



# The Personal Practice of Prayer

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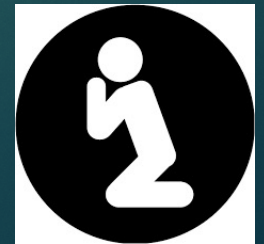
JOURNEY CLASS, FEBRUARY 20, 2022



SOUTH  PARK  
CHURCH

# GOAL: Encourage personal prayer practices

- ▶ In the setting of our recent Journey classes focused on personal practices/disciplines:
  - ▶ Journaling
  - ▶ Scripture memorization
  - ▶ Observing Sabbath
  - ▶ Developing a personal mission statement
- ▶ We are going to “PUT COURAGE IN” in the area of our personal prayer life



# DISCLOSURE: Influences on my own personal prayer life...

- ▶ My parents prayed for me...and my sibs
- ▶ Catholic background..... And loved it, including my experience of praying as a Catholic
- ▶ Baptist friends, Martin Luther, Protestant ministers, multiple churches, liberal Catholicism, retreats, morning prayer, campus ministries, Urbana Missions Conference, Missionaries, Nigerian Christians,
- ▶ Adult children and their experiences
- ▶ Prayer at SPC
- ▶ And the biggest influence: Where the Holy Spirit is taking me





Encouragement #1:

Keep the goal of your prayer life focused on glorifying God in and through your communication with HIM---and in your abiding relationship with HIM.

# “Prayer” for a Christ-Follower

- ▶ Spiritual communication between myself/us and God
- ▶ “talking with God”
  - ▶ *I am speaking, and He is listening....*
  - ▶ *He is speaking and I am listening.....*
- ▶ I am in an amazing relationship, unlike no other I have, with the God of the Universe
- ▶ I am pleasing Him, and glorifying Him, when I make myself intentionally focused on communicating within that relationship
- ▶ EVERY prayer is heard, EVERY prayer is answered—with perfect answers and perfect timing;

# Prayer Life

- ▶ Personal (alone) AND Community (corporate, group) prayer
- ▶ In my thoughts AND with my “out-loud” words
  - ▶ And some would add “in my actions” or “by my behavior”
- ▶ In silence and in shouting
- ▶ In music
- ▶ In designated time and spontaneously throughout the day
- ▶ In structured liturgy and pop-corn phrases
- ▶ In response to the Spirit and all that might mean



# Prayer and the Triune God



Something big is going on....

▶ And we are invited into it!



# Encouragement #2

## Try praying “Trinitarian” prayers

- ▶ Address the Trinity
- ▶ Use the name of each member of the Trinity
- ▶ Bring Praise and Adoration and Requests to each and all at the same time
- ▶ Invite God into your prayer time, with all that can mean.
- ▶ Join the prayer session that is ongoing and never-ending
- ▶ Tap into mystery and timelessness and the “cloud of witnesses” and those who have gone before us in prayer



## Encouragement #3

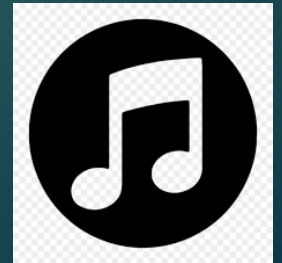
# Address God in the context of your relationship: BE YOU!

- ▶ Use YOUR words that you want Him to hear, from YOUR heart
  - ▶ SIMPLE is NOT STUPID!
  - ▶ *Grant that I may not pray alone with the mouth; help me to pray from the depths of my heart. Martin Luther*
- ▶ You are a CHILD OF THE KING, running into the throne room with permission.
- ▶ God knows your thoughts, but still wants to conduct a conversation.

# “You won’t relent”

## *Jesus Culture*

- ▶ “You won’t relent until you have it all.... My heart is yours.”
- ▶ “Come be the fire inside of me  
Come be the flame upon my heart  
Come be the fire inside of me  
Until you and I are one”
- ▶ “I don't wanna talk about you like you're not in the room  
I wanna look right at you, wanna sing right to you”



# Encouragement #4

## Study how to pray with the Master Teacher

- ▶ What would “Christlikeness in prayer” look like for you?
  - ▶ How will you pursue this?
  - ▶ Where will you observe this?
  - ▶ What textbook must you use for this course?
- ▶ Jesus' own Prayer Life: What stands out for you the prayer life of Jesus?
- ▶ Jesus's explicit instruction about prayer
- ▶ Instruction re: prayer throughout all of Scripture
- ▶ Probing, instruction, and guidance from the Holy Spirit
- ▶ Instruction through the community of faith



# Consider that Jesus prayed as a faithful Jewish man...and as the Son of God....

- ▶ Blessing prayers throughout the day.
- ▶ Many Jewish prayers begin with blessing God....
  - ▶ "blessing" means "to increase"—in joy, in peacefulness
  - ▶ Giving God Honor for His grace towards us.
    - ▶ Blessed are You, our God, King of the Universe



# Jesus' instruction on prayer: The Disciples' Prayer

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

### The Lord's Prayer



- The Lord's Prayer is the pattern for prayer Jesus taught his followers.
- Two versions of the prayer are in the Bible: Matthew 6:9-15 and Luke 11:1-4.
- Matthew's version is part of the Sermon on the Mount.
- Luke's version is in response to a disciple's request to teach them to pray.
- The Lord's Prayer is also called the Our Father by Catholics.
- The prayer is meant for community, the Christian family.



▶ "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.'

For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins. "

▶ Matthew 6:9-15

# A few more thoughts on the content and form of our prayers....

- ▶ WHAT ABOUT “ACTS”?
  - ▶ ADORATION
  - ▶ CONFESSION
  - ▶ THANKSGIVING
  - ▶ SUPPLICATION



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## A few words about "scripted" prayers vs "spontaneous" prayers

- ▶ Both can be very helpful.
- ▶ Both can veer off in the wrong direction.
- ▶ With your personal prayer time, consider what will help YOU most glorify God in your relationship with Him

AND Consider how you PERSONALLY join in when someone else is praying (or singing):

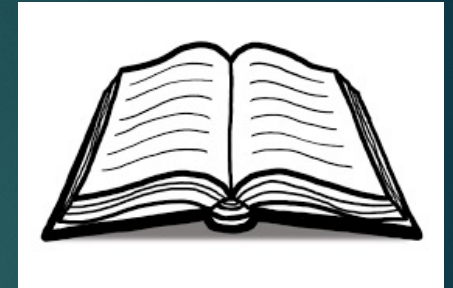
- Keep listening to the person praying—BUT PRAY ALONG WITH THEM (usually silently, but....)
  - Keep God as the audience; and no critiquing the prayer
  - ECHO truth and affirmation back to God
  - Bring your words, observations, “your AMEN of agreement” to the prayer



# Encouragement #5

## Pray from and with Scripture

- ▶ Actively try praying Scripture back to God
  - ▶ Directly from your time in the Word
  - ▶ Directly as you come across prayers in the Bible
  - ▶ Using structured materials that utilize Scripture
- ▶ When you pray Scripture back to God:
  - ▶ Giving TRUTH back to God that has come from God!
  - ▶ Know that your Prayer will be in accordance with His Word!
  - ▶ Gives you insight INTO God's word
  - ▶ Carries Scripture INTO your heart
  - ▶ Proclaims Scripture before the World and the evil one



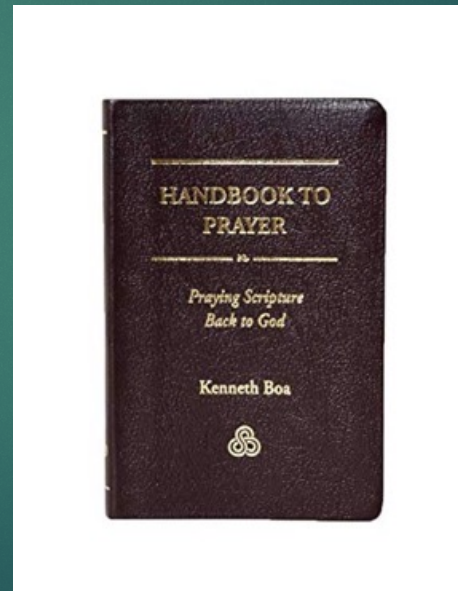


# Handbook To Prayer

## *Praying Scripture Back to God*

*Ken Boa*

- ▶ Includes a "Three month cycle" of daily prayer, morning affirmations, one week intensive plan....
- ▶ The daily format:
  - ▶ Adoration
  - ▶ Confession
  - ▶ Renewal
  - ▶ Petition\*
  - ▶ Intercession\*
  - ▶ Affirmation
  - ▶ Thanksgiving
  - ▶ Closing Prayer



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### PETITION

Growth in Christ

Growth in Wisdom

Spiritual Insights

Relationships with  
others

Faithfulness as a  
steward

Family and Ministry

Personal concerns

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### PETITION

Growth in Christ  
Growth in Wisdom  
Spiritual Insights  
Relationships with others  
Faithfulness as a steward  
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Personal concerns

### Intercession

Churches and ministries  
Family  
Believers  
Evangelism  
Government  
Missions  
World Affairs

## Encouragement #6

# Pray “BIG” and “DESPERATELY” and “CONFIDENTLY”!

- ▶ RECOGNIZE our DESPERATE NEED—AND CHOOSE TO ASK GOD BOLDLY TO DO THAT WHICH ONLY HE CAN DO
  - ▶ Do not be afraid to be specific.
- ▶ KEEP PRAYING FOR THAT NEED, in accordance with His will and His plans for the Kingdom, and for the sake of His name and His glory;
- ▶ PRAY WITH CONFIDENCE that God hears every prayer, and answers every prayer in His perfect timing—and that He will answer this BIG DESPERATE PRAYER THAT WAY.
- ▶ KEEP ON ASKING!!!!
- ▶ WATCH FOR THE ANSWER !!!
- ▶ DO NOT FAIL TO THANK GOD WHEN YOU SEE IT HAPPEN!



## Encouragement #7

Establish a rhythm in your prayer-life  
that works for you and God.

- ▶ This relationship needs quality time
- ▶ This relationship needs good quantities of time
- ▶ Remember Scriptural admonitions:
  - ▶ Pray always.
  - ▶ “In everything”, by prayer and petition....
- ▶ Re-evaluate where you are RIGHT NOW with the consistency, vibrancy, intimacy, time given over to God.



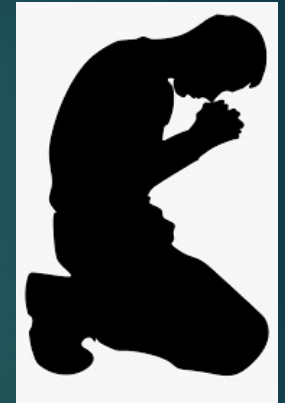
# A PERSONAL AND DEVELOPING STORY

- ▶ Morning prayer: first words
- ▶ Scripture/Handbook to Prayer
- ▶ Outside running/indoor swimming—NOT with bicycling...
  - ▶ Adoration, structured, use of hymns
- ▶ Prayer with Carolyn
- ▶ Breath prayer/short silent prayers
- ▶ Evening meal
- ▶ Community prayer: Sunday morning prayer room, Worship service, Small group, Accountability partner, Iron Men Prayer and with group, Tuesday night prayer
- ▶ In the workplace: for and with patients; staff; resident physicians in training
- ▶ On the phone? Responsive to requests?

## Encouragement #8

Ask God how to keep your prayer time fresh with Him, your relationship growing in Him, and your attention focused on Him and His Kingdom and His activity.

- ▶ Do you need to change your posture of prayer--KNEEL?
- ▶ Do you need to add regular periods of FASTING to your prayer life?
- ▶ Do you need to journal? Use lists? Check off answered prayer?
- ▶ Do you need to take a prayer retreat?
- ▶ Is it time for a prayer walk?
- ▶ Do you need to start praying on the phone? Or do you need to start praying immediately whenever someone asks you to, or you offer to pray and they accept?
- ▶ Do you need to pray with Christians from other churches, ethnic groups, worship styles? Do you need to pray more with children? Or pray for/with the sick?



## Encouragement #9

Your personal prayer life and your community/church prayer life will build off each other, as you invest in each.

- ▶ We learn from God in Scripture and in Prayer—and so we will learn individually and as a community.
- ▶ We carry on the privilege/work of intercession for others in our private time and in time together.
- ▶ We “ECHO” one another—and respond to the promptings of the Spirit.
- ▶ We lean on the promise of what happens when we pray together (*Our prayers answered when we are in agreement, and Jesus is in our midst*)

3:56



## Encouragement #10

Seek in prayer to see how PRAYER and ACTION are connected for you as a Christ-follower.

- ▶ Prayer and GOD'S ACTION
- ▶ Prayer and YOUR ACTION
  
- ▶ Seek to join God in “what He is up to”—both in you and around you.

## BONUS Encouragement

### Various resources on personal prayer that provide structure and content and more

- ▶ Look for ones that FIT you but STRETCH you, in format(s) that work for you.

AUDIO: Adam Nelson: Podcasts on PodBean

Handbook to Prayer: Ken Boa Praying scripture back to God (leather bound, paperback, electronic)

Daily Devotionals *The Daily Bread*, *My Utmost for His Highest*, *Jesus Calling*

*The Valley of Vision* (Puritan prayers)

THE PSALMS –as our teacher

Bible Read-Through with Journaling

*The Circle Maker* Mark Batterson

Missionary Biographies

Outreach Partner regular updates/reports/prayer letters

***Prayercast.com***



## Bonus encouragement: Address blocks to prayer

- ▶ UNFORGIVENESS: don't harbor resentment, bitterness, anger
- ▶ UNCONFESSED SIN
- ▶ SELFISHNESS: Impure and wrong motives
- ▶ IGNORING SCRIPTURE
- ▶ PRAYERS ANSWERED ACCORDING TO HOW WE TREAT OUR WIVES
  - ▶ I Peter 3:7



## BONUS encouragement: Martin Luther on prayer

- ▶ To be a Christian without prayer is no more possible than to be alive without breathing.
- ▶ Pray, and let God worry.
- ▶ If I fail to spend two hours in prayer each morning, the devil gets the victory through the day. I have so much business I cannot get on without spending three hours daily in prayer.

# BLATANT ADVERTISING

## ▶ PRAYER OPPORTUNITIES

- ▶ Iron Men Saturday mornings: 6:30 am (in person and virtual)
- ▶ THRIVE events
- ▶ Sunday Morning Prayer: 8:30 am (in person and virtual)
- ▶ Praise and Prayer at SCP: every other Tuesday evening in person
- ▶ WITH YOUR SMALL GROUP

WHAT IS THE KEY POINT(S) GOD IS  
SPEAKING TO ME TODAY:

