



Core Seminars—How to Grow

Class 5: Prayer

C. Develop a system for prayer

- Pray through the membership directory (Page 1 on the first day of the month and so on...etc.)
- Pray through Operation World
- Make a list (Carson: “All of us would be wiser if we would resolve never to put people down, except on our prayer lists.”)
- Organize prayer categories around the days of the week

B. Find ways to maintain concentration

- Vocalize your prayers
- Pray through Scripture (eg. the Lord’s Prayer, Paul’s prayers, the Psalms, etc.)
- Pray over what we read in Scripture
- Praying through hymns
- Journaling

Class Schedule Overview

Teachers:

1	Introduction
2	All of life worship
3	Bible Intake I
4	Bible Intake II
5	Prayer
6	Confession of sin
7	Fasting
8	Evangelism
9	Serving
10	Stewardship
11	Cultivating Spiritual Fruit I
12	Cultivating Spiritual Fruit II
13	Perseverance

I. Prayer Defined

Westminster Shorter Catechism

Q. 98: *What is prayer?*

A: Prayer is an offering up of our desires unto God,¹ for things agreeable to his will,² in the name of Christ,³ with confession of our sins,⁴ and thankful acknowledgment of his mercies⁵.

Prayer is an act, as well as an attitude of dependence upon God.

II. Prayer is Expected

Matt. 6:5-8; Col. 4:2; 1 Thess. 5:16-18; Eph. 3:12

III. Prayer is Learned

A. Prayer is learned...by praying

“Pray until we pray” ~ D. A. Carson

B. Prayer is learned...by praying with others

1. Develop a prayer-partner relationship
2. Choose good models of prayer

¹ Psalm 62:8.

² 1 John 5:14.

³ John 16:23.

⁴ Psalm 32:5-6; Dan. 9:4.

⁵ Phil. 4:6.

Where do we find such models of prayer?

- (a) Sunday morning and evening services
- (b) Books: eg. *Valley of Vision*, *A Call to Spiritual Reformation*, *Prayer and the Voice of God*, & Christian biographies
- (c) Other Christians

C. Prayer is learned...by meditating on Scripture

Thomas Manton: *“The word feeds meditation, and meditation feeds prayer. These duties must always go hand in hand; meditation must follow hearing and precede prayer. To hear and not to meditate is unfruitful... It is rashness to pray and not to meditate. What we take in by the word we digest by meditation and let out by prayer. These three duties must be ordered that one may not jostle out the other.”*

IV. The Content of Prayer

A. The Lord’s Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13)

“Our Father in heaven”

“Hallowed be your name”

“Your kingdom come”

“Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven”

“Give us this day our daily bread”

“Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors”

“Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.”

B. Paul’s Prayers

2 Thessalonians 1:3-12

- Paul gives thanks to God (v. 3-4)
- Paul prays with an eternal perspective (v. 5-10)
- Paul prays that God might make Christians worthy of his calling (v. 11a)
- Paul prays that God might fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by his power (v. 11b)
- Paul prays that Christ might be glorified (v. 12a)
- Paul prays that believers might be glorified in Christ (v. 12b)
- Paul’s prayer is founded on the grace of God and the Lord Jesus Christ (v. 12c)

Colossians 1:9-14

- Paul prays without ceasing
- Paul prays that believers might be filled with the knowledge of God’s will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding
- Paul prays so that believers might walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, in a way fully pleasing to him

V. Encouragements to Prayer

A. God answers prayer (Matt. 7:7-8; 1 Jn. 5:14-15; Lk. 18:1-7)

B. God is absolutely sovereign (Dan. 9:2-3)

VI. Conclusion – some practical helps for prayer

A. Plan to pray

- Cultivate a habit of prayer
- Set aside time to pray
- It is better to pray often with brevity than rarely but at length
- Redeem the time (while walking, driving, on the bus/metro, etc.)