**The Power of Prayer**

*Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your heart to him, for God is our refuge.***-***Psalm 62:8*

I hope you noticed how the last two series were prioritized. It was purposeful that we practiced listening before speaking. When it comes to our conversations with God, remember the old saying, “God wants us to listen more than we speak, that’s why He gave us two ears and only one mouth.” Unfortunately, many of us either don’t know or don’t practice this in our prayer lives. We offer our long lists of what we need (or think we need) from God and then “hang up the phone.” We become frustrated when it seems God is not answering our petitions in a timely fashion. We repeat our prayers again and again, as if God may have forgotten or didn’t have time to get to them yet. These can be dangerous prayer practices, because they put us in a position that minimizes the benefits we can gain from our relationship with God. Don’t misunderstand, God does not change and what He has to offer us does not change, but how we approach Him in prayer and in our daily lives can minimize or maximize the growth of spiritual “fruit.”

Two significant times in scripture, God tells us *specifically* how He wants us to approach Him in prayer and worship. The first is in the details of construction of the Tabernacle, the first “house of worship” for God’s people. Looking through Exodus, you will find several chapters devoted entirely to God’s instructions on how to build the tabernacle. If your Bible contains a drawing of the tabernacle, it might be helpful for you to review it.

Picture yourself entering the tabernacle as you begin your prayer and worship time with the Lord.

**Please read Exodus 25:1-9 and describe the purpose of the tabernacle:**

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**According to Exodus 40:6, what is the first item you encounter as you enter the tabernacle?**

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**According to Leviticus 4:14-20, 23-24, 28-29, 33, what was the purpose of the altar of burnt offering?**

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**According to Exodus 40:7, what is the next item you encounter as you approach the Most Holy Place, the tent within the tent, to meet with God?**

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**Accouding to Exodus 30:17-21, what is the purpose of the basin?**

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**As we enter the Most Holy Place, what three items do we find?**

**Exodus 25:31\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Exodus 25:23\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Exodus 30:1\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**What is the purpose of these three items?**

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As we look closely at the construction of the tabernacle, the details so carefully laid out by God Himself, we see the manner in which we are to approach Him in prayer and worship. The first order of business as we enter into our time of prayer and worship is atonement for our sins. Under the New Testament, or new agreement, we no longer have to offer a living sacrifice. Jesus paid that price for us. So our time of atonement is simply confessing our sins and asking for forgiveness. As the blood ran down the altar of burnt offering, so does the blood run down from the cross to cover our sins. The next step is the washing, or becoming clean before the Lord. Again, Jesus has done this work for us, and we pause at the basin to cleans ourselves in forgiveness and thank Him for it. As we enter the Most Holy Place, we offer our prayers as sweet incense to God. Because we are covered in the righteousness of Christ, we can meet with Him in His holiness. It is here that we have free communication with the Lord and can be justified in our prayers.

The second place in scripture where God tells us specifically how to approach Him is found in Matthew 6:9-13. Here again, we see a time of praise/submission (Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven) and confession (forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors) before we petition God with our needs (lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil one), finishing with our submission again to His will, even over those things we just prayed about (for yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever, Amen.)

So, a scriptural framework for prayer might look like this: Praise, Repent, Ask, Yield. This prayer framework is easy to remember using the acronym P.R.A.Y. Some people also like to use A.C.T.S. which stands for Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, and Supplication. Either framework offers an appropriate order that puts praise and confession before petitions. Approaching God in a way that recalls His instruction in scripture is pleasing to Him.

After we have settled into our prayer time, many of us still struggle with how to pray for our needs and the needs of our loved ones. Again, use of scripture is a sure bet. Before we explore this, let me be clear. *God does not require fancy language or carefully constructed prayers to hear us and know our needs.* Your prayer time does NOT have to contain scripture prayer to be heard by God. I beg the Lord to move in your heart so that you know His accessibility has been made perfect in the sacrifice of Jesus. Don’t let Satan lie to your heart and make you feel like any prayer you offer is not good enough.

Having said that, we return to the purpose of this study. That is, to increase our experience of God’s word in our daily lives. Many have found there is a unique communion when we honor God’s Word in our prayers to Him. In my own experiences, using scripture prayer is one of the quickest ways to invite the presence of the Holy Spirit to increase over me and my time with Him.

Don’t be intimidated by scripture prayer. There are a few very simple ways to compose scripture based prayers. Again, there are surely more and better ways, but perhaps these will get you started:

1. **Petition.** Find a scripture that fits what you need to pray for (we will work on how to do this during our group time this week). Offer the scripture as a petition to God, as one would make a request of another in authority. For example, if you struggle with anxiety, in general or over a particular situation, an appropriate verse might be 2 Timothy 1:7. You can petition the Lord to fulfill this promise in your life and heart by saying, “God, please show me that you did not give me a spirit of fear but a spirit of power, of love, and of a sound mind. Help me to see how you would have me live this promise in my life.”
2. **Drop in a name**. In some cases, you may want to take a scripture and just drop in the name of the one you are praying for. For example, I often use Ephesians 3:14-21 to pray for a friend or loved one, and often for myself. “For this reason, I kneel before the Father, from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of His glorious riches he may strengthen [me] with power through His spirit in [my] inner being, so that Christ may dwell in [my] heart through faith. And I pray that [I], being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge-that [I] may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.” Another example of this might be Philippians 1:6, “[I am] confident of this, that he who began a good work in [Amy] will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.”
3. **Claim.** Chose a scripture that speaks in some way to the prayer you wish to offer. Take the passage word-for-word and repeat it out loud (remember the power of our spoken words!) in an authoritative way. One of my favorites in times of struggle is 2 Corinthians 4:8, and I claim it as a promise from God to me personally, knowing that He will keep it. “[I am] hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed.” In those times when I feel like I might be spiritually crushed, in despair, abandoned, or destroyed, I claim the victory that Jesus has already won for me. There is an immediate sense of empowerment in praying with expectation, before I see it played out completely in my life. As I claim this scripture aloud, the victory is palpable.

Many scriptures lend themselves to all three prayer interpretations, and the choice of which to use is based on your own personal needs or preference. For example, returning to 2 Timothy 1:7, we can claim that promise word-for-word, we can petition as showed in the example, and we can drop in a name, saying, “For God did not give [Jen] a spirit of fear but a spirit of power, of love and of a sound mind.”

In week six we discussed the importance of memorizing scripture. Having God’s Word available from memory is a great way to arm ourselves for life’s battles. As events come upon us, we can call up appropriate verses and turn them into scripture prayer or simply speak them out loud over the situation.

Whenever you have the opportunity, practice these scripture prayer styles aloud. We spent an entire week understanding the power of our spoken words. Now is the time to use that power. One of my favorite teachers once said, “When we speak scripture out loud, it sounds like our own voice to us. But to Satan, it sounds like the voice of God.” God invites us to use His own words to unleash His power over our lives. Let’s take Him up on it!

**How did God speak directly to you through this week’s lesson?**

**What is your response to Him?**

**Please write Jeremiah 23:28-29** **and commit it to memory:**

**Group Workshop:**

Using the workshop pages that follow, practice finding and writing scripture prayers.

Suggested Resources:

* Bible Concordance found in the back of most Bible translations
* *Where to Find it in the Bible: The Ultimate A to Z Resource,* Ken Anderson, Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1996

Date:

**Prayer Workshop-Scripture Prayer**

Prayer Concern:

Appropriate Scripture:

Prayer:

Prayer Concern:

Appropriate Scripture:

Prayer:

Prayer Concern:

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**Prayer Journal-Supplication**

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| **Date/Prayer Concern** | **Appropriate Scripture** | **Date/God’s Movement** |
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| **Date/Prayer Concern** | **Appropriate Scripture** | **Date/God’s Movement** |
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