

We believe discipleship is a direction
not a destination.



Prayer: Does it Make a Difference

Week 6

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



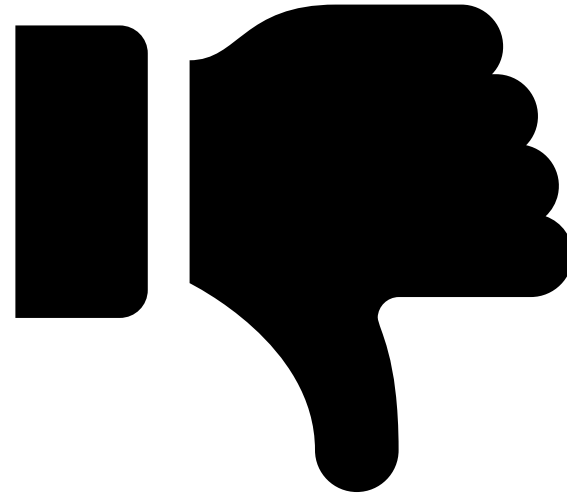
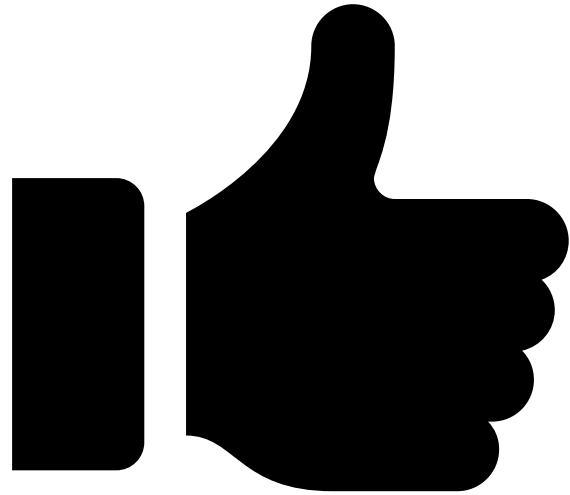
Course Outline

- **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**



Homework

- How did the homework go?



Homework

- What made your prayer time and reading time
 - Successful?
 - Unsuccessful?



The Language of Prayer

Tongue-Tied

Chapter 14



Tongue-Tied

- We are often stopped from praying because of
 - The things around us
 - Our internal thoughts



-Unworthiness-

- I feel unworthy to talk to God, so I don't
- How can you feel unworthy to talk to God?
 - I fought with my wife today
 - Yelled at the kids
 - I'm feeling irritable
 - I gave into my addiction today
- I really need to deal with these things before coming to God



Unworthiness

- All these thoughts of unworthiness are from the devil!
 - Of course you are unworthy to talk to God!
 - We all are
 - God still wants to talk to us
 - Over and over, we see unworthy people talking to God
 - Jonah, Samson, King David, ...
 - We even see Jesus praising the most unworthy
 - The tax collector over the Pharisees



Unworthiness

- When you are feeling unworthy of talking to God
 - This is a good thing
 - You are starting out your conversation properly aligned with God
 - You as unworthy and God as worthy



-Distractions-

- Do you get interrupted while praying? Distracted?
 - Laundry buzzes to be switched
 - Kids fighting upstairs
 - Lawn crew starting up outside?
 - Phone rings
 - Text chain is triggered! Ding! Ding! Ding! Ding! Ding!
- It would be easier without technological distractions of our day!



Distractions

- I throw my selfe downe in my Chamber, and I call in, and invite God, and his Angels thither, and when they are there, I neglect God and his Angels, for the noise of a Flie, for the rattling of a Coach, for the whining of a doore.... A memory of yesterdays pleasures, a feare of tomorrows dangers, a straw under my knee, a noise in mine eare, a light in mine eye, an any thing, a nothing, a fancy, a Chimera in my braine, troubles me in my prayer.
- John Donne (1571-1631)



Distractions

- We are more often distracted by our own thoughts
 - Our thoughts borage us
 - Need to call the plumber
 - What did Jim mean in that email
 - What's for dinner
 - Why didn't I get that promotion
 - I can't focus because of my own mind



Distractions

- Well, you must deal with the distractions
- Mr. Yancy suggests two ways
 - One practical
 - The other crazy
- Practical
 - Figure out what distracts you and deal with it
 - Well, he said there are lots of methods but only one works for him, so...



Distractions

- The crazy
 - Embrace the distraction of your mind
 - Prayer is not a business meeting with an agenda
 - It is a conversation with God
 - Maybe the right thing to discuss is not the war in Ukraine
 - Maybe it is the kids fighting upstairs



Distractions

- The things on your mind are the things you care about
 - The things you struggle with
 - Trace the distraction back to the cause, the desire
 - Pray on this
 - You will not be distracted when the distraction is the focus



-Doing it Right-

- What does a “right” prayer look like?
- On hands and knees
- Silently with head bowed
- A composed prayer
- In a group
- In song
- Long
- Standing with lifted arms
- Face up yelling
- Spontaneous prayer
- Alone
- Through dance
- Short

Doing it Right

- There is no right way to pray
- Jesus taught a model prayer, but otherwise gave few rules
 - But here are three general principles:
 - Keep prayer honest
 - Keep prayer simple
 - Keep prayer up



-Prayer and Personality-

- Who here has taken a personality test?
 - Which one?
 - Myers-Briggs
 - Enneagram
 - What did they tell you?
 - Type of learner you
 - Type of leader
 - Type of personality you have



Prayer and Personality

- What does that have to do with prayer?
 - Do you like order and discipline?
 - Spontaneity and chaos?
- We should pick the prayer form that best suits us
 - A scheduled time, with written notes
 - A more spontaneous emotional style
 - Group prayer
- Use whatever helps you get praying



Prayer and Temperament

- Kathy Callahan-Howell, from Leadership
- Intuitive feelers - Creative exercises involving imagination, imagery, and journaling
 - Insert your name into a passage and meditate on it with the personal application
- Intuitive thinkers – Scientifically minded people
 - Taking a Scripture passage and asking basic investigative questions: who, what, when, where, why, and how
 - “What area of my life will this help with?”



Prayer and Temperament

- Sensory judges - Orderly system of meditation appeals to the spirit more than abstract notions of peace, grace, and joy
 - Meditate on putting yourself into the story
 - Jesus on the cross, you on the cross next to him
- Sensory Perceivers – Meditating through activity (Hiking, fishing, swimming,...)
 - Pray while washing the dishes



-Helpers-

- Even when we are tongue-tied
 - When we don't know what to say
 - In the same way the Spirit also helps us in our weakness, because we do not know what to pray for as we should, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us, with inexpressible groanings. Romans 8:26
- When you are at a loss for words
 - The Spirit hears you



-A Gymnasium for the Soul-

- Gymnasium for the Soul?
 - Praying and reading your Bible are like exercise
 - Read through the Psalms and what do you find?
 - Prayers for all stages of your life
 - Happiness, Loss, Anger, Grief,...
- Reading and pondering on each of these prayers strengthens you
 - It works out the muscles of your faith in these areas

A Gymnasium for the Soul

- But like any exercise when you stop your gains don't just stop
 - They retreat
 - We must continually exercise these muscles "faith muscles" to stay strong
- When you say it's hard praying
 - Is it because you are weak?



City Person vs. Farmer

“The biggest difference I can see is that city people always think that this year has got to be better than last year. If they don’t get a raise, acquire something new, or find themselves somehow better off, they think they’re failures. Farm folks look at things a bit differently. We know there are going to be good years and bad years. We can’t control the weather. We can’t prevent a bad crop. We can’t control sickness. So you learn just to work hard and make up your mind to take what comes.”



The Language of Prayer

The Sound of Silence

Chapter 15



The Sound of Silence

- Have you ever not “felt” Gods presence?
 - Felt God was silent?
 - Any examples?



-Touching the Void-

- What helps in these quiet times
 - You got this, don't give up, God is here you just don't see/hear him
 - This might help but
 - More often it is
 - God is not here now! Why!
 - My God why have you forsaken me?!



Touching the Void

- When we don't hear God what do we think?
 - He doesn't care?
 - I did something so bad He is ignoring me?
 - I don't deserve to talk to God
- But what is the **truth**?
 - God cares!
 - There is nothing so bad that God won't forgive you
 - You don't deserve to talk to God but He does anyway

Touching the Void

- But those thoughts are there
 - And you are not alone
 - Let's look at some verses



¹ How long, LORD? Will you forget me forever?

How long will you hide your face from me?

² How long will I store up anxious concerns within me,
agony in my mind every day?

How long will my enemy dominate me?

Psalm 13:1–2



⁸ If I go east, he is not there,

and if I go west, I cannot perceive him.

⁹ When he is at work to the north, I cannot see him;

when he turns south, I cannot find him.

Job 23:8–9



Touching the Void

- You will go through quiet times
 - Maybe you are drifting away from God
 - But maybe it is just a quiet time
 - Think of Job
- Don't stop praying because of this
 - That is one sure way of not hearing God



-Survival Strategies-

- When you feel God is quiet what can you do?
 - Mr. Yancy gives three strategies
 - Examine yourself
 - Move on
 - Pray with others



-Survival Strategies-

- Examine yourself
 - What are you praying for/about
 - Things for you?
 - Or the things of God
 - What are your motives in prayer
 - Are they self focused (selfish)
 - Or are they God focused?



Survival Strategies

- You did a self check-up and can't find a problem
 - Then what?
 - Move on: Accept the quiet time
 - Don't worry about the lack of feeling
 - It does no good to obsess over this
 - Maybe, just maybe it is intentional
 - God may be quiet to give you time to grow



Survival Strategies

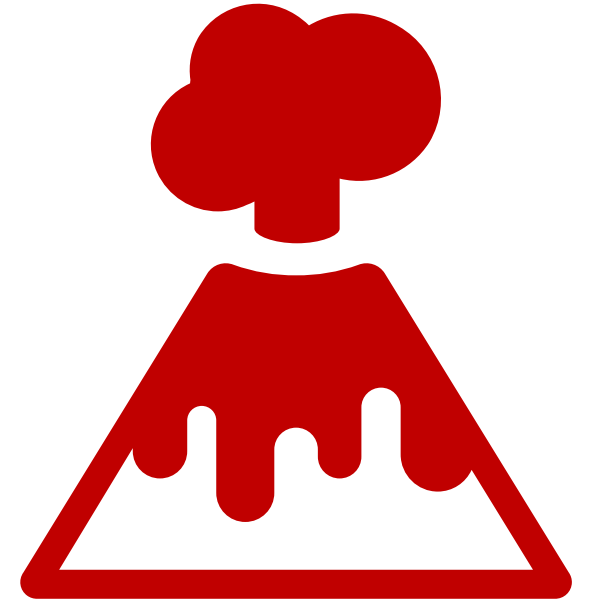
- Last strategy, lean on the faith of others
 - The Bible calls for us to pray in groups
 - “where two or three come together in my name there I am with you”
 - This gives you two things
 - Time to focus on the needs of others
 - And time to let others focus on you



-Free Partners-



God is free to do what
He wants



Free Partners

- Do you have free will?
 - Yes
 - So does God
- We have come to the expectation that when I call you
 - You should always answer
 - And if you don't
 - I text you and you better respond
- This is insane! We expect the same of God!



Free Partners

- The truth is
 - God has more to complain about my lack of presence than I His



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