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Oaks Early Risers Bible Class

**The Oaks
Baptist Church**
Grand Prairie, Texas



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Prayer - Review and Summary Psalm 119

Psalm 119 focuses on the two most basic elements of our spiritual life—the **Word and prayer**. Just a casual reading of this Psalm shows this, but note the following facts: (a) Except for verses 1-3 and 115, every other verse (172 verses) is a form of prayer addressed to the Lord. It provides us with a marvelous illustration of how to pray. (b) In addition, the Psalmist uses ten different terms for the Word of God and all but verses 90, 122, and 132 mention at least one of these terms. The large number of terms is designed to call our attention to the sufficiency of God’s Word and the number of ways God has designed it to meet our needs. Most study Bibles give a list of these with a basic explanation of each term in the footnotes to this Psalm. Psalm 119 teaches us the truth that, regardless of what life brings, God has given us two sources that are totally sufficient and contain everything we need: (a) We have God’s holy Word that gives us wisdom from God, and (b) we have the awesome privilege of prayer that brings the power of God into one’s life for strength, courage, endurance, and deliverance along with spiritual growth and change.

Further, the Psalmist teaches us that the Word and prayer are like inseparable twins because, as the Word reveals God, His all-sufficiency, infinite goodness, love, mercy, and grace, it also reveals man in his insufficiency and total need. But in the process of this, God also offers man the opportunity (through His revealed plan of salvation in the Savior) to come humbly to Him in prayer for His direction and supply. As I read this Psalm, I am further challenged by some other observations. First there is the way the Psalmist consistently turned his focus on the Lord rather than the problem he was facing at any given time, regardless of its nature. A second observation is his constant dependence on God to answer (lead, direct, sustain, deliver, etc.), but never just according to his own personal desires or wants. The Psalmist prayer was that God would answer according to His Word. Let me illustrate: *First*, in at least fifteen places we have a clear contrast where the Psalmist calls out to God regarding a particular problem, but he always turns his gaze immediately to the Lord and His Word. He gets his eyes off the problem by keeping his eyes on the Lord through the Word. Note the following illustrations from Psalm 119:23-24, 51-52, 61, 59-70, 78, 141-143, 161. *Second*, though the concept of praying according to the Word is implicit throughout this Psalm, some 15 or more times the Psalmist specifically makes his requests dependent on the principles of God’s Word with phrases such as, “according to Thy Word.” Note the following examples in verses 25, 41, 58, 116, 145, 156. What is the point? In view of the rest of this Psalm, the Psalmist was not simply praying, help me because you have promised in the Word to do so. For the Psalmist, prayer wasn’t just a matter of “naming and claiming.” Rather, he was praying that God’s purposes and plan might be accomplished in his life. He wanted God’s deliverance, of course, but in ways that would honor the Lord and produce spiritual change and growth in his own life. Psalm 119 is one prayer after another, but always according to the principles, purposes, and directives of the Word. Note in verses 59, 67, 71, 75 and 133 how the Psalmist was committed to what God was doing in his life and this commitment controlled and directed the way he prayed. *Third*, repeatedly the Psalmist prayed for insight and ability to both understand and apply God’s Word. He recognized his complete inability to properly understand and respond in faithful obedience apart from the work of God. Verses 17-19, 26, and 33-38 will illustrate the point.

I think it was Oswald Smith who said, “when we work, we work, when we pray, God works.” Throughout history, the men and women that God has used mightily have been people who knew how to pray and for whom prayer was both a priority and a necessity. As we study the gospels and the training of the disciples by the Lord, we find that prayer is to be a vital part of a disciple’s life. Most Bible believing Christians recognize and accept, at least intellectually, the need and importance of prayer. We read books on prayer, we talk about it, we ask for prayer from time to time, but somehow, the church today is anything but a praying church. We may have a few real prayer warriors, but the VISION AND DISCIPLINE of biblical praying as committed disciples of the Lord Jesus has somehow escaped the body of Christ. We talk of its necessity, but too often we fail to accomplish its reality. The disciples had this same experience. They too fell short in their prayer life and they felt it deeply. *(Excerpts from "ABCs for Christian Growth" by J. Hampton Keathley)*

PRAYER

“Teach Us To Pray”

Date	Lesson
01/11	Understanding Prayer (JH)
01/18	How Prayer Changes Us (DS)
01/25	How Prayer Changes God (DS)
02/01	Unanswered Prayers (DS)
02/08	Effective Prayer - Part 1 (JH)
02/15	Effective Prayer - Part 2 (JH)
02/22	Music and Prayer (RH)
03/01	<u>Review and Summary (JH)</u>

UPCOMING EVENTS

**Benefit Program
for Youth Direct**
At the Oaks
Featuring Melvin Adams

March 6th at 6:30pm

Food for Thought

Pray for the Childress Family

The Beginning and End

The Lord Jesus introduced Himself as the **Alpha** and the **Omega**... (first and last letters of the Greek alphabet).

"I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty"

Rev.1:8 (NIV)

(shared by a Class Member)

NOTES AND CROSS-REFERENCES

UNDERSTANDING PRAYER

- Prayer is the immediate desire of the heart of a new life in Christ to talk with and commune with the Father.
- Prayer is dependence upon God—not self.
- Words are not the important part of prayer; the spirit of prayer is what God sees and understands.
- The seven HOW aspects of prayer
 1. Prayer should demonstrate a total consciousness of our need, a sense of our complete inadequacy along with a sense of God's complete adequacy and willingness (2 Corinthians 2:16; 2 Corinthians 3:5)
 2. Prayer is not overcoming God's reluctance, but laying hold of God's ever present willingness.
 3. Prayer is not for emergency use only, when we get in a pinch and need someone to bail us out.
 4. Prayer is not an "Aladdin's Lamp" or a trip to a wishing well for our wants.
 5. By contrast, prayer is a means of intimate communion, fellowship, and dependence upon God the Father who has promised to work in and through us through His Son, just as God worked through Him.
 6. Prayer is for everyday living, moment by moment.
 7. Prayer is a means of claiming God's promises and knowing and becoming abandoned to God's will.

DON SMARTO'S POINTS

- Prayer is **communication with God**
- Five types of prayer
 1. Worship
 2. Confession
 3. Guidance
 4. Supplication
 5. Expression of thoughts
- Prayer changes us by
 1. See ourselves as we are
 2. Changes hearts
 3. Blesses others
 4. Relying on God
 5. Having grateful attitudes
- We pray by
 1. Invitation
 2. Command
 3. In the Spirit
 4. In faith
 5. Forgiving first
- Prayers are relational and they build trust and intimacy with God
- God chooses partnership with people and relies on choices
- Unanswered prayers are not unheard prayers

- Prerequisites to prayer
 1. Faith
 2. Obedient heart
 3. Asking
- Answers to prayers must **conform to God's Character and Will**

EFFECTIVE PRAYER

- Seven crucial elements to effective prayer
 1. The first crucial element is **Relationship**
 2. The second crucial element is **Praise**. Begin by expressing your love to God. Commitment: I will praise God for who He is and what He does.
 3. The third crucial element is **Purpose**: Commit yourself to God's purpose and will for your life. Commitment: I will obey God no matter what He asks of me.
 4. The fourth crucial element is **Provision**: Ask God to provide for your needs. Commitment: I will depend on God's provision for all of my needs.
 5. The fifth crucial element is **Pardon**: Ask God's forgiveness for your sins. Commitment: I will confess my sins as God reveals them and accept His forgiveness.
 6. The sixth crucial element is **Purity**: Let go of your grudges and bitterness Commitment: I will release those who have sinned against me because God has forgiven me.
 7. The seventh crucial element is **Protection**: Ask for divine protection. Commitment: I will learn my areas of weakness and depend on God's protection.
- Four **elements of listening to God**
 1. Hear the voice of God
 2. Answer the call
 3. Learn and know God's revealed word
 4. Be receptive to God's word

PRAYER, PSALMS AND MUSIC

- **When at a loss for prayer words, the Psalms and other spiritual songs will provide the words for us**
- The Psalms are man's release to God of the deepest emotions of life
- The Psalms may have all begun as **individual expression of personal faith, but have later been used by the community of faith** (Ps 23; Ps 139; etc.)