

INTRODUCTION

It is clear when you look at Jesus that He was marked by a lifestyle of prayer. Prayer was clearly one of His favorite habits (Matthew 14:23, Mark 1:35, Luke 3:21). Where does prayer fit in your life? Does 1 Thessalonians 5:17 (“*Pray without ceasing*”) come easily to you? Or do you find that you neglect to pray, or feel your prayers have no power? But if Jesus needed to pray, how much more do we need to pray?! So, what would happen if you prayed 100% more?

SCRIPTURE

⁹*Jabez was more honorable than his brothers. His mother had named him Jabez, saying, “I gave birth to him in pain.”* ¹⁰*Jabez cried out to the God of Israel, “Oh, that you would bless me and enlarge my territory! Let your hand be with me, and keep me from harm so that I will be free from pain.” And God granted his request.*

1 Chronicles 4:9-10

GROUP QUESTIONS

1. Share with your group one of your good habits and one of your bad habits.
2. Read 1 Chronicles 4:9-10. Jabez’s prayer to “*keep me from harm*” foreshadows “*deliver us from evil*” in the Lord’s Prayer (Matthew 6:13). Long before Jesus taught His disciples to pray, Jabez had the wisdom and humility to pray for deliverance from evil. What further insight does this give you into Jabez’s “*honorable*” character?
3. Aaron shared that it was clear that Jabez was marked and labeled by pain. Read Romans 8:1-2. No matter what labels you feel you have, if you are in Christ, your only label in God’s eyes is “*redeemed*”. Jabez escaped his assigned destiny in life. He overcame his past. Why is this message so needed message in our culture?
4. One of the definitions of “*habit*” is “*an acquired behavior pattern regularly followed until it had become almost involuntary*”. Considering that definition, what, if any, downside could there be by making prayer a habit? What are the upsides to making prayer a habit?
5. Read Matthew 6:7. What are some things you can do so that your prayers don’t become rote or stale (“*babbling*”)?
6. Aaron mentioned in his sermon that even one word from God is better than 10,000 words from any human. How often do you take time in your prayer life to actually listen to the Lord versus talking to Him?
7. Read the following passages and note the main thought in each. What impact do you think spending time listening would have your Christian walk?

1 Kings 19:11-13

Habakkuk 2:20

Isaiah 26:3

Psalms 46:10

Study Questions for Community Groups

APPLICATION

Read and pray through the following prayer prompts (if you were at Fellowship's Worship & Prayer Night on Friday, they'll be familiar to you):

ENGAGING WITH GOD IN PRAYER

- What keeps you from engaging in conversation with God?
- What feelings come to mind when you think about approaching God in prayer? Excitement? Hesitation? Cynicism?
- If you're honest, do you think that God enjoys your company? Enjoys hearing from you? Enjoys being with you?

PRAYER PROMPT: Did any of your answers to these questions surprise you? If so, take a few minutes to pray about those things.

EXPECTATION WHEN ENGAGING WITH GOD

- Is prayer a regular part of your life or something that you only do on special occasions?
- Do you believe God hears you when you pray?
- Can you think of a time when you prayed and saw a situation change, or experienced a change in your own heart?

PRAYER PROMPT: Is there anything you've been carrying around that you know you need to give to God, but you're afraid to give up control? Afraid prayer won't be enough? Afraid God doesn't hear you or doesn't care? Dare to take God at His word for the next few moments and cast your cares upon Him. Trust that He hears and He responds. (1 Peter 5:7)

EMOTIONAL AUTHENTICITY WHEN ENGAGING WITH GOD

- Think about how you approach God when life is good, and how you approach God when life is hard. Is there a difference?
- Do you find it difficult to be totally honest with God?
- Do you ever feel like you need to clean up your act emotionally before coming to Him?
- What do you do when God feels distant?

PRAYER PROMPT: What activities or spiritual disciplines could you begin to incorporate into daily practice to help you approach God from a place of emotional authenticity? Spend a few minutes thinking on that now. If you struggle to come up with any ideas, offer that to God and ask for His help. Take a moment to be completely honest with Him.

WHERE CULTURAL ENGAGEMENT & GOD INTERSECT

- When tragedy strikes in our culture (i.e. natural disaster, school shooting, etc.) how do you see people respond?
- How do you personally respond to those situations? Prayer? Volunteering/donations? Anger? Doubting God's goodness?
- How does the hope you have in Christ determine how you respond to the issues our culture faces?

PRAYER PROMPT: As a member of a society that can feel chaotic and turbulent at times, what are some things you can do to steady yourself in Christ? What can you do to point others to Christ? Spend a few moments praying about these things and for those in our world struggling with crisis and tragedy.

FOR FURTHER STUDY

1. Read the following passages that describe Jesus' prayer life. What times of day did He pray? What situations came before or after He took time to pray? Make notes of ways you want to emulate Him in prayer:

SCRIPTURE	TIME OF DAY	SITUATION	HOW I WANT TO EMULATE JESUS
Mark 1:35-39			
Luke 6:12-16			
Matthew 14:1-23			
Luke 22:36-48			