

CFBC Men's Study: Energizing Your Prayer Life – **PRAYING THE WORD OF GOD!**

- ✓ "Scripture is the best support for a vibrant prayer life" (James & Joel Beeke)
- ✓ We need to grow in a "greater dependence on the Holy Spirit & a lifelong pattern of praying Scripture promises & Scripture truth" (Joel Beeke)
- ✓ "Do you need instruction in how to pray? Encouragement to keep on praying? Guidance in how to pray, what to pray for? The words to express your desires? Look to Scripture, and learn to pray. Seek the Spirit's wisdom to pray with Scripture" (Joel Beeke)
- ✓ "One reason your prayer life may be drooping is that you have neglected the Holy Scriptures. Prayer is a two-way conversation. We listen to God, not just to talk to Him. We do not listen to God by emptying our minds and waiting for a thought to spontaneously come to mind. That's non-Christian mysticism. We listen to God by FILLING our minds with the Bible because the Bible is God speaking in written form" (Joel Beeke)

I. THE PROBLEM THAT EXISTS

It just might be that the people of God have never suffered from as much *prayerlessness* as now exists in the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The problem: we can pray very repetitive prayers -- praying the same old things about the same old things.

We believe in prayer (yes, of course we do!) -- and the Spirit of God prompts us to pray, but because we always say the SAME old things about the same OLD things, it can seem though all we do in prayer is simply 'HEAP UP EMPTY PHRASES'.

We often can fall prey to some of the tools that Satan uses to KEEP Christians from praying powerful prayers...

[in other words, what are some cunning deceptions of Satan?]

- 1. Satan fuels the spirit of rugged individualism** -- by keeping Christians independent of each other.
- 2. Satan digs ruts of boring prayer.**
- 3. Satan delights to cultivate theological orthodoxy without spiritual passion.**
- 4. Satan encourages idle preaching on prayer.** Satan loves to keep pastors content with *talking about prayer* rather than leading their people in prayer gatherings.
- 5. Satan promotes a 'success mentality' in the ministry.**

Wanna know the solution?

"Open the Bible
Start reading it
Pause at every verse
Turn it into a prayer." (John Piper)

John Piper: "I have seen that those whose prayers are most saturated with Scripture are generally most fervent and most effective in prayer. And where the mind isn't brimming with the Bible, the heart is not generally brimming with prayer."

"Prayer is best experienced with an open Bible" (Daniel Henderson)

II. THE REASONS TO PRAY THE WORD

1) Biblically

The Lord's Prayer; Jacob pleaded the promises (Gen 32:9-12); Daniel (Dan 9:1-2); Acts 4:24-26
Jesus on the cross (Ps 22:1 - my God my God; Ps 31.5 - into your hands; Ps 22.31 - it is finished)

2) Personally

"Pray over the Scriptures. Christians just setting out on the path of prayer sometimes pray for everything they can think of, then they glance at their watches, and discover they have been at prayer for all of 3 or 4 minutes! This experience sometimes generates feelings of defeat, discouragement, even despair. A great way to begin to overcome this problem is to pray through various biblical passages" (DA Carson).

Why? doing this gives direction to your prayers and momentum to your prayers. [it gives life, joy, words, excitement, variety!] No matter how sleepy, tired, distracted you may be when you go to pray, you know that you'll first hear from God from the Bible and then respond in prayer to God in light of what He's said. that's communication (that's a conversation, 2-way conversation)

**First, hear FROM God (=Bible)
Then, talk TO God (=prayer)**

III. HOW TO PRAY THE WORD

SO -- WHERE TO START?

A Simple Guide to Praying Scripture:

1. Read the **passage** slowly (a verse)
2. **Repeat** a phrase
3. **Turn** the words into a prayer
The 3 R's:
 - ✓ **Rejoice** [I praise you because...],
 - ✓ **Repent** [Forgive me for...],
 - ✓ **Request** [I ask that you would...]
4. Pray that **verse** until you're done. Then **go** to the next verse. (If that verse is unclear to you or of nothing comes to mind, go to the following verse.)

Some Simple Helps (from Don Whitney)

- ▶ If you're praying through a psalm...
- ▶ you simply read that psalm line by line, talking to God about whatever thoughts are prompted by the inspired words you read.
- ▶ If your mind wanders from the subject of the text, then take those wandering thoughts Godward, then return to the text.
- ▶ If you come to a verse you don't understand, just skip it and go to the next verse.
- ▶ If you don't understand that one, move one.
- ▶ If you do understand it but nothing comes to mind to pray about, go to the next verse.
- ▶ If sinful thoughts enter in, pray about them and go on.
- ▶ You may read 20 or 30 verses in a psalm and yet on a given day you have only 5 or 6 things come to mind. No problem.

"Praying the Bible isn't complicated. Read through a few verses of Scripture, pause at the end of each phrase or verse, and pray about what the words suggest to you." (Don Whitney)

"I have learned to ... season my prayers with the Word of God. It's a way of talking to God in His language – speaking His dialect, using His vernacular, employing His idioms ... This is not a matter simply of divine vocabulary. It's a matter of power. When we bring God's word directly into our praying, we are bringing God's power into our praying. Hebrews 4:12 declares, "for the Word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword." God's Word is living, and so it infuses our prayers with life and vitality. God's Word is also active, injecting energy and power into our prayer" (Joni Eareckson Tada).

"Nothing has brought more vigor, satisfaction, and consistency to my own prayers as this discipline of praying Scripture" (T.M. Moore).