



ELEMENTS

Week 5: Prayer

RECALL

DISCUSS YOUR EXPERIENCE:

Over the last couple of weeks you have discovered several key truths about studying God's Word: (1) It helps us to see life from God's perspective and not simply as we perceive it (**R**eveal); (2) Proper context is necessary for accurate interpretation (**R**eject); (3) All Scripture contains timeless truths (**R**ecognize); and (4) All Scripture is beneficial for daily living (**R**espond). In what ways has the focus on Scripture impacted you spiritually? Discuss with the group.

ICEBREAKER:

Write down the following emotions on small pieces of paper (one word per piece of paper): angry, happy, sad, disgusted, shocked, apathetic and disappointed. Now fold the pieces of paper up and put them in a bowl. Have each member (or couple) select a piece of paper without revealing their word to the other members of the group. Using the scenario that they are in a local restaurant and have just received their meal; tell the members to "act out" their initial response to the food delivery using the given emotion, without speaking. Have the other members of the group guess which emotion the person is revealing.

Communication is the means by which we express our feelings, thoughts, concerns, etc...to one another. Communication can be verbal or non-verbal, but in all cases requires some effort to convey a meaningful message.

FOCUS:

During the next two weeks we will take an in-depth look at prayer, the believer's primary method of communicating with God. Most people would agree that healthy relationships are dependent upon ongoing communication and yet, many spend very little time communicating with God. The Bible teaches that prayer is an act of coming into God's presence. Is it any wonder why our relationship with God seems distant or strained when little to no time is spent communicating with Him? In order to build and maintain a vibrant relationship with God, prayer must be an essential, ongoing part of your life and not simply an afterthought.

This week our focus will be on Jesus' "model prayer," where He reveals five (5) distinct characteristics of communicating with God.

REVEAL

PRAY FOR GUIDANCE:

Now take a few moments and ask God to help you understand, grasp and apply the spiritual truths of this week's selected Bible passage.

Matthew 6:9-13 (HCSB)

⁹ "Therefore, you should pray like this: Our Father in heaven, Your name be honored as holy.

¹⁰ Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

¹¹ Give us today our daily bread.

¹² And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

¹³ And do not bring us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. [For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.]"



REFLECT

UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT:

As a group, utilize your study bibles or on-line resources to help you answer as many of the following questions about the selected passage as you can. Keep in mind, these questions are intended to be a guide and you may not be able to find all of the answers or have time to address each one in the group.

1. Who? Who wrote the book and/or passage? Who was the intended audience? Who are the main characters in the story?
2. What? What are some of the key words and their meanings in the passage?
3. When? When was the book or passage written? What was historically occurring at the time?
4. Where? In what geographic location did the story take place? What was the setting?
5. Why? Why was this book or passage written? What was the main purpose?

RECOGNIZE

KNOW THE TRUTH(S):

Keeping in mind the context of the selected passage (see **Reflect**), read the Scripture as a group and carefully take note of the truth(s) and/or promises God provides. Look for God's promises, plans, provisions and purposes. What did it mean? What does it mean? What meaning is unclear?

In Jesus' "model prayer," He reveals five (5) distinct characteristics of communicating with God. We are to use each of these aspects to help balance and complete our communion with Him.

1. Verse nine (9) reveals the first aspect of prayer called PRAISE. Define praise in your own words. Who or what is intended to be the object or focus of our praise? Why do you think God wants us to praise Him? Does He need our praise? When is praise appropriate? What is the purpose of praise? Why is praise listed as the first aspect of prayer?
2. In verse ten (10) we find the second component of prayer: SUBMISSION. Make a list of other words that reflect the idea of submission. Why do you think most people view this word or concept in a negative sense? Discuss the positive aspects of submission. Why is this component important to God?
3. PROVISION is the third facet of prayer that Jesus reveals in verse eleven (11). Why do you think that Jesus used the word "daily" in this part of His model prayer? Use available resources to find the various biblical meanings of the word "bread." Does "bread" reflect more a "need" or a "want"? What type of "bread" are you praying for on a daily basis?
4. Jesus teaches in verse twelve (12) that CONFESSION is the fourth important part of prayer. Discuss the correlation between confession of our shortcomings, forgiveness of others' shortcomings, and answered prayer? Do you think most would want to be forgiven based on how they forgive others? Use Matthew 7: 1-5 for further study or discussion.
5. The final component(s) of prayer that Jesus mentions is DIRECTION/PROTECTION and is found in verse thirteen (13). Compare this verse with Matthew 26:41; 1 Corinthians 10:13; Hebrews 2:18; Hebrews 4:15; and James 1:13-17. Does God ever lead a person into temptation? Is temptation sin? Discuss your answers.

RESPOND

TAKE ACTION:

You've now prayed asking God to **R**eveal Himself and help you understand the selected passage; you've **R**elected on the context in which the passage was written; you've **R**ecognized God's timeless truths; and now you must **R**espond. To help



determine your response, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. Jesus begins His “model prayer” with the word “Therefore.” When we **R**espond to Him in prayer, what attitudes or characteristics is He asking us to avoid? How do we keep our heart and motives pure for prayer?
2. Jesus says, “you should pray like this.” Is He indicating our **R**esponse in prayer is optional? Why or why not?
3. Why do you think Jesus instructed the listener to “pray like this” rather than to simply “pray this?” How might this change our **R**esponse through prayer?
4. Both sentences in verse ten (10) begin with the word “Your.” Why is this important? How should the use of this language affect the way believers pray?
5. Discuss your understanding of what Jesus meant when he said God’s kingdom should look “on earth as it is in heaven.” How must this shape our prayer life?

THIS WEEK:

Your assignment is to study and meditate on five (5) passages of scripture that contain biblical models for each component of prayer. Use the following schedule as a guideline and ask God to help you learn how to communicate better with Him:

Monday: Praise - Psalm 145

Tuesday: Submission - Mark 14: 32-42

Wednesday: Provision - Psalm 23

Thursday: Confession - Psalm 51

Friday: Direction/Protection - 2 Thessalonians 3: 1-5

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