



Next Level Praying

Onward... Forward... Upward!



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Foundations:

Instructions for using this guide:

- Be sure to have a Bible, a pen, and at least an hour.
- Find a quiet place where you can speak out loud to God without distractions.
- Take the needed time to look up the Scriptures and read them through.
- Prayerfully answer all the questions.
- Talking with God takes time... Don't rush!

The Entry Level Of Prayer - Relationship

The entry to prayer is knowing your sins are forgiven. The Model prayer in Matthew 6 opens with "Our Father". A relationship is required, without one prayer is futile. Answer the questions below:

- Have I ever turned from sin and placed my faith in Christ alone for my salvation? **Yes or No**
- Can I sin and feel no remorse? **Yes or No**
- Am I convicted and chastised when I sin? **Yes or No**
- Do I have the inner witness of God's Spirit that assures me I am a new creature in Christ? **Yes or No**
- If you are uncertain of your salvation, turn to God and tell Him you are at this moment trusting Jesus' shed blood for forgiveness of your sins.

Take a moment and thank the Lord for His mercy & grace in your life. Pray to Him as your Father.

Let's Begin...

Introduction

Prayer is the greatest force on earth. E. M. Bounds went so far as to say, “God shapes the world through prayer.” As Christians, we are called to partner with God in intercession for the implementing of His will on earth. Jesus plainly instructed His followers to pray—“Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven” (Matt. 6:10).

Prayer is not so much about my will being done in heaven, as it is about God’s will being accomplished on earth. Prayerful exchange leads to agreement where man’s will meshes with God’s will. And through the medium of intensified intercession, we pray the future into present circumstances.

Intensified intercession is the need of the hour. Andrew Murray said, “The sin of prayerlessness is a proof . . . that the life of God in the soul is in deadly sickness and weakness.” If we are to witness the power of God in our generation, we must get beyond the basics. Under the guidance of the Spirit, we must actively participate in the outworking of His will.

The point of Next Level Praying is to inspire us to move on to new heights. The “stages” presented here are not intended to provide a chronological, linear timeline, or some type of precise technical graph. We must get beyond surface-level prayer. Let’s move to the NEXT LEVEL of prayer!

1 - Asking

Action Step - Take at least 60 seconds and ask the Lord to challenge, convict, and encourage you in your prayer life during this hour.

ASKING... is entry-level praying. Jesus said, "Ask, and it shall be given you" (Matthew 7:7). Here is prayer at its most basic level...

- Abraham petitioned God for a son... and Issac was born (Gen. 15:2)
- Elijah asked God to send fire from heaven... and it fell (1 Kings 18:36-38)
- Hannah prayed for a son... and Samuel was born (1 Sam. 1:10-19)
- All of these examples accomplished God's will in God's timing.

Application:

1. Ask the Lord to change your heart to resemble His. How does your heart need to be softened or changed to resemble His? Confess and continue asking.

2. Ask the Lord for the Holy Spirit to lead you as you pray through this pamphlet.

3. Spend some time asking that God's will would be accomplished during this Prayer Advance in your life and your group. Be specific! Ask Him to speak, and express to Him that you are willing to listen and obey.

2 - Interceding

Intercession is about standing in other people's shoes and representing them before God. It means to "entreat in favor of" or to "come between." Therefore, an intercessor is one who prayerfully places himself between God and human dilemmas. He is a "go-between" who wrestles in the secret place for deliverance or a desired outcome.

Andrew Murray said, "We must begin to believe that God, in the mystery of prayer, has entrusted us with a force that can move the Heavenly world, and bring its power down to earth."

Consider Moses as he interceded for Israel (Read Exodus 32:1-14). Moses had lingered on Sinai, and the people became restless. While Moses was receiving the commandments—including the prohibition against "graven images"—the Israelites wanted an "image." So they concocted a golden calf, which was a misrepresentation of God. Aaron then built an altar and announced a feast day to worship the calf. Then the Lord told Moses to rush down from the mountain because the people had corrupted themselves. Amazingly, as Moses interceded for them, God told Moses to leave Him alone so His wrath could wax hot and destroy them. Upon their destruction, God assured Moses that He would raise up a great nation from his descendants.

At that point, Moses prayerfully reasoned with God not to destroy the people (vs. 11–14). Moses threw himself between God’s anger and Israel. Here is my paraphrase of Moses’ prayer, “Please forgive their sin—but if not, then blot me out of the book you have written” (Exodus 32:32). God’s purposes were deeply rooted in Moses’ soul, and that shaped his prayer. His prayer implemented God’s plan. His intercession reflected God’s redemptive intentions.

As we are connected to the mind and heart of God, we stand in the place of a mediator, representing the people before God. Intensive intercession is praying for someone else as if they were you. All the faculties are engaged: mind, emotions, and will. This sort of praying is not mimicking or merely repeating prayers from the Bible. Nor is it commanding or demanding the Godhead to do our bidding. To the contrary, intensified intercession cries out according to the God-implemented desires resident within our hearts.

Application:

1. List the names of at least two people who the Lord has placed on your heart for a certain need. If you cannot think of two offhand, ask the Lord who you should pray for.
2. Now go before the Lord on their behalf. Take their serious need or situation and pray in their place to the Lord for them. Take your time and be specific.

3 - Seeking

Seeking is a more than simply casual requests. After inviting us to ask, Jesus said “Seek and you shall find...” The word “seek” carries the idea of actively searching or an endeavor. It moves beyond a simple appeal to diligent pursuit of God.

Paul employed seeking prayer when he asked three times that his “thorn in the flesh” might be removed (2 Cor. 12:7-10). He did not give up after the first petition which yielded no result. At length Paul did not get deliverance, but he got something much better. He received insight and grace to endure. His persistent seeking went beyond entry-level asking and resulted in an alignment to the heart of God.

The kind of prayer needed today is not some worked-up feeling. It is wrought in our souls by the Holy Spirit Himself.

Application:

1. What are your deep-seated and long-held aspirations and desires?
2. Take some moments now to pray more fervently for the things that are dear to your heart.
3. Now ask the Lord to add to this list Ask Him what should be removed. Ask Him to guide you closer to His heart.

4 - Weeping

Many individuals in the Bible had tears...

- David watered his couch with tears
- Hannah wept over her barrenness
- Nineveh wept and fasted
- Paul warned the people day and night with tears
- Jesus wept on many occasions

Tears are heart speech—a liquid language that God understands. Prayer is not just an intellectual presentation to the Almighty. Tears come from deep within—the manifestation of a broken heart. “If our eyes are dry, it’s because our hearts are parched,” said Al Whittinghill.

Application:

1. Ask God to break your heart over the things that break His heart. Ask Him to tenderize your soul. God responds to the cries of the heart. Job said, ‘For God, makes my heart soft and causes me to tremble’ (Job 23:16). Don’t attempt to work up an emotion. Just ask the Lord to soften your hard heart. Ask Him for the gift of tears.
2. A hard heart is an unfeeling heart. Acknowledging callousness is the way to begin in the process of breaking your heart.
3. Pray over the situations that break your heart. Ask the the Lord to work in your heart.

5 - Travailing

Paul likened prayer to the birthing process—“My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you” (Gal. 4:19). He spoke of experiencing distress, like labor pains as he prayed for the Galatian believers. He compared this process to the anguish of childbirth, which includes long periods of prolonged pain and difficulty.

The word “formed” means to fashion, or form like a sculptor shaping material into a clay vessel. The Potter is shaping and molding the clay (us) into the form to suit His purpose. And He uses prayer as a “shaping” tool. And prayer not only shapes the person who is prayed for, but also the person who is praying. Never discount how the Potter uses intercession to affect the world, and mold His vessels. E. M. Bounds said, “God shapes the world through prayer.”

Recall when Elijah prayed on Mount Carmel. Elijah humbly knelt with his head so low that his head touched his knees (see 1 Kings 18:42), travailing in prayer for rain. Then he sent his servant to survey the sky. Initially there were no clouds. Elijah continued to pray and sent his servant to view the heavens seven more times. In due course, there appeared a cloud the size of a man’s hand. The prophet discerned that the cloud was a forecast of coming rain. Elijah instinctively knew his prayer had availed, and a downpour was imminent.

The English word “agonize” comes from the Greek word “agonizomai”. It means severe pain, or writhing with torture—a strong word for sure. Scripture tells us that Epaphras labored fervently in prayer (Col. 4:12). This involved toil or labor.

The idea is using your shoulder to remove a boulder. It is prayerfully wrestling in the power of the Spirit to get the obstacles out of the way. And Epaphras regularly prayed in this way, laboring in prayer, under great duress. As we travail in prayer, God works in us and around us. God doesn’t always change my situation, but He will always change me through prayer!

Application:

1. Pray this now, “Lord, impart to me the spirit of prayer. Teach me to labor fervently in travailing prayer. Deliver me from surface-level praying.”
2. Take some time and identify your main prayer burden. Bring it before the Lord.
3. Ask Him to show you any areas of life that are not alligned to His Word & His will.
4. Now ask Him to work mightily in that situation. Paul incessantly prayed for His need until the Lord told Him specifically the answer. God always answers prayer. Sometimes He says “yes”, sometimes “no”, and at other times “wait”. What is He saying to you?

6 - Wrestling

Wrestling in prayer is an all-out attack against Satan's strongholds. The purpose of wrestling prayer is to overcome the Evil One and his demonic strategies. Jesus has all authority, and He has granted that authority to all His followers.

Prayer is wrestling with sin. Unconfessed sin is a prayer killer. If I look favorably upon sin, God will not hear my prayer (see Psalm 66:18).

Prayer is wrestling with priorities. Jesus mastered His time, and it was always in His schedule to pray. With so much at stake, we cannot afford not to pray.

Prayer is wrestling with intrusive thoughts. Have you started in prayer only to have some thought or troubling scene invade your mind? Wrong thoughts must be rejected. Prayer requires a cleansed mind where every thought is brought under obedience to the Holy Spirit. (See 2 Corinthians 10:5.)

Prayer is wrestling with skepticism. Epaphras prayed that others might be fully assured of God's will (see Colossians 1:7). Do you ever struggle with doubt, doubting that God will answer or doubting your prayers will make a difference? We must pray in faith!

Prayer wrestles with self-interest. Selfish desires can choke out God's purpose and power in prayer (see James 4:2-3).

Take time to wrestle through each of the above areas in prayer!

Notes: