

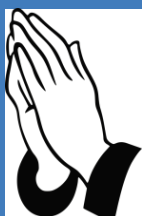
# UPGRADING YOUR PRAYER LIFE





## Initial Survey

# UPGRADING YOUR PRAYER LIFE: -- WORKBOOK AND NOTES --



1. Please define the “concept of prayer” as you currently understand it. [All answers are correct]

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2. What other terms would you use for “prayer”?

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3. What do the common letters of the anagram, A., C., T., S. stand for in regards to your own prayer life and prayer planning? [ All answers are correct]

- a) A = \_\_\_\_\_  
b) C = \_\_\_\_\_  
c) T = \_\_\_\_\_  
d) S = \_\_\_\_\_

4. When and where do you usually pray?

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What do the common letters of the anagram, A., C., T., S. stand for in regards to your own prayer life and prayer planning? [ All answers are correct]

**NOTE:** There are several interpretations of this anagram: they all are purpose driven.

- a) A = Acknowledgement of God's Supreme Lordship
  - b) C = Conversations With the All Wise (Simple 'Friend speak')
  - c) T = Thanksgiving for blessings (Specific in nature)
  - d) S = Submission Declaration
  
  - e) A = Adoration of God and The Whole God-Head
  - f) C = Confession of Faith
  - g) T = Thanksgiving for blessings (Specific and General)
  - h) S = Supplication for others and addressing of needs
  
  - i) A = Anticipation Of Reunion With God
  - j) C = Concerns Report ...How it is all going from your eyes,
  - k) T = Tasking Discussions (Options presented)
  - l) S = Strength In Meeting The Missions Requirements
  
  - m) A = A
  - n) C = C
  - o) T = T
  - p) S = S
- The A. C. T. S. paradigm is not the only way to pray and is not directly required by any scripture, but it can be helpful in organizing and planning your prayer life.

1. In Matthew 6:9-13, Jesus gave us the Lord's Prayer. Do you see any of these 'elements' in that prayer?
2. What do you think the purpose of the Lord's Prayer as outlined in Matthew actually is?
3. How can the Lord's Prayer help mature Christians?



## Question: "What is the Lord's prayer and should we pray it?"

**Answer:** The Lord's Prayer is a prayer the Lord Jesus taught His disciples in [Matthew 6:9-13](#) and [Luke 11:2-4](#). [Matthew 6:9-13](#) says, "This, then, is how you should pray: 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.'" Many people misunderstand the Lord's Prayer to be a prayer we are supposed to recite word for word. Some people treat the Lord's Prayer as a magic formula, as if the words themselves have some specific power or influence with God.

The Bible teaches the opposite. God is far more interested in our hearts when we pray than He is in our words. "But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words" ([Matthew 6:6-7](#)). In prayer, we are to pour out our hearts to God ([Philippians 4:6-7](#)), not simply recite memorized words to God.

The Lord's Prayer should be understood as an example, a pattern, of how to pray. It gives us the "ingredients" that should go into prayer. Here is how it breaks down. "Our Father in heaven" is teaching us whom to address our prayers to—the Father. "Hallowed be your name" is telling us to worship God, and to praise Him for who He is. The phrase "your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" is a reminder to us that we are to pray for God's plan in our lives and the world, not our own plan. We are to pray for God's will to be done, not for our desires. We are encouraged to ask God for the things we need in "give us today our daily bread." "Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors" reminds us to confess our sins to God and to turn from them, and also to forgive others as God has forgiven us. The conclusion of the Lord's Prayer, "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one" is a plea for help in achieving victory over sin and a request for protection from the attacks of the devil.

So, again, the Lord's Prayer is not a prayer we are to memorize and recite back to God. It is only an example of how we should be praying. Is there anything wrong with memorizing the Lord's Prayer? Of course not! Is there anything wrong with praying the Lord's Prayer back to God? Not if your heart is in it and you truly mean the words you say. Remember, in prayer, God is far more interested in our communicating with Him and speaking from our hearts than He is in the specific words we use. [Philippians 4:6-7](#) declares, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

**Recommended Resources:** [Prayer, The Great Adventure by David Jeremiah](#) and [Logos Bible Software](#).



Pray with A.C.T.S.

**A.C.T.S. is an easy way to remember key elements of prayer. It's simply prayer in four parts:**

**Adoration** – *"Praise be to God!"* - **Psalms 68:35**

Tell God how much you appreciate Him. Express your love for Him. Praise His power and majesty. This is a great way to begin your prayer time. Sometimes I watch the sun rise, and praise God for the beauty of His creation. You should never run out of praise. *"How awesome are your deeds!"* - **Psalms 66:3**

**Confession** – *"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just, and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."* - **1 John 1:9**

Tell Him where you have fallen short. Be specific. I thank Him for the forgiveness I have in Christ, and ask for help and strength to turn away from future temptations.

**Thanksgiving** – Always *"glorify him with thanksgiving"* - **Psalms 69:30**

You have plenty of reasons to be thankful. Thank God for His love, His faithfulness, His patience and a million other things. Express gratitude for what He's doing in your life. Thank Jesus for dying on the cross for you. Thank the Holy Spirit for indwelling you, and never leaving. Thank Him for being your conscience, your counsellor and that "still small voice."

**Supplication** – *"Make your requests known to God."* - **Philippians 4:6**

Tell God what you want, no matter how small it seems to you. Do you really think any of your requests are big to God the Creator? You should have lots of intercessory prayer here. Remember: As a Promise Keeper, you are committed to pray for your pastor and your church every day.



# The First Key To Prayer

Charles Spurgeon once wrote, “You who are King of Kings and Lord of Lords, we worship you. “Before Jehovah’s awful throne, we bow with sacred Joy.” We can truly say that we delight in God. **There was a time when we feared You with the fear of bondage.** Now we reverence you, but we love as much as we reverence. The thought of your omnipresence was then horrible to us. We said, “Wither shall we flee from your presence?” (Psalm 139:7). *[Is there no place where we are safe from your all seeing eye?]* It seemed to make hell more dreadful, because we heard, “If I make my bed in hell, behold , you are there (v. 8). *[We can not even escape God’s all knowing, total-awareness, even in hell.]*”

- I. In this statement from Spurgeon we see the great problem with all prayer life. To upgrade our prayer life **we must first up-grade our knowledge of God.**
- II. Upgrading our prayer life is not so much in up-grading the ‘place we pray’, or ‘the form we use to compose’ our prayers. It is in rising to understand that **“God is working with us, already, if we are working for Him.”**
- III. The great problem with the “War Room” is that the focus is placed on time, place, and manner. You do not improve your spirituality by the building of a prayer-room any more than if you were to refrain from eating peanut paste right before you pray. It is in the rejection of the sentimentality of the “War Room” phenomenon, that we begin to up-grade our real life in prayer. Remember, Jesus said, “...don’t stand on the street corner to seen praying and being more spiritual than all others. That is what a Pharisee does, and it does not work.
- IV. A person who builds his ‘prayer closet’ out in a clear glass phone box, is not more spiritual, but less. We can not escape the all-knowing nature of God, and we can not live in a world based on our perfect purity. **We are Christians, not Puritans...**





# The First Key To Prayer

- V. In getting to know God better, we are really getting down to the hard, but essential, side of prayer up-grading.
- VI. **What are** 20 things about God that you know, or have recently learned, that are not part of the “Omni’s”. [Beside, ‘omnipotent’, ‘omnipresent’, ‘omniscient’, ‘omnichronal’ [← existing for all time, before and after time], thus ‘omni-eternal’], ‘omniloving’, and ‘omnijust’, **what do you know about ‘God’ that is pertinent to our lives today as Christians? List them on paper.**
- VII. Digest **Philippians 4:8-9** and **Romans 14:18** in preparation for the in-class discussion.
- “Think” on these things.
  - “Practice” these things, and the God of peace will be with you.
  - “Knowledge” thus comes, in part, by **thinking** and **practicing**, by becoming open and in active service to God.
  - “Knowledge” can come by books and preachers, if accompanied with **personal application** and **totally involved active services** that precede from **reading** the word of God. [“If you can not read, then find one who can and listen.”]
  - More** real knowledge comes by reading than by preaching. Paul therefore told Timothy to prescribe and teach these things, giving much time to reading. **I Timothy 4: 11-14** *Real ‘prayer’ starts in the word...*
  - NOTE: No one can teach false doctrine if all they are doing is reading scripture....the problem comes when the teaching / preaching and opinionated sides come into play, but God inspired the word in such a way that He is clear and very revealing as to who and what He is all about, if we will but “seek” Him.**

**Discussion:** How do you ...

- a. **Personally express your acceptance of God's supreme authority, normally, in prayer?**
- b. **Personally express your awe at His holiness?** Do you think about His holiness on your own? How often do you do so?
- c. **Is it necessary to express your current understanding of "God" in your prayers?** Why or why not? What can it continually accomplish for the one praying?
- d. **Can you ask God questions about Himself in your prayers?** ---If so, what would you ask Him in your next prayer?
- e. **Why do you believe Jesus give us the 'Model Prayer' in the first place?** What does the context around the 'Model Prayer' say to you, personally?
- f. **How do you see this quote from Spurgeon reflecting on the Lord's prayer, and those opening words, "Our Father which art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name."?**
- g. **What does the term 'hallowed' mean to you?** What other terms can you use?
- h. **What are you going to pray tonight?** What will you ask and what will you declare?





# The Lord's Prayer Analyzed:

The A. S. D. A. P. Fundamentals Of Prayer

1. -Acknowledgement of His Sovereignty
2. -Submission-bow to His Sovereignty
3. -Dependence on His Sovereignty
4. -Acceptance of His Sovereignty
5. -Pledge to His Sovereignty

*Our Father, which art in heaven,  
Hallowed be thy Name.*

*Thy Kingdom come.*

*Thy will be done in earth,*

*As it is in heaven.*

*Give us this day our daily bread.*

*And forgive us our trespasses,*

*As we forgive them that trespass against us.*

*And lead us not into temptation,*

*But deliver us from evil.*

*For thine is the kingdom,*

*The power, and the glory,*

*For ever and ever.*

*Amen !!!*

**NOTE:** When viewed from this perspective, the Model Prayer is more of a modelling of our heart-attitude, than it is a modelling of our vocabulary and the basic requirements that are to be expressed in our prayers. Outside of the occasion there on the mount, these words are not found in any other prayer in the New Testament, but the heart-attitudes expressed here are found in everyone of the other recorded prayers.



# Meditating On God's Word: Praying The Book Of ... Acts

**"An unschooled man who knows how to meditate upon the Lord has learned far more than the man with the highest education who does not know how to meditate."**

*---Charles Stanley*

**"Prayer is not monologue, but dialogue; God's voice is its most essential part. Listening to God's voice is the secret of the assurance that He will listen to mine."** --- Andrew Murray

**"God never gives us discernment in order that we may criticize, but that we may intercede."** — Oswald Chamber

*The second key to upgrading your prayer life is learning to bring scripture to your life, and to bring your life to the scriptures. Prayer is then a process of modelling a persons life ever closer to God. It is never a simple list of requests, but a two communication into a deepening knowledge of God and a more complete ambassadorship to the community "for God".*

*The great question is the "HOW?", How do we do this?*

*One of the ways to train ourselves and to up-grade our prayer life is by praying through a specific book of the bible. We can do this by praying through any book of the bible, but we will learn more and up-grade our relationship with God more, by doing it, first, through a book in the New Testament. One very good book to use to acquaint ourselves with the skill is the book of Acts by Luke.*



## Meditating On God's Word: Praying The Book Of ... Acts 1:1-11

1. **Read Acts 1:1-11** from four different translations. Different translations can be found on the internet. [Suggestion: Read from translations you would not normally hear used at church, plus one that you would hear at church services.]
2. The "Setting's" Thoughts:
  - a. What do you personally image the scene in the upper room to have been like?
  - b. What would the disciples have been thinking about?
  - c. If you were there, what would have been going through your mind?
  - d. Why is the material in the bible? Is it just part of the story telling or is there a message in these first eleven verses for me, personally, today?
  - e. If there is a reason that these words are here, what do they teach you specifically?
  - f. What does the 'ascension' cause your heart to really do? ---not what you think it should do, or what you anticipate it doing, what does it actually do in your mind honestly?
  - g. How can you come to appreciate this section of scripture without going totally 'touchy-feely'? How can you have a real reaction, a real encounter with these words?
  - h. **Write your responses down to these questions before coming to class.**

*Prayer is exhaling the spirit of man and inhaling the spirit of God. —Edwin Keith*



## Meditating On God's Word: Praying The Book Of ... Acts 1:12-26

- a. **Read: Acts 1:12-26 from four different translations**
- b. How do you personally think the disciples felt when Jesus Left them?
  - What would have been going through their minds when they could no longer 'see' Jesus?
- c. How do people usually respond to being "left behind"?
  - What thoughts would go through your mind at such a time? How can you deal with that
- d. What could have been going through their minds in regard to Judas?
  - What thoughts would you have if you had an experience of being betrayed by a colleague?
  - If you had been their in the crowd at the death of Jesus, and had not stood up like you would have wanted to do, now that all of the excitement had passed, and Jesus had arose, what would be going through your mind?
  - What would you have been thinking / praying about when you walked past the "Field of Akeldama"?
  - Do we have to deal with individuals who have betrayed the faith today? What can you say to God about that 'adversary' of the church and still be Christian in thought? What do you need to pray about in such a situation?
  - **Why is this passage in the bible? What does it say to us today?**





# Meditating On God's World: Writing Our Own Prayer Psalms

1. Frequently, we all are called on to 'pray' on short notice. These are often 'times of crisis', and not a great deal of thought goes into our prayers in such occasions.
2. That is the nature of the moment, and God is not looking at our expressions as much as He is looking at our hearts. The exposed heart is the best insight into the real person underneath all of the defensive skins we may deploy.
3. The training of that exposed heart is one of the great challenges we face today. How can we up-grade our hearts for the moments of crisis when prayer is our first line of offense and defense?
4. Training for crisis situations, be they extreme or small crisis's, always the results in the person going back to what they have done before, repeatedly. **If** we have done it several times before, it then becomes a tool by which we can tune our lives to 'fear the Lord', ever better.
5. **"The fear of the Lord"** is much more than the response of cringing before a God who is taking notes of all of our digressions, mistakes, and evil thoughts. The term for 'fear of the Lord', in Hebrew, is **"Yirah"**.
6. **"Yirah"** means to *'tune ones life to resonate in harmony with God and His will'*. It is part of *the building of an inner sense of 'reverence', awe, and greater awareness of God.*
7. **"Yirah"** is *being filled with wonder and awe*, of being filled with the hopes of anticipation, even in moments of trouble and crisis. It is an amazement, a mystery, an astonishment, a gratitude. It is a realization of the glory, worth, and the beauty received from viewing the beauty of God. It also means fear and dread, but only secondly.
8. See: **Deuteronomy 10:12, Psalm 111:10, Proverbs 1:7, Proverbs 9:10, 10:27, 14:27, 15:33, 16:6, 19:23.** **What have you learned from these? Put it in your prayer.**



# Meditating On God's World: Writing Our Own Prayer Psalms

1. So 'how' do we go about this? Writing a Psalm a week is a good idea !!!! How do we do that?

**Write down a short sentence on a recent perception of God.**

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**-then rewrite that idea in other words. Do not worry about rhyme or rhythm, just rephrase.**

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**-now amplify that first line in looking one step deeper and write that deeper idea down as line three**

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**-then rewrite that idea in other words. Do not worry about rhyme or rhythm, just rephrase.**

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**-now amplify that first line in looking one step deeper yet again and write that deeper idea down as line three**

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**-then rewrite that third idea in other words. Do not worry about rhyme or rhythm, just rephrase.**

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**\*\*\*\*\* YOU HAVE JUST WRITTEN A PSALM**

**-KEEP YOUR 'Psalms on a separate file on your computer and then after 3 months review where you stand in the 'fear of the Lord', the "Yirah Factor".**





# Meditating On God's World: Writing Our Own Prayer Psalms

## 2. We are required to be always ready to give a defense for the faith that lies with in us. 1 Peter 3:15

- A. "...but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always *being* ready to make a defense, to every one who asks you, to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence;..."
- B. This command that we are to obey requires that we have a ready presentation of the basis for our own faith.
- C. This command that we are to obey also requires that we are skilled in presenting it in gentleness and reverence.
- D. To present your faith, you have to get to know your faith and the things in that faith that compel you to render your total and absolute commitment.
- E. What better place to practice the delivering of that case than with you all loving and all wise heavenly Father. ....***writing your defense down in Psalmic form is one very good way of getting more in-tune with your own faith reasons, building a deeper case for reverence.***

-Keep your 'Psalms' on a separate file on your computer hard drive, and then after 3 months review where you stand in the 'fear of the Lord', the "Yirah Factor", in the areas of understanding, and reverence for the awesomeness of God. ----Then celebrate your growths with God in a special prayer session.



## Reflections:

### Making Ready For Our Evening Prayers

1. Prayer without prior thought, done before the actual moments of prayer, can be very hard. When we are called on to pray, we often think along the lines that we have always used and to which we retreat from the real problems and open hearts that prayer actually calls for.
2. NOTE: There are no real recipes on how to upgrade your prayer life that do not begin in the silence of your own heart and in ensuing acts of selfless reflection ,and loving praise, before we bow our heads.
3. As a child, I was taught to pray with the old nursery rhyme of “Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the Lord my soul to keep, and if I should die before I wake, I pray the Lord, my soul to take. When in the morning light I wake, Show me the path of love to take, And if by callous heart or rebel tongue, I’ve wounded anyone, I pray you’ll forgive at morning sun. If I should live another day, I pray the Lord to guide my way. Amen”
4. This a good ‘formulaic’ prayer to begin with, but over half of the words and ideas are very foreign to a five year old heart, and can be just as meaningless to those who say the same thing over and over and over.
5. The pertinent point is the same that Jesus made in Matthew 6 with the model prayer.....put the real you into your prayers!!! ➔ ➔ .....HOW??

