What is the basis of this confidence?

2. What does John 15:7 say about our relationship with God's Word? What does that have to do with answers to our prayers?

3. 1 John 3:21-23 says that we can have confidence that our prayers will be answered if we are living in obedience to God's commandments. How do we know what God's commandments are?

4. If praying outside of God's will is a waste of time, how can we know we are praying according to His will? (Where is God's will found?)

5. What is your prayer life like if you are not in the Word? (Proverbs 28:9)

*God reveals His will in the Bible. In order to pray in His will,
we need to make the Bible our prayer book.*

THREE METHODS OF PRAYING GOD'S WORD:

#1 Pray Prayers Found in the Bible

6. Note the major things which Paul prayed in the following prayers. (Notice the spiritual rather than physical emphasis.)
 - a) Ephesians 1:15-21

 - b) Ephesians 3:14-21

 - c) Colossians 1:9-12

 - d) How can we pray these prayers for ourselves or for loved ones? Write one of these passages out as though you were praying it for someone you care for.

#2 Claiming the Promises of God

7. What promises of God did Moses pray for God's people in Exodus 32:11-14?
 - a) If Moses had not known the promises, after hearing vv.7-10, what might he have done instead of praying as he did?
 - b) What does this indicate about how important it is to know the promises of God and how praying the promises affects prayer?
8. When we pray God's promises, we are claiming what is rightfully ours. What do you call it when someone 'claims' something that is not his? What does that say about the importance of understanding which things are promises and which promises are intended for you?

#3 Praying Passages that Reveal God's Will

I once heard a man describe prayer like this: "Decide what you want. Find a scripture that says you can have it. Pray and receive."

The man was right on one count, and seriously wrong on another. It is true that the Bible is an answer key for prayer, but the man had the order wrong. We should start with the Bible, to understand what God wants to give us. Then we must determine to want what God's Word says. Pray and receive.

Besides praying actual prayers recorded in the Bible and praying the promises of God, since God's Word is His will for us, any passage of scripture can be the basis of a prayer that is certainly according to God's will.

9. Write a personal prayer based on 1 Timothy 4:12-16. Follow the scripture as closely as possible and incorporate every portion possible into your prayer.

WHY ASK GOD TO DO WHAT HE ALREADY SAID HE WOULD DO?

10. Read Isaiah 37. Why did Hezekiah pray asking God to do what God already said He would do? (Notice vv.21-22)
11. Read Daniel 9. Why did Daniel pray after he read the scriptures? (He read Jeremiah 25:10-12 and 29:4, 10.)
12. Why should we pray for what God already says is His will?
13. How should we pray if we are unsure of God's will? Compare Mark 14:32-36 and Luke 22:39-42.

14. Read Romans 8:26-27. This passage tells us that the Holy Spirit, who lives in us, prays for us when we do not know how to pray (when we are unsure of God's will). What does v.27 promise about the Holy Spirit and His prayers for us that assures us that the prayers are answered?

Connect To Life:

As you pray each day this week, make a point to cite scripture in your prayers. What difference does this make in your prayers? Does it do anything for your faith? Come prepared to discuss what impact, if any, praying scripture has had during the week.

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Lesson Six: How God Answers Prayer

Memory Verse: Isaiah 8:20

LESSON OBJECTIVES:

God can, and does, answer prayer in a variety of ways, according to His sovereign pleasure. However, while God can, and does, speak in a variety of ways, we can misread what we think is God's voice answering our prayers. The only way to be sure we are hearing God's voice is to verify all things with scripture since it is infallible. We must check everything we think is from God with His Word. No matter how convincing or appealing something appears to be, if it is not in line with God's Word, it must be rejected.

There are four points in this lesson. Point five is the MAIN POINT. Be sure you get each of the four points that lead to point number five, which is the all-important MAIN POINT.

SIGNS AND WONDERS

1. Read 1 Kings 18:36-39. God spoke to Elijah in a big, miraculous way. Now see 1 Kings 19:9-13. God was not in the wind, not in the earthquake nor in the fire. In what very different way did He answer Elijah? (v.12)

- a) Why do you suppose the answer was given in a different way in chapter 19 than in chapter 18?

- b) What danger is there in expecting God to always answer in miraculous ways and with signs and wonders? (Matthew 12:39)

2. What is Point #1 regarding discerning God's voice through signs and wonders?

OPENED AND CLOSED DOORS

3. Moses was called to be the deliverer of Israel from Egypt. Read Exodus 2:11-15 and 5:1-21. Did the door appear to be opened or closed?

a) In spite of what may have been thought to be a closed door, what was God's will? (Exodus 12:51)

4. From outward appearances, did Calvary appear to be an opened or closed door? Why?

a) In spite of outward appearances, what was God's will in this?

5. Read Genesis 13:6-11. Lot was given an open door. What was the result of this? (Genesis 19)

6. Who and/or what (besides the Lord) can make doors appear to be open or closed? Name a few.

7. What is Point #2 regarding discerning God's voice through open and closed doors?

COUNSEL: GOOD & BAD

8. What method of hearing God do the following verses suggest and how are we to seek it?

a) Proverbs 11:14 (How is this verse often misused by those who do not really want godly counsel?)

b) Proverbs 18:1 (What does this say about the one who refuses counsel?)

c) Proverbs 15:22 (How does counsel help us avoid problems?)

9. Can you see any difference between “Godly counsel” and “counsel from the godly”? Can one be trusted more than the other? Why?

10. Good advice can be outside of God’s will. Why? (Acts 21:10-13)

11. What is Point #3 regarding discerning God’s voice based on counsel?

WISDOM AND COMMON SENSE

12. Common sense and wisdom are often the answer to prayer. (See Proverbs 9:6 & 19:8.) This too can be wrong, however. How? What can go wrong?

a) Proverbs 14:12

b) Proverbs 19:21

c) Isaiah 55:8-9

13. What is Point #4 regarding discerning God’s voice through common sense?

WHERE ARE THE ANSWERS?

14. God does speak in various ways, BUT because none of these can be trusted by themselves, where are we ultimately to get answers and confirmation of answers to prayer? (Psalm 119:170)

15. We are to check everything with the Word of God. In Acts 17:11-12, the Bereans were commended for checking everything out with the Word. Whose word were they checking with the Word of God? What does that say to you?

16. Read 1 John 4:1-6. This passage gives two tests to apply to what we think may be God’s will.

a) What is the first test in vv. 2-3? What are the implications of this? Is it possible for someone to say they believe in Jesus and yet be all wrong? What then are we really looking at beyond a mere verbal confession?

b) What is the second test in vv. 5-6? What does this say about counsel that the world readily agrees with?

17. What is Point #5, the MAIN POINT of this lesson regarding discerning God’s voice?

Connect To Life:

Make a conscious effort to find scriptural support for the decisions you make this week. Come next week prepared to share at least one decision you needed to make during the week that could be answered from scripture.

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Lesson Seven: *Spiritual Warfare*

Memory Verse: Ephesians 6:12

LESSON OBJECTIVES:

We are usually aware only of what we perceive with our senses. Because of this, we are most often unaware of how much activity is going on in the spiritual realm. To get the most out of this lesson about the spiritual warfare aspect of prayer, pray that God would open your eyes to the spiritual realm.

PRAYER IS A BATTLE

1. Read Ephesians 6:10-20. What kind of battle are we in? Why is this important to know and be reminded of?

a) Where is the battleground and who is the enemy?

b) Who then is not the enemy? (What persons or circumstances do we often incorrectly tend to think of as the enemy?)

c) Spiritual armor for the battle has been supplied (vv. 14-17). While each piece is likely to have its unique purpose, according to verse 18, what do these provisions enable us to do? Why is it important to remember this?

A classic example of prayer operating hand in hand with hard work is found in Exodus 17:8-13. Moses' lifting of his hands symbolizes the aspect of doing battle in the spiritual realm (praying), while Joshua's fighting a physical war exemplifies the results in the natural realm.

2. Read Exodus 17:8-13 and consider the following questions:

a) Why would Satan move the Amalekites to attack Israel? (Remember that Israel was to produce the Messiah.)

b) What was the two-fold battle plan? (v.9)

c) Which part of the plan was most influential on the other? (v.11)

d) Which is most commonly neglected? Why? When is it most commonly neglected?

e) Prayer is hard work. What makes it easier? (v.12)

f) How long must you be prepared to pray? (v.12)

g) What will happen if either part of the battle is fought while the other is neglected?

3. Some seem to want to stand and fight with Satan, wasting precious prayer time arguing with the devil. According to James 4:7 what is the better way and what promises are attached? (See also 1 Peter 5:8-9.)

EYES TO SEE THE BATTLE

4. Read 2 Kings 6:15-18. Why was Elisha's servant fearful? What new confidence did he receive and how did he receive it?
 - a) While God may be pleased to give us a vision of the spiritual realm, most likely He will not. Through what eyes are we to see the spiritual realm?
 - b) What ought we do realizing that there is a spiritual war?
 - c) When do we most need to do this?

STAYING AT IT

5. Read Daniel 10:1-14. Daniel prayed for 21 days before he received his answer. The answer was delayed due to spiritual battles. What does that say about the importance of persisting in prayer?
6. According to John 17:15, what is God's will concerning retreat from the war?
7. In 2 Timothy 2:3-4 Paul speaks about what we can expect as soldiers, what we must avoid and what our goal is to be. Name them.

APPLICATION

8. Identify 4 or 5 issues that you have either learned about, or been reminded about, by doing this lesson.
9. What challenges have you personally received from the Lord concerning the spiritual battle aspect of prayer? What are some specific changes in attitude and action that you can apply in your life this week?

Connect To Life:

As you pray each day this week, look back at the specific changes you wrote when answering questions eight and nine of this lesson. Put them into practice this week. Come prepared to share how this has impacted your prayers.

HOW TO FAST

5. In Matthew 6:16-18 what warnings did Jesus give about outward appearances and attitudes when fasting?
6. Fasting is not merely abstaining from food or any other of God's blessings. Fasting is not merely about not doing some things. It is also about doing other things to draw nearer to the Lord Himself. Read Isaiah 58 (especially vv.6-10) listing several things we should be doing when we are fasting.

MISCONCEPTIONS REGARDING FASTING

7. We may have incorrect motives for fasting. Please comment on each of the following and explain why they are not the correct motive to fast: (1) to lose weight; (2) to "turbo-charge" prayers; (3) to obligate God to answer (See Romans 11:35 & Job 41:11).
8. What is the correct motive to fast? (Hebrews 11:6)

REWARDED FOR FASTING

9. In Matthew 6:16-18, Jesus said that people can fast with one of two different rewards in mind. Identify the reward that comes from God, how people earn it and why it is more desirable. (See Hebrews 11:6)
10. Can you see how fasting can lead to pride or discouragement? Explain how fasting can lead to these problems.

APPLICATION

11. In what circumstances and in what ways might you deny your bodily appetites in order to concentrate on the Spirit?
12. What specific thing(s) do you plan to do as a result of this lesson?

Connect To Life:

Commit to a simple fast this week. Report back next week what you did and didn't do, and how it affected you.

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Lesson Nine: *Intercession*

Memory Verse: Ezekiel 22:30-31

LESSON OBJECTIVES:

Prayer is personal but it need not be self-centered. Intercessory prayer, or praying on behalf of others, is a most important aspect of Christian prayer. In this lesson we will learn important aspects of intercessory prayer from several giants in the faith.

Psalm 115:3 declares, "Our God is in heaven and He does as He pleases." From that we know that God does not need us or our prayers. However, He has chosen to include us in His work in the world and in people's lives. One of the ways we join Him in His work is through prayer.

Intercessory prayer is prayer for others. In this lesson we will consider the importance of this kind of prayer, and learn how to effectively engage in it from some important biblical characters, including Jesus Himself.

THE IMPORTANCE OF INTERCESSORY PRAYER

1. Read Ezekiel 22:30-31. What kind of man [person] was God seeking? Were there any special qualifications required? What encouragement can we gain from that fact?

- a) Based on what happened as a result of "finding no one," how important is intercessory prayer?

ABRAHAM WAS AN INTERCESSOR

2. Read Genesis 18:20-33. Who prompted his prayer? (vv. 20-21)

- a) What lesson can we learn from this about where we should go for prompting to pray for others?

- b) We often pray, asking God to bless or heal those we care for, reminding God of what good people they are. This is not the correct basis on which to plead with God in intercessory prayer. According to vv. 23-25, what is the correct basis on which to plead our case for others?

- c) Compare v.22 (note Abraham's physical posture) with v.27. What does this teach us about the balance between boldness and humility?

- d) When did Abraham stop praying? (v.33)

- e) What kinds of things tend to trigger the end of prayer for you?

- f) How does this challenge you in the areas of "continuing in prayer?"

MOSES WAS AN INTERCESSOR

3. Read Numbers 14:11-23. Moses used two arguments to plead his case while interceding for Israel. What were they?

- a) How is this similar to the basis of Abraham's prayer in Genesis 18?

- b) In vv. 20-23, what principle was in operation? (See Galatians 6:7-8)

- c) Does this principle apply to us as well? What does this say about prayer as an escape from responsibility?

HEZEKIAH WAS AN INTERCESSOR

- 4. Read 2 Chronicles 30:18-20. (1) What did he pray for? (2) Is there any application for your life to pray as he did?

JESUS WAS (AND IS) AN INTERCESSOR

- 5. Jesus is the perfect example of an intercessor. Read His prayer in John 17. What was going on in His life as He prayed this prayer? What was He facing?

- a) What would you be praying if you were in His situation?

- b) Rather than praying for Himself, what did Jesus pray for His disciples in verse 13? What is this and how does it differ from "happiness?"

- c) v.15 What did He pray for and what did He not pray for? Why?

- d) v.17 What is this and how does it take place?

- e) v.20 Who did Jesus pray for way back then?

- f) v.21 How important is Christian unity? How united are we to be?

- 6. Jesus was facing the cross in a matter of hours. Yet He prayed for the Father's glory and for His disciples — including you and me! If you were in a similar spot, would you pray this way? Why or why not?

- a) What needs to happen in your life to be more like Him in this respect?

PAUL WAS AN INTERCESSOR

- 7. What can you note from Paul's intercessory prayers in Ephesians 3:14-19 and Colossians 1:9-14? What did he pray for? What kinds of things did he not pray about? What can we learn from that regarding what is most important to pray about?

- a) What things does Paul pray for? What things that people most naturally pray for does he not mention? What can we learn from that?

ARE YOU CALLED TO BE AN INTERCESSOR

8. Based on the prayers you have read in this lesson, what aspects of intercessory prayer seem the most important to you? List several and explain each.

9. What ingredients ought you to be careful not to include when praying for others? (In addition to the rest of the lesson, see Proverbs 30:10)

Connect To Life:

If you haven't already got a prayer list, maybe you should consider formulating one. The attached Appendix gives a sample idea. Use it or another, but begin interceding for people with some kind of system. Be prepared to share what you are doing, or are going to do.

Prayer

Lesson Ten: *Evangelism and Missions*

Memory Verse: **Matthew 9:38**

LESSON OBJECTIVES:

As evangelism may be the weakest and/or most neglected aspect of the Christian life for many people, prayer is probably the weakest and/or most neglected aspect of evangelism for most people. In this lesson we will consider the importance of prayer regarding evangelism and world missions.

As Christians, our first priority is to worship and serve the Lord. We are not, however, to remain constantly in our “holy huddle” enjoying worship and the safety of Christian fellowship. We are to share our faith in Christ with as many as we possibly can—both in our own communities and around the world.

The task of reaching people around the world with the gospel is not possible in human terms. No human effort or technique is equal to the task. It is a spiritual task that requires spiritual tactics. None is more important than prayer.

EVANGELISM AND PRAYER

1. Read Acts 1:8. Humanly speaking, the task our Lord gave His disciples [not just the original disciples, but all who are disciples, including you] is impossible. What special enablement did the Lord provide?
 - a) What do you see the early disciples doing when they received this divine enablement in Acts 4:31? (Note several observations from the whole chapter.)
 - b) Apart from the Holy Spirit, what things do we lack that keep us from being effective in carrying out this task? (List several.)
2. Why must prayer be an important part of our evangelism efforts based on 2 Corinthians 4:1-4?

3. What can we pray for on behalf of our non-Christian family and friends if you want them to come to faith in Christ? (List several.)
4. What should we pray for ourselves with regard to our non-believing friends and family?

WORLD MISSIONS AND PRAYER

5. Besides sharing our faith in Christ with our family and friends, where else are we to be involved in making disciples according to Matthew 28:19 and Acts 1:8?
 - a) Many more are called to go into foreign missions than go. What might we do and how might we pray for ourselves concerning this?
 - b) After praying concerning ourselves, how should Jesus’ command in Matthew 9:38 prompt us to pray for the various mission fields around the globe?
6. Read Matthew 9:38. Besides praying for the lost around the world, what does Jesus command us to pray for with regard to missions?
 - a) Many more are called to go into foreign missions than go. What might we do and how might we pray for ourselves concerning this?
 - b) After praying concerning ourselves, how should Jesus’ command in Matthew 9:38 prompt us to pray for the various mission fields around the globe?

"Missions always need money, but we are not concerned about that. God always supplies the money for those He has called to go. What we need is help! We need more workers!"

— A missionary in North Africa

SUPPORTING MISSIONS THROUGH PRAYER

In Romans 10:13-15, Paul reminds us that only those who call upon the Lord will be saved; that no one can call upon One about whom they have not heard; that people will not hear unless someone tells them; and that those who go to tell must be sent by someone. Those who send must support those they send.

7. In what practical ways are we to support those we send?

8. What are you going to do this week to get connected with at least one missionary for prayer support?

9. What do the following verses say about how to pray for those who are "on the front lines?"
 - a) Romans 15:30-31

 - b) Ephesians 6:18-20

10. Read 1 Samuel 30:1-25. How many men did David have with him? (v.9)

- a) How many went with David to battle and how many stayed behind? (v.10)

- b) What did those who went to battle not want to do with the spoil? (v.22)

- c) What did David say about this in vv. 23-25?

- d) What do you think this principle promises those who are faithful to give prayer support to missionaries?

Connect To Life:

Pick three to five people you know who are not Christians. Begin praying for their salvation. Pray the "three open prayer." "Lord, Open a door (of opportunity), open their hearts (to receive the gospel), and open my mouth (to share Christ!) Pray also for the Lord to send other believers into their lives who can also share Christ with them. Begin this week to establish a plan to pray for world missions and at least one missionary. Be prepared to share what you are doing or are going to do.

- b) Why do you suppose he felt this way?

 - c) What was the result of Job's correct reaction to God's cross-examination? (42:10)

 - d) When did this happen? (v.10) What is the significance of this?

 - e) Though we cannot always expect things to happen to us exactly as they happened to Job, what can we learn about how we should react to adversity and how God might deal with us if we react correctly?
6. Consider Psalm 37:4. How might people often misunderstand this verse?
- a) If we delight ourselves in Him, what will our desires be? (What are His?)

 - b) What does it mean to "delight yourself in the Lord?"

 - c) Saint Augustine once said, "Love God and do as you please." Do you agree or disagree with this statement. Why?

7. Read Psalm 63:1-8. David was in need, but he did not seek answers to his problems. What did David seek in time of need? (vv.1-2)
- a) Though David did not pray asking for specific blessings from God, what did he receive as a result of his more important request? (List several from vv. 3-8.)

 - b) What is the aim of prayer if it is not simply to "receive things"?
8. How does Psalm 84:10 contrast the blessings of this life with being with God?

FINDING HIM TO KNOW HIM INSTEAD OF JUST TO RECEIVE HIS BLESSING

9. Paul had position, possession, and prestige. These are often the focus of our prayers. How did Paul value these things? (Philippians 3:8-10)
- a) What was the one thing Paul counted as being highest in value?
10. According to Hebrews 11:6 (NKJV), what must we seek in order to receive God's blessings? How are we to seek this?

11. According to Matthew 6:33, what are we to seek instead of God's blessings?

Connect To Life:

If you are not in the habit of beginning your personal prayer time with some sort of adoration and worship, do so each time you pray this week. Make it a special point to begin doing this.

Think about what you have learned about prayer. Make a list of the items God has spoken to you about and begin putting those into practice.

Prayer

ANSWER KEY / DISCUSSION GUIDE

Lesson One

1. Answers will vary. A model definition is: Prayer is communication with God. It involves both speaking to God and listening to God.
- 2.a) It is a sin not to pray, in this case, for others. Cross-reference Luke 17:7-10. We should not expect special favor for praying. It is what is required!
2. b) God answers prayer. He delivers those who cry out to Him from all their fears and troubles. The promise is peace through trials, not necessarily deliverance from trials.
2. c) Prayer is a means through which God protects His people from temptation. Prayer helps strengthen us when, because of the flesh, we are weak.
- 2.d) Prayer protects God's people from losing heart and giving up, particularly in difficult situations. Cross reference Galatians 6:9.
- 2.e) Prayer is a means of "abiding in Christ." When we are not abiding in Christ, we can do nothing!
2. f) Prayer (in Jesus' name) is a means of receiving answers from God which result in fullness of joy. Cross reference Psalm 16:11.
2. g) Prayer for others, especially those engaged in ministry, is a means by which we may partner with them in their ministries. Note that in 1 Samuel 30:21-25 the principle was established granting those in support roles an equal portion with those in the battle. The same is true in ministry of those who support those on the front line.
2. h) We are to pray for those in authority so that we may experience quiet peaceful lives "in all godliness and reverence."
2. i) We do not receive because we do not ask. Instead, we strive to make things happen. It does not work. We must pray to receive.

Lesson Two

1. Because God alone can forgive sins, and because we desperately need forgiveness, we must come to Him humbly and often, seeking forgiveness. Failure to confess sin is a primary way many claim they have no sin. We must also be thankful because He is so generous in forgiving us.
2. As our Father God loves us as a father loves his children. He longs to hear from us and to receive our love. (He does not need it, but He desires it and it pleases Him.)
As God's adopted child, we are heirs to all He has, and He has everything! Therefore we must be

grateful for His benevolence. We experience intimacy, security, comfort and protection.

As God's adopted children and heirs to all He is and has, we are in a special place of privilege. Because we did not earn it, we must not be proud about it. We can come freely to our heavenly Father, remembering to be respectful at all times.

3. Because God owns us, we are the purchased possession of God. We must remember our place. We must remain clean and pure from sin. As His possession, we are in no position to be demanding of Him.
4. Because He is the Master who requires faithfulness from His servants, and because we are His stewards, we will answer to Him based on what we have done with what He has entrusted to our care.
When we come in prayer, it must not be to try to get Him to do our will, but to understand His will so that we may faithfully do His bidding.
5. Because He is holy and sovereign, and we are sinful, we must come to the Lord in humility, remembering that before Him, we are nothing! This may cause us to keep our words short, not trying to impress Him with our speech.
6. Since God is the source of true peace, and because we are often fearful, we must be dependent upon Him, not the many other counterfeits that offer peace. We must confess our fears and anxieties.
The more we understand that we are weak and anxious and that God is the source of all peace, the more we will run to and cling to Him. The passage calls us to come to Him in thankfulness, no matter what our circumstances are. The passage promises peace. The promise of peace is experienced when we are thankful in spite of circumstances.
7. He has all authority in heaven and on earth. He has the authority to issue commands that must be obeyed. He is always present, never leaving me.

I am one who is sent. I am a disciple (student) of Jesus Christ. I am bound to obey Him because He has supreme authority. I am one who is sent by One in authority.

As those sent by God, we must be ready and willing to go where He sends and do what He commands. As His disciples, we must listen to Him in prayer, not dictating to, or trying to direct Him. We are to be obedient. Our prayers can be at any, and all, times since He is always with us.

Lesson Three

1. Sin is a barrier to prayer.

To overcome this we must overcome sin. The first step in overcoming sin so that our prayers will be heard, is to receive Christ as Lord and Savior.

Even Christians have their prayers hindered by continued sin. The way to overcome this barrier is through confession of sin. (1 John 1:9) Include confession in prayer as a standard procedure.

Confession is more than merely admitting guilt. It is agreeing with God about sin, which means we must not only admit sin, but hate it and have a desire to repent.

2. Two things: (1) Hypocrisy (whether praying to be seen by or to impress people); or (2) vain repetitions.)

To overcome hypocrisy we must pray more in secret than in public. (See v.6 and Colossians 2:23)

To overcome vain repetition we must not settle to recite vain, repetitious, rote prayers. We must think about what we are praying. We must pray from the heart, telling God what is on our minds (Philippians 4:6-8 and Ecclesiastes 5:2-3). We must be careful not to let our prayers become routine.

3. A lack of faith is a barrier to prayer.

To overcome we must increase our faith. This can be done by filling our minds with the Word of God (Romans 10:17). Another way of increasing faith is to admit lack of faith and call out to God for mercy in spite of weak faith. (Mark 9:23-24)

Faith must be in God, not in faith.

4. In general, the weakness of the flesh. More specifically, sleep gets in the way of prayer.

To overcome we must deal with the general weakness of the flesh. A life-style of self-denial will help curb the appetites of the flesh.

As for sleep, get proper rest by going to bed at night. This will allow you to be more fresh during morning prayers. The same is true for Saturday night before Sunday worship.

It is also helpful to get out of bed into a well-lit place for prayer time since horizontal comfort helps sleep more than prayer! (Proverbs 6:9-11)

5. Praying with selfish motives hinders prayers.

To overcome this we must pray the Word of God. It is not wrong to pray for one's self as long as our prayers are not self-centered, but rather are God-centered. (Philippians 2:3-4)

6. Failure to pray in Jesus' name hinders prayer.

To overcome we must pray in Jesus' name. This does not mean that if a person tacks the words, "in Jesus' name, amen" on the end of their prayers they will necessarily be answered.

Praying "in Jesus' name" means praying in the authority and power of Jesus.

A political ambassador, although just one person, speaks for, and has the force of his country behind his words. It is imperative, however, that he speaks only what he is authorized to speak. Likewise in prayer, we have the power and authority of Jesus behind us, as long as we speak only what God's Word authorizes

us to pray. This precludes selfish prayers that are any different than Jesus would pray.

7. Not abiding In Christ and in His Word hinders prayer, because we are less likely to ask according to God's will.

To overcome we must learn to abide in Christ. John 15:7 promises that those who abide in Christ and His words abide in them "will pray." Simply abiding close to Jesus and seeing that His Word is abiding in us will enhance our prayer life because we will be more likely to pray God's will if we are abiding in Christ and in His Word.

8. Allowing friction to exist between ourselves and other persons, especially Christians, will hinder our prayers. This is especially true when the friction is among family members, and spouses in particular. (See 1 Peter 3:7.)

To overcome we must do what we can to reconcile ourselves to anyone with whom there is friction — even if it is not our fault. (Matthew 18:15-17)

To overcome barriers caused by family problems, 1 Peter 3:7 instructs husbands to treat their wives with honor. Ephesians 5:24-33 provide instruction about how married people are to relate to one another. When either husband or wife are not following these basic guidelines, their prayers will be hindered. Following them removes this barrier.

The same is true with parent-child relationships. Ephesians 6:1-4 provide instruction on this. Children who are not honoring and obeying their parents can expect barriers to prayer. Parents who are not training their children in the ways of the Lord, or who are provoking them, will likewise experience barriers to prayer.

Lesson Four

1. a) Matthew 6:5

- (1) A desire to be seen and acknowledged by men while praying is an incorrect motive to pray. Trying to pray with great eloquence may be respect for God, or it may be to impress people who are hearing us pray.
- (2) When someone else is praying in a prayer group, if we are planning what we are going to say instead of listening to what they are praying, we are possibly more concerned about being heard than really praying. Or when people agree with our prayers out loud, we may become prideful.
- (3) We need to pay attention to other people's prayers and not pay too much attention if others agree with ours out loud.

1. b) Matthew 6:7-8

- (1) Vain repetitious prayers are warned against. (Note that repeating the same prayer does not necessarily make it vain.) Praying certain

- prayers or phrases in prayer as a matter of habit without thought, may be vain and repetitious.
- (2) If we pray the same prayers each morning or whenever we eat, they may become vain repetitions.
 - (3) We must work at keeping our minds engaged, trying not to be repetitious. When we do pray the same prayers, we must not let them become vain.
1. c) Luke 18:9-14
- (1) Prayers that point out one's own supposed goodness or someone else's sin are more to boost that person's ego than to seek God.
 - (2) This may be happening if, when we pray for unsaved people or people in trouble, we find ourselves becoming frustrated with their sin or "foolishness."
 - (3) We must remember that apart from God's grace we are no better than the worst of all people. We must seek to be as patient and gracious with others as God is with us.
1. d) James 4:2-3
- (1) Prayer to receive selfish desires to feed personal lusts are not prayers that are heard and answered by God.
 - (2) Whenever we are directing God to answer our prayers according to our will we are doing this. We are also doing this when we daydream about our own desires while praying.
 - (3) We must pray according to God's will not our own. Test all things against God's revealed will in scripture. Unless we are sure of God's will, it is wise to couch all prayers in the words, "According to Your will, Lord."
2. a) Matthew 6:6
- (1) Getting alone with God to pray for His reward rather than for the benefit of appearing righteous before men is true prayer and is rewarded by God.
 - (2) Prayers in quiet time are often the most honest since no one but God sees or hears us.
 - (3) We must discipline ourselves to have a daily quiet time alone with God since the closer to God we are, the closer we will want to be.
2. b) Luke 18:9-14
- (1) Confessing sin and humbling oneself before a Holy God is prayer that God honors.
 - (2) If we are aware of specific sin(s), we humble ourselves and confess our sins.
 - (3) Confessing all known sin as a regular part of daily prayer is a reminder of this. Worshiping God and meditating on His holiness is a good reminder to humble ourselves and confess our sins.
2. c) Philippians 4:6
- (1) Praying to God in time of trouble rather than becoming anxious is encouraged.
- (2) This is difficult unless we have a holy habit of prayer since otherwise we tend to pray only because we are already anxious.
 - (3) We must develop the discipline of praying regularly before anxiety creeps in.
2. d) 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18
- (1) Pray because it is commanded as the will of God for His people. Disciples are to pray because God's Word calls us to pray, rather than because of specific victories or trials.
 - (2) The discipline of regular prayer is what makes this happen.
 - (3) The discipline of regular prayer makes this happen.
2. e) James 1:5-8
- (1) Prayer when one lacks wisdom is wise.
 - (2) Sadly we tend to try to figure things out until we are completely stalemated before praying. When in need of wisdom it is natural to pray. Often when we lack wisdom, we tend to lack discernment and be unsure of answers.
 - (3) If we are in a constant state of awareness of our own lack of wisdom apart from God, we will seek God's wisdom more readily. Reading Proverbs is a reminder of our need for God's wisdom in all areas of life.
3. a) Matthew 6:5 When people are praying as a performance before men, they are not really praying. God is motivated to answer the prayers of those who are truly seeking Him.
3. b) Matthew 6:7 God is not moved by the number of our words or by our eloquence in speech. God is moved by the sincerity of our hearts to abandon all hope in ourselves or even our ability to pray, and simply trust God with our whole hearts.
3. c) Answers will vary. Six examples follow:
- (1) Prayer is standard procedure for disciples. "When [not if] we pray"
 - (2) There is a right way and many wrong ways to pray.
 - (3) Prayer is for God's ears, not men's.
 - (4) The best place to pray is out of other people's sight and the best way to pray is alone.
 - (5) Keep prayers simple (though not necessarily short.)
 - (6) Remember that we are not telling God anything He does not already know!
4. God does not answer prayers either because the person praying or the person being prayed for is "good" or "worthy." The reason is that compared to God, no one is "good!" (Romans 3:10-12)
4. a) Pray for other people based on God's goodness and His mercy, not man's!
5. Prayerlessness silently says, "I have no need of God's help." When a person is generally prayerless, God is not likely to hear their occasional self-sufficient prayers.

Lesson Five

1. We can have confidence that God hears our prayers and that He answers those prayers He hears.
This confidence is based on praying according to God's will. God will never act contrary to His will, no matter how diligently we may pray.
2. God's Word must abide in us. For this to happen we must be intimately familiar with the Bible by hearing, reading, studying, memorizing, and meditating on it. (Remember the Word Hand?).
The connection between abiding in God's Word and answers to prayer is that it is only as we are abiding in God's Word that our prayers are likely to be consistently within God's will. As 1 John 5:14-15 states, only prayers that are in God's will are heard and answered. Therefore abiding in God's Word is the key to answered prayer.
3. The way to know (and therefore obey) God's commandments is by abiding in God's Word where His commandments are recorded. It is possible to be ignorantly in disobedience and therefore not receive answers to prayer.
4. We know we are praying in God's will if we pray according to God's Word. God's will is found in God's Word.
5. It is possible for your prayer life (one of God's greatest blessings) to be an abomination to God. How? By praying outside of God's will because you are not in God's Word.
Remember that prayer is God's idea and gift to man, not man's idea. Therefore, we must pray as He has determined us to pray. How we pray is not our prerogative.
6. a) Ephesians 1:15-21 Paul prayed that the Ephesians would have: knowledge and understanding (v.17), appreciation of what God has done and will do for them (v.18), appreciation of the power of the Holy Spirit who is in them (v.19-20), and their position in Christ (v.21).
6. b) Paul prayed that the Ephesians would be: strengthened by the Holy Spirit in the inner man (v.16), filled with the Spirit of God in faith (v.17), know God's love, able to comprehend (along with all Christians) the magnitude of the love of God (v.18-19), filled with the fullness of God (v.19), and that all would be for God's glory (v.20-21).
6. c) Paul prayed that the Colossians would: know God's will in all wisdom (v.9), have a walk [life-style] that is worthy of Christ, pleasing Him (v.10), be fruitful in good works (v.10), increase in knowledge of God (v.10), strengthened by God's power (v.11), patient and joyful (v.11), thankful as heirs of God (v.12).
6. d) Answers will vary. Try to be specific when praying God's word.

The following is a sample answer based on Ephesians 1:15-21:

Dear Lord, Please bless Paul with knowledge and understanding concerning Your will for his life. Grant him an appreciation of what You have done to save him and of the inheritance that awaits him as one of Your children. May he realize how You have empowered him by indwelling him with Your Holy Spirit. May he realize that the same power that raised Christ from the dead is in him and may he live in Your power. I pray that he would live as one who has risen victoriously over circumstances in life and will be seated with You in heavenly places.

7. Moses prayed based on God's promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob that their descendants would multiply and inherit the land of promise.
7. a) He might have seen an opportunity to be the new founder of God's people.
7. b) We must know God's promises and pray accordingly. Otherwise we will be likely to pray based on our desires rather than on God's will.
Praying God's promises is a way in which we can be a part of God fulfilling His promises.
8. When people claim what is not theirs, it is called stealing!
If I am "claiming" anything that God has not promised me, I am "stealing" what is not mine!
An example is when people pray "claiming" a person's salvation. There is no verse promising a particular person's salvation.
Be careful to claim only what is promised.
Be careful to discern whether the promise given applies only to the individual(s) in the passage or if it may also apply to the person for whom you are praying.
Remember that most promises to individuals are conditional, so pray that the person will meet the condition and then claim the promise based on that obedience.
9. A sample prayer based on 1 Timothy 4:12-16:
*Dear Lord, May I not look down on my youth or inexperience, or let others do so. May I not look down on other's youth and inexperience either.
I pray that I would be an example in all that I say and do, in how loving I am, or how spiritually-minded I am. Lord, may I be a good example of faithfulness and purity.
I ask that I would be mindful to give special attention to reading Your Word, to encouraging and exhorting others and to holding fast to sound doctrine.
May I know of and use the spiritual gifts You have given me, not neglecting them for any reason.
I ask that I would be mindful to meditate on these things, giving myself entirely to them as an example of spiritual growth to others.
I ask that I would examine my life next to solid doctrine and that I would continue, never falling away.
May I persevere, proving my own salvation and leading others to salvation as well.*

10. Hezekiah was praying according to the will of God. It is not foolish to pray that God would do what He already said He would do.

Prayer is one of the important means by which God plans to accomplish what He said He would do. Prayer is a means by which we can be a part of God's plan to accomplish certain things.

Would God do what He promised if we did not pray? Yes, ultimately. Maybe through the prayers of someone who is more faithful than me. But by failing to pray, we take ourselves out of the action.

Remember, God not only ordains the ends (end results), He also ordains the means (the way those results are to come to pass). His ordained means includes the prayers of His people.

- 11 Daniel understood that it was about time for God's promises to restore Judah to be fulfilled. He wanted to be a part of the Lord's gracious restoration of Judah. It is good to pray for God's Word to be fulfilled for the same reasons mentioned in question #11.
12. Two reasons:
- (1) Prayer is one of God's appointed means of accomplishing His will. He commanded us to pray.
 - (2) Prayer is a means by which I am allowed (commanded) to participate in the fulfillment of God's will.

This question is recap, but important to cement in our minds why we should pray for what God has already said He would do. Otherwise, we might argue that there is no reason to pray at all since God will do it anyway.

While our prayers will not change God's ultimate will, whether we pray will determine how God's will is accomplished.

For example: If it is God's will to save Paul and God calls me to share my faith, if I do not share my faith, God will still save Paul. But what if the next Christian to cross Paul's path doesn't come along for 30 years? Paul will still be saved, but he will have missed 30 years of walking with the Lord. Prayer matters!

13. It is wise to pray saying, "Not my will but Your will be done, oh Lord." It is far better to admit to not knowing God's exact will in a given situation than to go on and on asking Him to do something that is not His will.

We are not exercising a lack of faith by praying in this manner. We are demonstrating more faith as we ask God's will to be done, trusting that His will is better than our will while not foolishly directing God in prayer and selfishly demanding our will be done.

Those who challenge this kind of prayer challenge the prayers of Jesus Christ. That is a serious error!

14. The Holy Spirit knows the will of God and prays the will of God. This is the assurance that His prayers on our behalf are answered.

Think about what a comfort it is to know that when we do not know how to pray God's will, the Holy

Spirit does. And He prays. And His prayers are always answered!

Lesson Six

1. God spoke to Elijah this time in a "still, small voice." This was not necessarily even an audible voice. God speaks through a "still, small voice" sometimes by placing impressions on a person's heart.
 1. a) Elijah had recently experienced great signs and wonders. Since God does not want His people to assume that He will always do things in the same way—especially regarding signs and wonders, God was pleased to speak in a quiet, unassuming manner. God is pleased by faith. Faith is not required of those who "see" signs and wonders, but it does require faith to follow a still, small voice.
 1. b) The danger in expecting God to always speak in miraculous ways is that since He does not, when He does not, we may miss His voice.
 2. Point #1 God does speak in signs and wonders, but we must not expect or demand Him to do so.
 3. The door to be the deliverer of the Israelites appeared to be closed.
 3. a) It was clearly God's will that the children of Israel were led out of Egypt under Moses' leadership.
 4. Jesus' death on the cross must have appeared to be a hopelessly closed door to the disciples. See Luke 24:13-21.
 4. a) Christ's death on the cross was the greatest event in human history, for through His death God's people had their sins forgiven.
 5. Lot was given an open door to go wherever he desired. The result was that he chose a place that looked good but was actually exceedingly wicked.
 6. Many things and persons can make doors appear to be open or closed. Satan, circumstances, our own desires, other people.

Doors that appear to be open or closed are not necessarily green or red lights from God.
 7. Point #2 Although open doors sometimes appear to be a yes, and closed doors a no, we can be fooled by appearances. There are times when a seemingly closed door means wait, or pray harder.
 8. a) People often look for counselors who will tell them what they want to hear.
 8. b) Those who refuse counsel insist on doing as they please.
 8. c) Without good counsel our plans are often met with disaster.
 9. "Godly counsel" is from the Lord. "Counsel from the godly", though it comes from godly people, is from

human beings. Human beings often insert their own opinions that may be contrary to God's.

- 10 The prophet Agabus was correct with his prophecy. His counsel to Paul was to not go. It seems that it was God's will for Paul to go even though it meant arrest and imprisonment. Why? Because it was from prison that Paul wrote the letters that became the New Testament.

If this is the case, then counsel from a godly man (a prophet) was not to be heeded.

11. Point #3 God can and does speak through people. But people tend to add their opinions which may not be from the Lord. If we follow counsel that is not God's will, we are responsible—not the counselor.
12. a) Though a matter appears one way from our human perspective, God's will may be contrary to human wisdom.
12. b) Men's wisdom changes. What is wise today will be called foolish tomorrow. This is not so with God. His counsel never changes.
12. c) God's ways and thoughts are infinitely higher than ours. What we think, based on our limited finite perspective of life, is so often wrong when compared to God's unlimited and infinite perspective.
13. Point #4 Often common sense and wisdom will lead to an answer, but since God's ways are beyond ours, our wisdom may be foolishness at times.
14. The Psalms speak of praying and receiving answers from the Word of God.
15. The Bereans didn't even take Paul's word by itself. They checked even what he said with the Word of God that they had, the Old Testament.
We can take Paul's word now because it is inspired and is the Word of God.
The message is to check everything anyone says with the Word of God. People are fallible. God's Word is not!
16. a) Not every spirit is true.
People can say they believe in Jesus and not, so it is not just the words we must look to but the life and the message. Does the life and the message agree with the message of Christ and the gospel?
16. b) If the world embraces a spiritual message, it is highly unlikely that the message is from God. The world hates the truth concerning Christ.
This is not to say that the world is wrong about everything. A person need not be spiritual to correctly identify 4 as the sum of 2 + 2. In spiritual matters, or any matters that have spiritual implications such as marriage and family, handling money, etc., the world is so often wrong that it is a fair test to say, "If the World agrees with a position, it is probably not of God."
17. Point #5 is the MAIN POINT. God can and does speak through many different means, including signs and wonders, open and closed doors, counsel, and

wisdom and common sense. HOWEVER, the only 100% reliable source from which to hear God's voice is the Bible. Therefore, we must check everything we hear from any other source with the Bible so that we may either confirm or reject answers that are not from God.

Lesson Seven

1. We are in a spiritual battle. We must be reminded of this battle because we cannot see it and are therefore often oblivious to it. We need to be reminded of the spiritual battle because we tend to see people and circumstances as the enemy, which they are not!
Note that this is a battle that hinders the preaching of the gospel.
1. a) The battle is in the spiritual realm and the enemy is Satan, (the devil) and his army of fallen angels (demons).
Please note the following about Satan: The highest angel was named Lucifer. He was not content to serve God, desiring to be like God Himself. The result of this rebellion was that Lucifer was cast down and became the devil or Satan. One-third of the angels followed Satan in this rebellion. These fallen angels are demonic forces.
1. b) Sample answers: Government, boss, finances, family, health problems, busyness, etc.
1. c) The armor is provided to enable us to PRAY more effectively. Note Paul's prayer request is that he would be effective proclaiming the message. Evangelism is a spiritual battle for men's souls. Effectiveness in this battle depends more on prayer than we often realize.
This is important since it is easy to get side-tracked discussing the armor and forget its purpose, thereby neglecting to use it as it was intended to be used.
2. a) Satan wanted to destroy God's people thereby destroying the line of the Messiah and thwarting God's plan of salvation for His people. (Of course, this was impossible.)
2. b) Moses was to pray while Joshua (and his troops) were to fight.
2. c) While both were important and each influences the other, prayer influences the results of the work even more than work influences prayer.
2. d) Prayer is more commonly neglected than our other efforts because it is hard, because we cannot see the enemy or the results of prayer instantly, and because we tend to think we can handle situations on our own.
2. e) Help—encouragement from others who will pray with us and for us.
2. f) We must be prepared to pray as long as it takes.

2. g) Defeat. Both are essential.

3. The better way is to:

- (1) Submit to God. I need to be sure that I am abiding in the Lord and in His Word. and
- (2) Resist the Devil. I need to have as little to do with Satan as possible, without denying the reality of his existence and his influence. I need to keep Jesus between me and Satan at all times.

The Promise is Victory!

An example of those who did not handle this well is found in Acts 19:13-16. These fellows involved themselves with more than they bargained for! The results were disastrous (although somewhat humorous from our perspective.)

An example of handling this correctly is found in Jude 8-9. Michael, the Archangel, who has considerably more experience with the devil than we do, sought the Lord to deal with Satan rather than taking matters into his own hands. If he relied on the Lord to deal with the devil, how much more do we need to do so?

4. He was fearful because he could only see the physical realm and the opposition.

He received confidence that God's forces were greater than the enemy's when Elisha prayed that God would open his eyes to the spiritual realm.

4. a) We are to see the spiritual realm through the eyes of faith. Believe what God has said and act accordingly, regardless of what we see with our physical eyes. This kind of faith exhibits confidence, obtains victory, and most importantly) pleases God (Hebrews 11:6.)

4. b) Pray for eyes of faith to see the spiritual realm, to have confidence in God and to experience victory.

4. c) We need to do this most when we are overwhelmed.

5. We must persist in prayer. We do not know what answer is just about to arrive.

Do not take no answer for the answer, "no." Pray until God answers, whether the answer is "yes," "no" or "not now."

Had Daniel given up, he might not have received the answer. The answer was an encouragement for God's people. Had he given up, God's people might not have received the encouragement. (This, of course, is speculative.)

Consider: A standard question regarding prayer and God's sovereignty asks, "Why pray if God is going to do His will anyway?" Here are three answers:

- (1) God commands us to pray. Therefore, it is disobedience and sin not to pray irrespective of God's sovereignty.
- (2) God has sovereignly decreed that our prayers are a means through which He acts in the affairs of men, and through which we may partner with God to accomplish His ends. Failure to pray keeps us from being a part of God's plan to act.
- (3) If we do not pray for a person to be saved who God has determined to save, our lack of prayer

will not keep that person out of heaven.

However, if we do not pray, what if there were not another Christian to pray for that person's salvation for ten years. Our lack of prayer could keep that person from experiencing salvation for another ten years; of living in rebellion against God.

6. We are not to seek to get "out of the spiritual battle," but rather to endure and be victorious "through the battles."

7. Note the following three items:

- (1) We must expect to face battles while serving the Lord.
- (2) We must avoid being entangled in the affairs of this life.
- (3) Our goal is to please Christ who has enlisted us in His army.

8. Answers will vary. Some examples:

- (1) There is a spiritual realm, even though we cannot see it with our eyes. It is where the real action is taking place.
- (2) Pray for spiritual eyes when overwhelmed.
- (3) People and circumstances are not the enemy.
- (4) Do not give up too soon.
- (5) Expect hardship and do not become entangled in the affairs of this life.
- (6) As an integral part of evangelism, pray that God would open the eyes of non-believers that they might see the gospel and believe.
- (7) Prayer is more influential in securing victory than work is, although both are essential.

9. Answers will vary. Examples might include: We must pray more specifically for the lost as a matter of spiritual warfare. We must not give up too soon just because we cannot see the battle or the victory.

Lesson Eight

1. Two groups are identified by Jesus. The first is the hypocrites. The second is disciples.

The hypocrites go through the motions of religion but their hearts are not motivated by the right thing.

Disciples are expected to fast as seen by the fact that Jesus said, "When you fast..."

This instructs us that we should be fasting, and that we must be careful not to fast as the hypocrites do.

1. a) The fact that Jesus said, "When you fast" rather than "If you fast," suggests that Jesus expects His disciples to fast. If we are His disciples, yet never fast, we need to give careful attention to the subject of fasting and begin fasting as one of the disciplines of the faith.

2. Jesus was led by the Spirit of God to fast before entering into His public ministry. This suggests three things:

- (1) If we take ministry seriously, we should consider fasting before entering into it.
 - (2) Since the Holy Spirit led Jesus to fast, we should seek the leading of the Holy Spirit regarding fasting.
 - (3) If we do not sense the Holy Spirit calling us to fast, we should seek Him more diligently since He will lead us to fast in some way.
- 3.a) Each of the excuses given by those who wished to be excused from attending the feast was associated with one of God's blessings. The first two were material, the third was relational, but all three were blessings from God. None are legitimate excuses.
3. b) The cares, riches and pleasures of this world (even God's blessings) choke the effectiveness of the Word in our lives.
3. c) There are two ways of fasting as a means of drawing closer to the Lord:
- (1) As we temporarily deny ourselves some of the pleasures of God's blessings from time to time, we can devote more time and heart to seeking the Lord in prayer and in ministry.
 - (2) As we temporarily deny ourselves some of the pleasures of God's blessings from time to time, we will become less dependent upon them and more dependent upon the Lord Himself.
4. God called on Abraham to "give up" his son, his only son, the one Abraham loved, the one that was the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham.
4. a) Answers will vary. They might include wealth, material possessions, career, hobbies, entertainment or even relationships. Do not be satisfied with a simple short list. Think deeper than surface.
4. b) Answers will vary. Take the challenge to go beyond the theoretical and to actually deny yourself one or more of the things that are dearest to you for the sake of drawing nearer to the Lord who blessed you with those things.
Beware whenever you want these things, ask yourself, "Should I deny myself at this time?"
5. Jesus warned not to be like the hypocrites who fasted to be seen and admired by people. We are to seek the Lord, not the admiration of men.
He warned us not to fast with a long face that draws attention to our fasting. Instead, we are to act physically as though we are not fasting.
6. Isaiah 58
- v.6 Minister to those who are oppressed.
 - v.7 Feed the hungry, house the homeless and clothe the naked.
 - v.9 Refrain from talking about others. Be a peacemaker.
 - v.10 Spiritually minister to the needy (extend not only your goods, but your soul).
7. Misconceptions explained:
- (1) To lose weight: Although fasting is a means of losing weight, one must be careful that one is not

using a spiritual discipline as a means of accomplishing the physical goal of merely losing weight.

- (2) To "turbo-charge" prayers: Fasting doesn't make prayer more powerful so that prayer can accomplish great things. Prayer doesn't accomplish anything. God is the One who does great things in response to prayer. God is certainly not strengthened by our fasting. Fasting makes me more sensitive to the Lord's voice, but it does not give power to prayer.
 - (3) To obligate God: God is never obligated to man (Romans 11:35).
8. God will reward "those who diligently seek Him." Fasting is a means of seeking the Lord Himself. As we fast, we are saying, "All I need is You, Lord."
9. The ultimate reward we can receive from the Lord is greater intimacy with Him. He gives Himself to those who diligently seek Him.
Another reward is the ability to please God. It takes faith to fast correctly: faith pleases God, which is our reason for being.
10. If we fast and succeed, we may think that our success is because of our superior willpower. This will fuel the fires of pride.
If we fast and do not succeed, we may become discouraged and give up on fasting as a means of drawing closer to the Lord.
11. Answers will vary.
12. Answers will vary. Consider fasting in the coming week. Consider fasting not merely as a one-time experience, but rather as a matter of course as a disciple.

Lesson Nine

1. God was seeking a person who would pray on behalf of others who were in line for judgment.
God was not seeking any other particular qualifications, just a person who would pray for others.
I need not have any special gifts or abilities to be an intercessor. I need only a willingness to be "found by God" as an intercessor.
1. a) Judgment came because no one prayed. Prayers of intercession matter tremendously.
2. God came to Abraham, informing him of His plans. This prompted Abraham to pray.
2. a) I need to go to God's Word and to spend time with God in prayer to learn His plans. Then I need to pray in response to God's plans.
2. b) The basis on which we should intercede for others is God's character (goodness, mercy, love, etc.)
If God were to answer our prayers based on our goodness, the goodness of those we are praying for,

or based on how well we prayed, He would not answer any of our prayers.

Pray, pleading your case based on God's character.

2. c) Abraham stood before the Lord in v.22 and he was exceedingly humble in v.27. That both are seen in Abraham in the same instance points out that we can be bold to go to God in prayer, but that we must humbly remember our place before Him.
2. d) Abraham stopped praying when God was through. He did not wear out first.
2. e) I tend to stop praying: when my time is up, when I am tired, when I am interrupted or late for work, etc.
2. f) I need to linger in the presence of the Lord more. Who knows? Maybe more would be accomplished if I prayed longer. In Abraham's case, more were spared.
3. In vv. 13-16 Moses prayed with God's reputation in the eyes of the world in mind.
In vv. 18-19 Moses prayed for the people based on the character of God, not on the character of the people.
3. a) Neither of them brought up the goodness of the people for whom they were praying for, nor did they argue that the people did not deserve to be punished. Both argued based on God's character.
3. b) The principle of sowing and reaping is in operation. Although God pardoned, there were still consequences for sin.
3. c) The principle applies to all.
Sincere prayer for forgiveness will always result in forgiveness because God is so gracious. However, even once forgiven, I may still have to suffer consequences for my sin. Prayer is no escape from responsibility.
4. 2 Chronicles 30:18-20
 - (1) Hezekiah prayed that God would be merciful to the people, allowing them to partake of the Passover based on the sincerity of heart even though they were not ceremonially prepared.
 - (2) I need to pray for myself regarding worship. I am not clean either! I need to pray for others who are in the same position.
5. Jesus was facing the biggest trial and worst situation ever faced by anyone —ever! He, the Son of God, was facing a wrongful execution on the cross.
5. a) I would be praying for myself! Deliverance from harm. Justice!
5. b) v.13 Joy is based on an inner strength and serenity. Happiness is dependent on circumstances. Joy lasts; happiness is fleeting.
5. c) He did not ask that they be delivered from trouble, but that they would be strengthened and kept through it. If disciples are taken away, we cannot continue to do ministry.

5. d) Sanctification is the process through which we are made holy. We are declared holy when we are justified by faith. Then, as we live, we grow in our holiness, actually becoming more like what God has declared us to be. It happens as we grow in faith — especially in the face of life's trials.
5. e) Jesus prayed for all who would believe through the testimony of the first disciples. Their testimony is what all successive generations of Christians have believed. Jesus prayed for US!
5. f) Our unity as disciples will convince the world that Jesus really is the Messiah.
We are to be as united to one another as Jesus is to the Father.
6. No. I am too self-centered.
6. a) I need to abide in Him so that the fruit of the Spirit would be borne in my life. Only the Holy Spirit can make a person that selfless.
7. In both prayers he prayed for spiritual things, not for temporal or physical things. While praying for physical things is good, praying about spiritual matters is of greater importance.
7. a) Paul prayed for people's spiritual needs rather than their physical or temporal needs. Spiritual needs are far greater than people's physical or temporal needs.
I need to give more attention to praying for people's spiritual needs than merely praying for their houses, jobs, cars, health, etc.
8. Answers will vary. Some examples are:
 - (1) Praying based on God's character rather than anyone's goodness.
 - (2) Pray until God is through.
 - (3) Get God's heart on what to intercede for.
 - (4) Pray for people's spiritual needs, not just their physical or temporal needs.
 - (5) Pray for OTHERS instead of being so self-centered in my prayers.
9. I must be careful not to use prayer as a forum to malign other people. Remain humble.

Lesson Ten

1. Evangelism is only possible with the power of the Holy Spirit. Without His power, we can accomplish nothing of eternal value evangelistically.
1. a) Several observations:
 - vv.8-12 They were bold to proclaim the gospel.
 - v.13 They were like Christ.
 - v.14 They ministered to people's physical needs (healing).
 - vv.19-20 They were discerning about their relationship to civil authorities.
 - v.21 They were able to endure persecution for the Lord.

v.24 They worshiped God in the midst of persecution.
v.28 They had faith in God's sovereign control of all things.
v.31 They were bold to speak the Word of God.
vv.32-35 They were generous and sharing.

1. b) We lack boldness to speak. We lack faith that God will protect us and convert the lost. We lack compassion for the lost. We lack fear for the lost and concern for our own disobedience for not sharing more as we should.
2. Cross reference 2 Corinthians 10:3-5. In this passage we are reminded that our battles are spiritual and that the only way to experience victory in these battles is through prayer.
Evangelism is a spiritual task, not a fleshly endeavor. Therefore, it takes spiritual weapons, not physical weapons. The reality of the gospel is hidden from the sight of those who are lost, whose eyes the devil has blinded. The spiritual weapon at our disposal is prayer. Only God, through the Holy Spirit, can open the blind eyes of the lost, revealing the gospel to them.
3. We need to pray that God would open the spiritual eyes of the lost so that they would realize their spiritual need; that Christ is the only answer; that they would be born again by the Holy Spirit so they can follow Christ. Pray also that God would send other Christians their way since often family are less receptive toward relatives.
4. Pray:
To be an example
For opportunities to speak
For wisdom to recognize the opportunities that God does give and for boldness to speak
For wisdom to answer questions that are pertinent and to avoid subjects that are not
For a loving spirit that communicates your concern for them as people, not as notches in your evangelistic belt
For a change of heart toward the lost if needed
For a realization that the lost really will go to hell!
5. We are called to be involved in evangelism to people all over the world. Notice in Acts 1:8 that we are to be witnesses in Jerusalem and all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth. These three "ands" signify that we are to be involved in some way in all these arenas.
6. Jesus calls us to pray that the Father will raise up and send forth more workers to evangelize the lost.
6. a) Each person can seek ways to go on short-term missions trips.
Pray for a "world vision" to see the global need. One way to do this is to pray using a world map. As you pray over a map, God will give you a vision for the world.
Be free from debt so you can go if called. Ask God to reveal ways you can be a part of the effort to evangelize the world.

6. b) Pray for God to raise up more missionaries to go!
Pray for those who are on the field as you would any other Christian (e.g., devotional life, family life, faith in God.)
In addition, for missionaries, pray for health since many are exposed to more disease, for protection from persecution and hostile civil authorities and spiritual forces, for their children since they are growing up as foreigners where they are, for finances as missionaries seldom have an abundance, etc.
7. We support those we send by providing financial support including health care and insurance, encouragement through correspondence, care packages of items from home that they might miss and cannot get where they are.
There are many other ways. Perhaps the most practical thing we can do is pray.
An important part of a missionary's support is in the form of prayer. Before we can effectively pray for specific missionaries, we must know of some. We need not know them personally, but we need to know who they are and where they are serving. Missionaries are eager to have prayer support and are thrilled to inform people "back home" of their prayer needs. We can find out what their specific needs are by writing and asking. Every Christian who does not go should be praying regularly for at least one missionary. If you are not currently doing this, make a connection with one or more and begin praying for them.
8. Answers will vary.
Consider writing to at least one missionary on a regular basis and begin praying for that person or family.
If you are already doing this, great! You might want to consider adopting a prayer and writing plan through which you may support more than one missionary or family.
9. a) Pray for missionaries to be free from persecution and opposition and that the Christians would accept them. (The latter part is important since one of the biggest difficulties missionaries have on the field is getting along with other missionaries!)
9. b) Pray that they would minister boldly in the power of the Holy Spirit.
10. David had 600 men with him.
10. a) Four hundred went, two hundred stayed behind.
10. b) Those who fought did not want to share the spoil with those who stayed behind.
10. c) David said that those who stayed behind were to have an equal share in the spoil with those who were on the front lines.
10. d) Those who are faithful to support missionaries on the field will share in the reward received by those missionaries. Support is as important as being on the front line.

The exception to this might be if you are called to be on the front line and you stay behind. In that case you will receive just compensation for your disobedience!

Lesson Eleven

1. a) We have been created for God Himself.
1. b) We were created for God's glory.
1. c) We were created for God's pleasure and to accomplish His will.
1. d) YOUR NAME HERE was created by God, for God's glory, to please Him and to accomplish His will.
1. e) This is encouraging, knowing that we have an important calling.
It is also humbling since we realize that we so often fall short of that calling.
2. Our motives for prayer are often selfish, seeking to obtain favor and/or things for ourselves.
3. We should pray for what glorifies God, for what pleases Him and for His will to be done.
4. Godliness with contentment is great gain. This is the definition of true success.
5. God was helping Job regain perspective and the ability to see God's purposes, not personal convenience, as the goal of life.
5. a) Job was humbled. He repented of his lack of faith in God that was demonstrated by questioning God.
5. b) Job realized his presumption and pride.
5. c) God blessed Job restoring all that Job lost during his trials.
5. d) God's blessing came when Job regained his perspective and when he prayed for others. When we get out of ourselves, God will bless us. When we pray only for ourselves, we get nothing.
5. e) Correct reactions:
 - (1) React by not second-guessing God. Remember that He is sovereign and His will will be done.
 - (2) Remember that even a right attitude does not guarantee no trials or even the restoration of things lost during trials. Seek the Lord and God will deal properly with you, even if He does not bless you as He did Job.
6. This verse is often misunderstood to mean that if a person does some sort of religious service for God that God will give them whatever their flesh desires. This mentality reduces God into a magic genie.
6. a) Our desires will be as God's desires if we are truly delighting in Him. Delighting in God means being delighted with whatever delights God. What delights

God? Righteousness, holiness, love, selflessness, etc.

6. b) Delighting in the Lord means being delighted with whatever delights God. What delights God? Righteousness, holiness, love, selflessness, etc.
6. c) This is true. If I love God, I will only want to do what pleases Him. Whenever my desires do not line up with His, I am demonstrating a lack of true love for Him.
7. David sought the Lord, not merely the blessings of the Lord.
7. a) Heart for worship (vv.3-4), contentment and joy (v.5), peace (v.6), safety (v.7), fellowship with the Lord and security (v.8).
7. b) The aim of prayer is to be in the presence of God, experiencing intimate fellowship with Him.
8. Having a lowly place in the presence of God is better than being in an exalted position in the world. See also Proverbs 16:19.
9. Paul viewed all the things that are so important to the world, that he had attained and then lost when he came to faith in Christ, as worth less than nothing.
Less than nothing? Yes. Paul called them dung. Dung is not only not an asset, but a liability—something that must be disposed of.
9. b) Paul valued knowledge of Christ as the top priority in life. He was not referring to a casual knowledge either. He longed to enter into the fellowship of Christ's sufferings (v.10).
10. To receive the blessings of God, we must seek God, not His blessings. Look again at the verse. The reward is to "those who diligently seek Him."
How do we seek Him? The Word, prayer, fellowship, worship, communion, serving others, obedience to His commands.
- 11 We are to seek the kingdom of God and God's righteousness, not blessings. The result: like Solomon, we will receive Him and His blessings. If we seek only the blessings, we will receive neither Him nor His blessings.

