

# 21 Days of Prayer

## Week 2 – 1/19 Types of Prayer: Adoration Confession Thanksgiving Supplication (ACTS)

Summary of Key Points from week 1:

- Prayer is fellowship with God.
- Fellowship has been initiated by God. Prayer is our response to his offer of fellowship.
- Prayer can be learned – “teach us to pray”

### Praying with Scripture

Praying with scripture helps us learn how to pray.

Just as a child learns to talk from listening to adults, we learn to pray by reading the prayers of “spiritual adults”.

Look at the Psalms. An entire book of prayers, most of which are sung. You’ll see prayers of praise, thanksgiving, complaint, questioning, anger, frustration, joy and other emotions. It’s an orchestra of prayers that as we pray scriptures we learn to play the instruments beyond our own personality and create a symphony of prayer.

Good conversation, is two-way conversation.

Scripture is the word of God – God’s fellowship extended to us.

2 Peter 1:19 Because of that experience, we have even greater confidence in the message proclaimed by the prophets. You must pay close attention to what they wrote, for their words are like a lamp shining in a dark place—until the Day dawns, and Christ the Morning Star shines in your hearts. (NLT)

### Adoration – Look Up

Adoration is often called worship. Adoration is expressing your deep love to God for His character and who He is. Looking Up - Focusing your love upon God such that all other loves are shadows. Looking Up reminds us of the “why” we pray that we learned last week – I want to know Him. I want to love Him.

Matthew 22:37 Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." (NIV)

This expression of Adoration, is an engagement of the heart, and it changes our perspective, as it causes us to look up, see who He is, desire more of Him, and correspondingly change who we are. You are changed by what you love. The very core definition of who you are and what motivates you, is a function of what you love. This is why loving God with everything we are is the first and primary commandment – not simply because He is deserving, but because His desire is to transform us into His image, and we are transformed by what we love.

If you love anything in this world more than God, you will ultimately crush it under the weight of your expectations for it to fulfill you, and you’ll end up with a broken heart. Only God can bring the rest for your soul, and the fulfillment of our lives and this is why we adore Him. The

ultimate reason for our disappointment is we don't love God first. Loving God first and primary is what enables us to fulfill the 2<sup>nd</sup> commandment – love one another.

Adoration should take a primary position to the other types of prayers as it provides the right perspective and motivation to guide us in prayer.

- The more we see God's perfect holiness and justice, the more we will see our flaws and our need for Confession.
- The more we see God's character and attributes, the more we will Thank Him for his works.
- The more we see God's sovereign majesty as our creator, the more we will recognize our complete dependency upon him and go to him for every need in Supplication.

Want to see life change? Change what you adore. You are what you love.

### Confession – Look In

The goal of confession is repentance: change my heart's adoration.

The real goal of Confession, is to change the adoration of my heart, which is repentance.

Repentance is a transformative change of the heart and the way we think and behave.

Confession is changing the priority of my loves such that He is placed as the principle love of my life.

We need to confess not just when I do something I'm ashamed of and feel guilty over, but rather live a life of repentance that is constantly changing, reorienting what I adore, and what I believe will truly fulfill me - fellowship with God.

We confess with an understanding that sin is grievous and so serious that Christ had to die and pay an infinite cost for forgiveness. Yet forgiveness is offered freely with grace such that we are no longer under condemnation. We must understand both sides of forgiveness – The infinite cost of forgiveness, and The free gift of forgiveness.

### The Infinite Cost of forgiveness

Forgiving sin was one of the greatest feats God has ever accomplished. God had to pay a debt he did not owe, he had to bear the burden of our sin, and he had to pay the cost - - he had to give His only begotten Son to endure the punishment of sin, on behalf of us. The result of not recognizing the infinite cost of forgiveness, is that we become so easily entangled in our sin again, as there's no aversion to repeat the failure.

### The Freedom of forgiveness

If we don't recognize the freedom of forgiveness, we depend on our own attempts to restore fellowship by trying to appease God, which is self-righteousness.

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. (NIV)

Just - the cost for your sin has already been paid by Christ. It would be unjust of God to charge you more than what Christ already paid.

Faithful – no matter how many times you sin, God continues to be faithful to forgive. His grace is so much greater than our sin, because of the infinite cost of forgiveness, and now it is a free gift of fellowship extended to us.

Seeing both the infinite cost of forgiveness, and the free gift of forgiveness, leads to repentance, leads to change, which is a key to consistently growing into the character of Jesus.

### Thanksgiving – Look Around

Thanksgiving is praising God for what He has done. I can begin Thanking God for his work of salvation, grace, and his forgiveness such that I can be in relationship with Him – that I get to know him! There's nothing greater I can thank Him for. When we do, our thanks is no longer bound by circumstance nor condition.

1 Thes 5:18 give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. (NIV)

God offers something much greater than deliverance as a victim from my circumstance, but becoming an overcome in the midst of my circumstance. What would you rather have – change in circumstance, or strength to overcome circumstance?

Habakkuk 3: 17-19 Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my Savior. The Sovereign Lord is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, he enables me to tread on the heights. (NIV)

The opposite of thanks is complaining.

Num 11:1 ....the people complained about their hardships in the hearing of the Lord... (NIV)

Num 11:4 The rabble with them began to crave other food, and again the Israelites started wailing and said, "If only we had meat to eat! (NIV)

Complaining leads to craving. Thanks leads to contentment.

Thanksgiving helps breaks the chains of craving for the misdirected adorations of my heart.

### Supplication – Look Forward

Supplication is asking God requests for yourself, or others.

How do we know what the right things to ask for are? We don't always know. But we can have the desires of our hearts changed by starting with Adoration.

Psalms 37:4 Delight yourself in the LORD; And He will give you the desires of your heart. (NAS)

Two criteria should be in place to bound our prayers of supplication – we should ask for 1) our desires that are consistent with His character, 2) His will.

## 1) Our Desires

Examine our requests against scripture and our understanding of God's character; then ask with "shameless audacity".

Luke 11:8 I tell you, even though he will not get up and give you the bread because of friendship, yet because of your shameless audacity he will surely get up and give you as much as you need. (NIV)

## 2) Ask in light of God's will.

1 Jn 5:14 This is the confidence which we have before Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. (NAS)

If His will is something different than our request, then we know that His will is better than our requests. This also serves as a heart check – can we really be willing to let God give us whatever is in His will rather than ours? If not, we've identified an idol.

Leaving our requests in God's hands, bound by whatever is in His will, brings rest. We can experience peace and confidence in knowing that He's in control, and He's going to bring about what's best because He's a good Father, and He wants what's best for his children.

We see this same pattern in Jesus prayer in the garden – his desire and God's will:

Matthew 26:39 ... "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will." (NIV)

"God will either give us what we ask for, or give us what we would have asked for if we knew everything he knew." - Tim Keller

### Application: Praying ACTS over scripture

"From this Scripture . . . .

- Adoration – ...what can I Adore about God's character?"
- Confession – ...what can I Confess and change about my desire, attitude, or behavior?"
- Thanksgiving – ...how can I Thank God for what He's done or doing?"
- Supplication – ...what can I request in Supplication?"