

We believe discipleship is a direction  
not a destination.



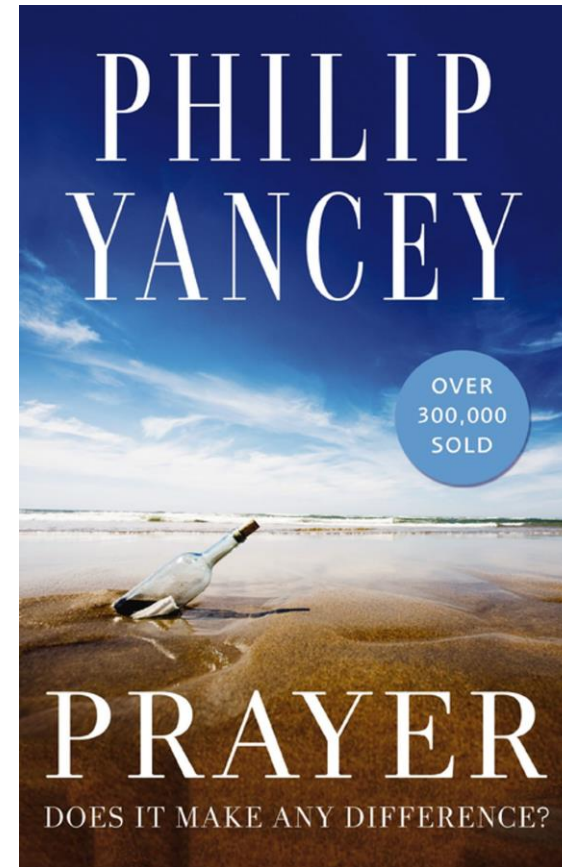
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**Prayer: Does it Make a Difference**

**Week 1**

# The Author

- Philip Yancey
  - Born 1949, 74 years old
  - Christian author
    - Written 22 books
  - Is an avid mountain climber



# Course Outline

- **Keeping Company with God**
  - **Week 1** Introduction, Ch1-2
    - What do you expect
    - Who prays and why
  - **Week 2** Ch 3-5
    - Come just as we are
    - Who is God to listen



# Course Outline

- **Unraveling the Mysteries**
  - **Week 3 Ch 6-8**
    - What's the point
    - Wrestling with God
  - **Week 4 Ch 9-11**
    - Does prayer change God?
    - Ask, Seek, Knock



# Course Outline

- **The Language of Prayer**
  - **Week 5 Ch 12-13**
    - I pray all the time, but...
    - It takes time and practice
  - **Week 6 Ch 14-15**
    - What do I say?
    - When we don't hear anything



# Course Outline

- **Prayer Dilemmas**
  - **Week 7 Ch 16-17**
    - Unanswered prayer, whose fault is it
    - Living with not knowing
  - **Week 8 Ch 18-19**
    - Prayer and healing
    - What to pray for if not healing



# Course Outline

- **The Practice of Prayer**
  - **Week 9 Ch 20-22**
    - How do I pray?
    - Should I “forward this prayer”
    - Rule #1 Love the Lord your God
  - **Week 10 Review, Conclusions**



# *What is Prayer*

# What is Prayer?

Chapter 1



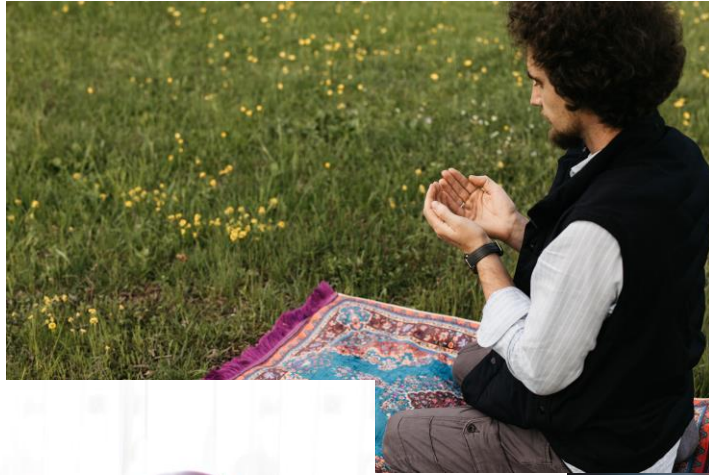


# What is Prayer?

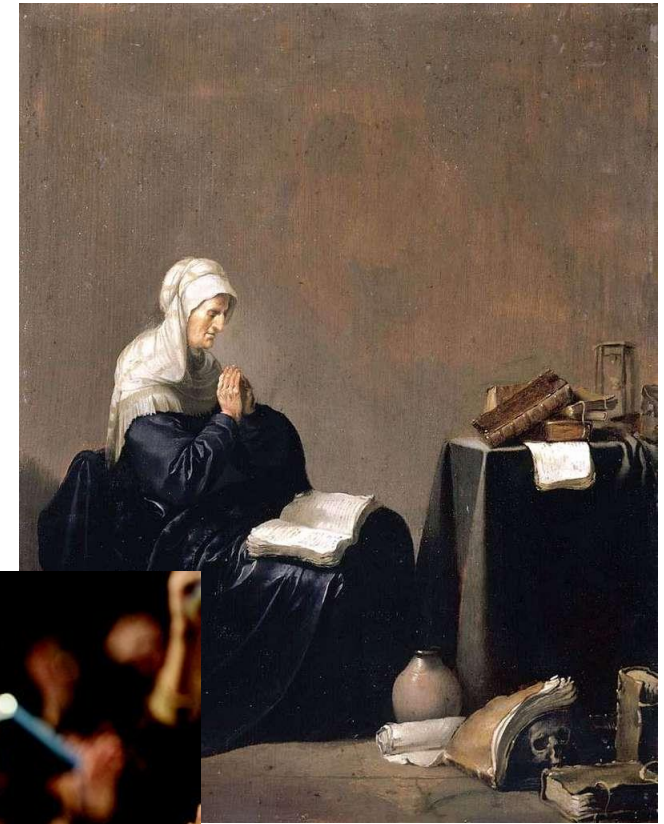
- Prayer, an act of communication by humans with the sacred or holy—God, the gods, the transcendent realm, or supernatural powers. Found in all religions in all times, prayer may be a corporate or personal act utilizing various forms and techniques.
  - Hamman, Adalbert G.. "prayer". Encyclopedia Britannica, 22 Nov. 2023,
- This means every religion that has a god prays!
  - Not just us Christians



# What Does Prayer Look Like



# Christian Prayer



# Why Do We Pray?

- We want to thank someone for the beauties in life
- We may feel afraid, scared, small
- We pray for
  - Forgiveness
  - Strength
  - Help
- We pray when we have no where else to go



# Who Prays?

- Everyone!
  - A Gallup poll says
    - More Americans will pray this week than:
      - Exercise
      - Drive a car
      - Go to work
  - 9 of 10 people pray regularly
  - 3 of 4 people pray daily!



# What's the Difference?

- What makes Christian prayers different than all the other prayers in the world?
  - Christian prayers go to the one and only God
  - A God who listens and cares
  - A god who calls us to call on His name
- But, Philip Yancey did an informal survey and found
  - Only 23 out of 678 people felt satisfied with their prayer life



# What About You?

- Do you find prayer more of a *burden* or a *pleasure*?
  - Do you ever feel guilty about not praying enough
  - Or do you find praying hard
    - What do I pray about?
    - What words do I use?
    - When is it bad enough that I should pray?



# Prayer in America

- Why do you think people in America find their prayer life so unsatisfying?
- Science and technology advancements
  - Do we need God as much or do we have options?
    - Who do you call out to when your child gets sick?
    - What do you do when the weather gets bad?





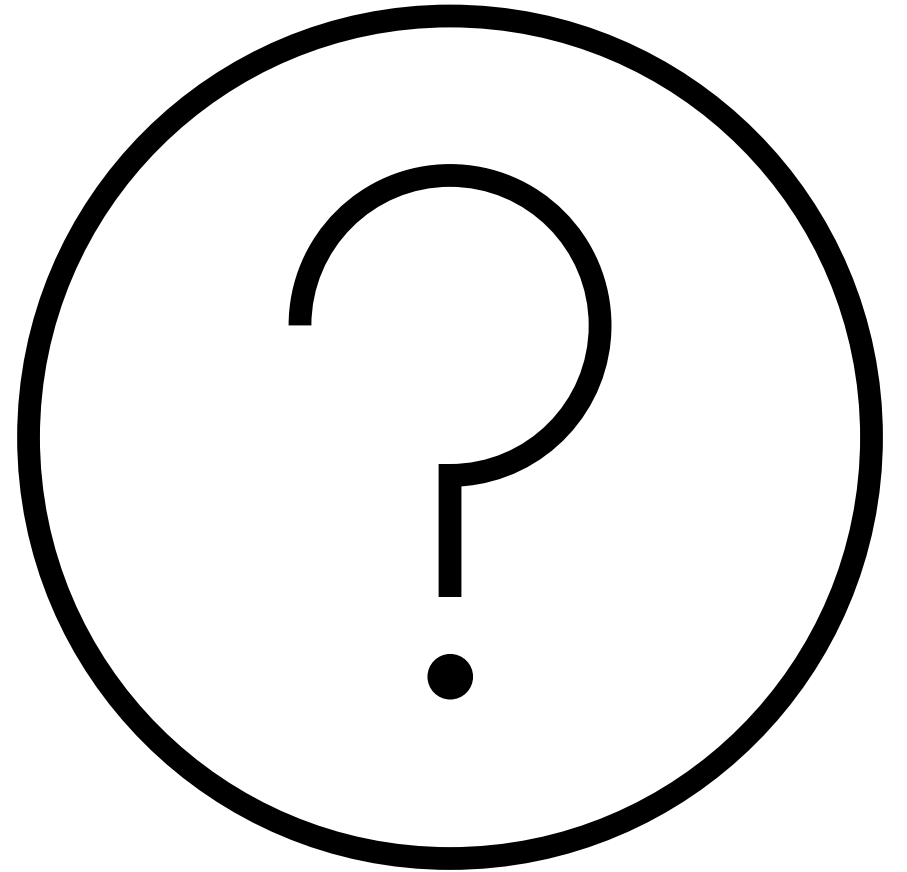
# Prosperity

- “Prosperity may dilute prayer”
  - Developing countries need God to help them
    - They may have no other hope
  - Americans have insurance
    - Stocked pantries
  - Do we feel a need for Gods help?



# Why are You Here?

- The big question
  - Are you happy with your prayer life?
  - Do you have questions?
    - What are they?



# Questions?

- Is God listening?
- Why should God care about me?
- If God knows everything, what's the point of prayer?
- Why do answers to prayer seem so inconsistent and capricious?
- Why does God seem sometimes close and sometimes far away?
- Does prayer change God or change me?



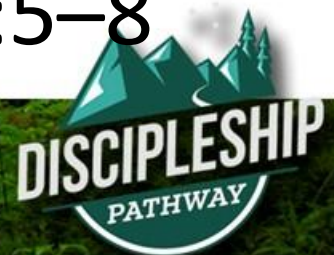
# Right and Wrong

- I have always thought that there is a right and wrong way to pray
- But is there a right or wrong way to pray?
  - What did Jesus have to say about it?



<sup>5</sup> “Whenever you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites, because they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by people. Truly I tell you, they have their reward. <sup>6</sup> But when you pray, go into your private room, shut your door, and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. <sup>7</sup> When you pray, don’t babble like the Gentiles, since they imagine they’ll be heard for their many words. <sup>8</sup> Don’t be like them, because your Father knows the things you need before you ask him.

Matthew 6:5–8



<sup>9</sup> “Therefore, you should pray like this:

Our Father in heaven, your name be honored as holy.

<sup>10</sup> Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. <sup>11</sup> Give us today our daily bread. <sup>12</sup> And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

<sup>13</sup> And do not bring us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

Matthew 6:9–13

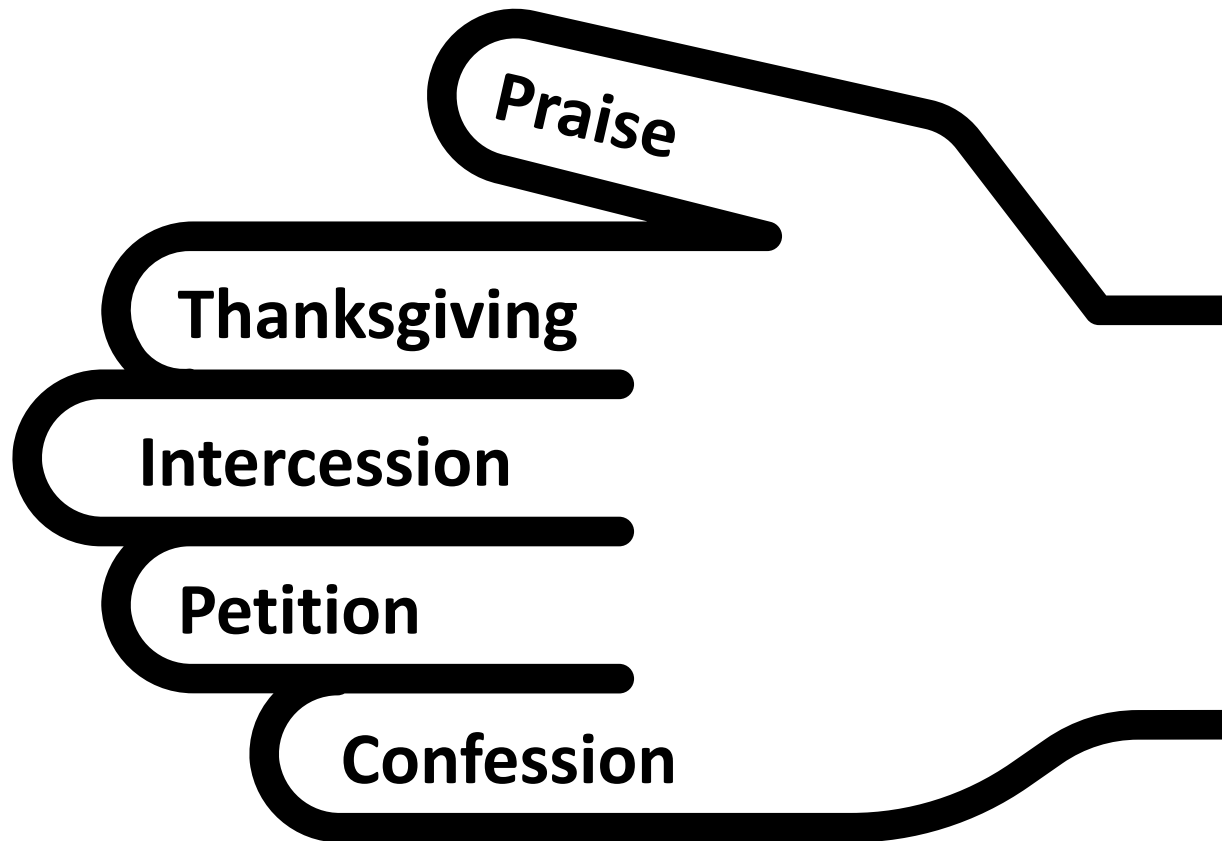


# The Formula

- So, there are some wrong ways to pray!
- Jesus tells us how to pray
  - He has a formula for praying!
    - The Lords Prayer
    - To simplify, there is the hand of prayer method



# The Prayer Hand



- **Praise:** I let my enjoyment and adoration of God overflow into words
- **Thanksgiving:** I thank God for what He has done in, through, and for me
- **Intercession:** I ask God to provide for the needs of others
- **Petition:** I ask God to provide for my needs
- **Confession:** I agree with God about my sin.



# And We are Done!

- And we are done, prayer is easy!
- This is what I have thought for a long time, but...
  - I have never felt like I pray right
  - How many people here are happy with their prayer life?
- If prayer is so simple, we can do it on our hand
  - Why do so many people feel bad about their prayer life?



# Questions

- First
  - How often do you pray?
  - How long do you pray?
  - What do you pray about?
- Now
  - How often should you pray?
  - How long should you pray?
  - What should you pray about?

# Questions

- How would you describe your experience with prayer?
- What do you understand the purpose of prayer to be?
- What do you long to experience in your prayer life?
- What are your expectations of this class?



# From Here On

- “This will not be a guide book”
  - No prayer retreats
  - No fasting techniques
  - No prayers to memorize and recite
  - No time limits
  - No prayer rooms



# What We Will Do

- We will realize prayer is “a privilege not a duty”
- Prayer is how we develop a better relationship with God
- We will look at two big questions through out this study
  - “Why God doesn’t act the way we want”
  - “Why I don’t act the way God wants me to”
    - “Prayer is where these two things meet”



# *Keeping Company with God*

## **View From Above**

Chapter 2



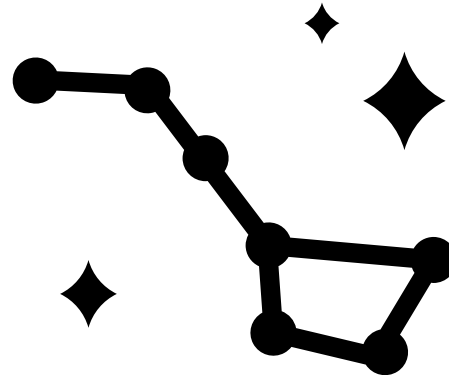
# Perspective

- Let's look at things from two perspectives

- A view from **above**



- A view from **below**









# The Mountain

- At the mountain top looking down what do you see?
  - The people below are small, tiny specs
  - The people below have a long hard way to go
  - Do they know what waits for them on top
- All the problems of life are equally small when viewed from above
  - When you are on top of the mountain what are your worries?



# How Big Are You?

- Looking up at the vastness of space
  - How BIG is God?
  - And how little am I?
- When I observe your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you set in place, what is a human being that you remember him, a son of man that you look after him?

Psalm 8:3–4



# Where to Start

- This is the place to start
  - What is the reality of what God sees
    - God see everything, the big and the small
- But we want God to see my problems, my issues
  - Look at me God, fix my problems God!
    - And how do we pray?
      - With commands, “Fix it this way!”
- And how will God respond?



# Job 42:1–6

<sup>1</sup> Then Job replied to the LORD:

<sup>2</sup> I know that you can do anything and no plan of yours can be thwarted. <sup>3</sup> You asked, “Who is this who conceals my counsel with ignorance?” Surely I spoke about things I did not understand, things too wondrous for me to know.

<sup>4</sup> You said, “Listen now, and I will speak. When I question you, you will inform me.” <sup>5</sup> I had heard reports about you, but now my eyes have seen you. <sup>6</sup> Therefore, I reject my words and am sorry for them; I am dust and ashes.



# Perspective

- Prayer can help shift my perspective from
  - My daily life, my daily worries
  - And shift them to Gods view
    - Note Job **NEVER** got an answer to any of his questions
      - Why? Did God not care about Job?
        - Let's not jump ahead



# But Don't Forget

- With all the bigness and vastness of God
  - God is never far away
- From one man he has made every nationality to live over the whole earth and has determined their appointed times and the boundaries of where they live. He did this so that they might seek God, and perhaps they might reach out and find him, though **he is not far from each one of us.**

Acts 17:26–27



# Direction of Prayer

- By shifting our view, our perspective, from ours to God's
  - We will shift the direction of our prayer
  - From our personal problems and issues
    - To the things around us, to the things God is focused on





# Direction of Prayer

- God already knows ALL our problems
  - And He cares about them all
  - But if all we focus on is telling God our problems
    - What happens?
- We never stop to listen to God
- “Stop fighting, and know that I am God, exalted among the nations, exalted on the earth.”
- Be still and know that I am God.... Psalm 46:10



# We Never Stop to Listen

- God commands us to just STOP!
  - This is a hard command in our world today
    - How long can you sit still in the quiet?
- God wants us to stop what we are doing
  - And be quiet and pray
    - But I have a lot of stuff to get done
    - Yes, but is it more important than what God has to say?



# Philip Yancey

- “My conclusions will unfold only gradually, but I begin here because prayer has become for me much more than a shopping list of requests to present to God. It has become a realignment of everything. I pray to restore the truth of the universe, to gain a glimpse of the world, and of me, through the eyes of God.”



# Philip Yancey

- “In prayer I shift my point of view away from my own selfishness.”
- “Prayer is the act of seeing reality from God’s point of view.”



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**Week 1**