

## PARENTING BY THE BOOK

### “LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY”

#### 1. PRAYER

- a. Robert Murray McShane once said, if you want to **humble** a Christian, just **ask them about their prayer life**.
- b. **Most** Christians, if they are **humble** and **self-aware**, will **admit** that they **struggle with prayer**.
- c. **Prayer humbles us**.
  - i. St. Teresa said, when it comes to **prayer**, **we are all beginners**.
- d. **BUT...** the **main reason** why most Christians would say I **struggle with prayer** is because we struggle to **PRIORITIZE** prayer in our **daily lives**.
- e. There are lots of **REASONS** for that:
  - i. One is **BUSSINESS**.
  - ii. Another is **DISTRACTIONS**.
    1. **Technology** Today, a virtual **conspiracy against the interior life**.
    2. There is a multi-billion-dollar industry whose **only goal** is to **monetize our attention**.
  - iii. Another is **CYNICISM**.
    1. Today everything can be **explained** by **science** and **physics** and **chance**.
      - a. And so **even when God does answer prayer**, we often think, well, was that just going to happen anyway?
      - b. Was that **just a coincidence** or **karma**?
  - iv. And finally, we **struggle to pray** because we **DON'T FEEL LIKE WE'RE GOOD AT IT**.
- f. We don't know **where to start** and we don't know **what to say**.

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2. **NOTE:** In fairness, many of our religious traditions give us very little in the way of **EQUIPPING** us on **HOW TO PRAY**.
  - a. But for all of the above reasons, many Christians, for the most part, **don't really pray very often**.
    - i. We may **value** prayer... We may **desire** to pray... We may even **believe** in prayer... **BUT WE DON'T PRAY**.
3. This is a powerful statement... **THERE IS NOTHING MORE IMPORTANT IN OUR SPIRITUAL LIFE THAN LEARNING TO PRAY**.
  - a. **PRAYER IS NOT A PART OF OUR SPIRITUAL LIFE... IT IS OUR SPIRITUAL LIFE!**
  - b. That statement may cause you to **question** and think that is **extreme**... **BUT** if you will stay with me for a week or so, I'll do my best to **explain** what I mean.
4. **DISCUSS: WHAT IS PRAYER... HOW WOULD YOU DEFINE IT?**
  - a. **PRAYER** is an **umbrella term** in the Bible for all kinds of ways of relating to God.
  - b. The **definition** I like is that **PRAYER IS THE MEDIUM THROUGH WHICH WE COMMUNICATE AND COMMUNE WITH GOD**.
    - i. It's **NOT** just **TALKING TO GOD**... it's also **LISTENING TO GOD**.
  - c. We often think of **PRAYER** as a **MEANS TO AN END**.
    - i. **WE ASK... GOD RESPONDS**.
  - d. **BUT, PRAYER (OUR LIFE WITH GOD) IS NOT A MEANS TO AN END... IT IS THE END!**
    - i. Our whole **spiritual journey** is about **DEEPENING OUR LIFE WITH GOD**... AND THAT IS WHAT **PRAYER IS**:
      1. **IT IS ABIDING IN A LOVING RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD BOTH NOW AND FOREVER**.

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2. **THERE IS NOTHING MORE IMPORTANT!**
  3. **AND WE NEED HELP TO PRAY WELL.**
5. **THE DISCIPLES WERE SELF-AWARE ENOUGH TO KNOW THAT THEY NEEDED HELP WITH PRAYER.**
- a. That’s why they say to Jesus in Luke 11:1, **“LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY”**
  - b. **THEY NEEDED HELP TO PRAY, AND I BELIEVE WE DO TOO.**
    - i. That is why the verses in Luke 11:1-9 **ARE SO IMPORTANT!**
6. **HERE IS AN OUTLINE OF WHERE WE ARE GOING IN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS:**
- a. Today we will look at Luke 1:1-4
    - i. **THIS IS WHERE JESUS TEACHES US HOW TO PRAY.**
  - b. Next week we will look at Luke 1:5-13
    - i. **THIS IS WHERE JESUS TEACHES US ABOUT WHY WE KEEP PRAYING.**
      1. **BECAUSE PRAYING IS HARD AND WE OFTEN FEEL LIKE GIVING UP, WE ARE GOING TO TALK ABOUT HOW TO BUILD A PRACTICE OF PRAYER.**
  - c. As we come to this teaching today, and next week, if our heart’s desire is like the disciples, **“LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY”**.
    - i. I believe... **GOD WILL TEACH US TO PRAY.**
    - ii. If we have receptive and eager hearts... **GOD WILL TEACH US TO PRAY.**