



Brown Community Group Discussion Guide

“Prayer” Series Lesson 9 – April 10, 2016

Praying Continually and Earnestly

I. Lesson Starters:

Is it wrong or inappropriate to pray for something over and over and over? If you do, does this mean that you do not “believe with faith the first time you prayed”? Are we fervent and zealous in our attitude toward praying?

We will break the series into multiple lessons/subject matter:

1. Why Does God want us to Pray?
2. The Effectiveness of Prayer
 - a. Does Prayer Change the Way God Acts?
 - b. Effective Prayer made possible through Jesus
 - c. Who are we supposed to pray too?
 - d. Role of Holy Spirit
3. Important Considerations for Effective Prayer
 - a. Pray “According to God’s Will”
 - b. Praying with Faith and Obedience
 - c. Forgiveness and Humility
 - d. *Praying Continually and Earnestly***
 - e. Waiting on the Lord, What about Unanswered Prayer?
4. Praise and Thanksgiving

II. Continuing in Prayer Over Time:

Deuteronomy 9:24-26; 10:10

24 You have been rebellious against the Lord ever since I have known you. 25 I lay prostrate before the Lord those forty days and forty nights because the Lord had said he would destroy you. 26 I prayed to the Lord and said, “Sovereign Lord, do not destroy your people, your own inheritance that you redeemed by your great power and brought out of Egypt with a mighty hand.

10:10 Now I had stayed on the mountain forty days and forty nights, as I did the first time, and the Lord listened to me at this time also. It was not his will to destroy you.

Genesis 32:24-28

24 So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak. 25 When the man saw that he could not overpower him, he touched the socket of Jacob’s hip so that his hip was wrenched as he wrestled with the man. 26 Then the man said, “Let me go, for it is daybreak.” But Jacob replied, “I will not let you go unless you bless me.” 27 The man asked him, “What is your name?” “Jacob,” he answered. 28 Then the man said, “Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with humans and have overcome.”

- Moses twice stayed on the mountain for forty days and nights before God to pray for his people.
- Jacob wrestled with God and would not let go without a blessing.

Luke 5:16

16 But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.

Luke 6:12

12 One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God.

Jesus is our ultimate example of prayer. Prayer over a long period can often be for the same thing as in the case of Moses or Jacob. It is perfectly fine and acceptable to earnestly seek God for an answer to a specific prayer on multiple occasions.

- Paul asked God three times to remove the thorn from his side (2 Cor 12:8)
- Jesus himself asked that the cup be removed from him twice to God on Mark 14:36 and 14:39
- Earnest repetition in prayer for a deeply felt need are not examples of Jesus forbidding of “empty phrase” or “many words”

Praying continually means that you are in “continual” fellowship, time spent with the Lord.

Acts 6:4

2 So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, “It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. 3 Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them 4 and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word

- Apostles freed themselves of regular and work duties so that they could specifically dedicate time to prayer

III. Praying Earnestly

Hebrews 5:7-9

7 During the days of Jesus’ life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with fervent cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. 8 Son though he was, he learned obedience from what he suffered 9 and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him...

- Jesus prayed earnestly
- Earnestly: 1) serious in intention, purpose, or effort; zealous; 2) showing depth and sincerity of feeling; 3) seriously important; demanding or receiving serious attention
- If we attempt to fake emotional intensity with an outward show of emotion, this may not be consistent with our heart; others will sense our hypocrisy

IV. Group Questions:

1. In earlier lessons of this series, we studied that “Anything you ask in Jesus name will be answered”; Discuss this previous truth in parallel with us “continually praying” for the same thing
2. Discuss examples of what you have found that helps you be “diligent and continual” in your prayer life? Why is this so hard at times to do?
3. What are the main ingredients of being “fervent and zealous” in our attitude toward prayer?
4. Using the Jesus and the Apostles as an example, what can we do in our daily lives to “prioritize prayer and free up time”?
5. Discuss the type of inner emotions that God desires when we pray; Do we approach being fervent, zealous?
6. While we are generally taught that prayer can be any conversation with God, in Hebrews 5:7-9 discuss the words “reverent submission” and its place in prayer?