

**PRAYER:
DEVELOPING A LIFESTYLE
OF PRAYER**

by
Taylor Chapman

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INTRODUCTION

Prayer is a topic that every Christian comes into contact with during their personal journey to know Christ more. Whether you have been saved for years or are new to following Christ, prayer should be a top priority in your life.

I became a Christian when I was very young and saw that my parents spent much time in prayer. It was of utmost importance to them. They taught me, even as a child, that prayer is a vital aspect of the Christian life—so much a factor that it is a requirement for the person who desires to know God more. For without prayer, it is nearly impossible to know Him.

I wrote this book for that very reason, to show you the fundamental basics and encourage you to grow in your journey with Christ through establishing a lifestyle of prayer. I will discuss many different attributes of the lifestyle of prayer. I'll answer questions like why should I pray? How often should I pray? Is there a right or wrong way to pray? Or how can I grow closer to God through prayer? My ultimate goal is to inspire you to be a person of prayer.

Do you need encouragement? Do you need healing? Do you need direction or inspiration? Do you need peace in your life? Do you need more joy? Do you need forgiveness? Do you need a breakthrough? The answer is simple: you need to pray.

Prayer is simply you talking to God and giving Him the opportunity to speak back. Prayer is a two-way conversation in which sometimes you speak, and other times you wait for an answer. Through prayer, you can access heaven in your life.

Pastor John Hagee's mother once said, *"Little prayer, little power. Much prayer, much power."* In other words, if you are willing to spend time in prayer, you will see God operate in your life more clearly and more often because you are learning to walk in God's will for your life.

Prayer will change your life!

CHAPTER 1

Prayer is the dialogue between you and God. It gives you access to the Father and helps you enter into a relationship with Him. As you have this relationship, God will show you your path to follow Him through prayer. I'm sure you desire to know why you are here on earth, and through prayer, God will reveal to you exactly what you are called to do to make a difference in the lives of those around you.

Jesus had twelve disciples He mentored and spent a considerable amount of time with during His three years of ministry on earth. They traveled with Him, broke bread together and learned at His side. They saw Him heal the blind, raise the dead, feed massive crowds miraculously, amaze people with His teachings, and even calm a storm. They knew that Jesus operated from a life of prayer and power that was unheard of at that time. One day, a disciple even asked Him how to pray (Luke 11:1).

The word "pray" or "prayer" is used over 25 times in the Gospels when referring to the life of Christ. Prayer was important to Jesus and His ministry on earth. Much of His time was spent in prayer, communing with His Heavenly Father. He truly understood the correlation between His ministry and prayer. In fact, there are several occasions where the Bible says, "Jesus got up very early in the morning to pray" (both in the books of Mark and Luke). Before Jesus' ministry began, the Bible clearly says Jesus went alone for 40 days to fast and pray. Spending time in prayer took precedence over everything Jesus did.

Every decision Jesus made was done with a lifestyle of prayer backing and surrounding Him. The interesting thing was that Jesus did not pray because He had to. It was a choice because He wanted to. He wanted to continue to grow in His relationship with the Heavenly Father. And Jesus knew that in order to do so, He had to spend time with God in prayer. Prayer was not an obligation or stumbling block, but rather a privilege and a spiritual boost to do what He needed to do.

Jesus was continually telling His disciples and other new followers of Christ to pray to get to know the Heavenly Father. The very life-source for the ministry that Jesus operated in while on earth was established through His lifestyle of prayer with the Father. You, as a Christian, must pursue Christ and you can do that by prayer.

Think about your spouse...when you first met him or her, what did you do? If you are a guy, you began to find out about her. You asked her on a date. You might have asked your friends to find out more about her. Maybe you even asked some of her friends to tell you all about this new person you have discovered. Why? Because you wanted to know who she was. You wanted to find out about her character, morals, values,

attitudes and interests. Then, after you learned more about her, you finally worked up the nerve to ask her out on a date. If the date went well, there were more dates that followed which quickly established and built a relationship. That relationship grew the more time you spent with her. You went to ball games, movies, church services or state fairs. You had fun together as you were discovering more about her. Then after time had passed, you made a decision to ask her to marry you. She set the date and all attention went to preparation for the marriage.

I know in my own life, from the moment I asked my wife to marry me, the following months were bombarded with conversations about the big day. It seemed like it was all we talked about. When we got around family members, it was what we talked about. It consumed us.

Do you remember when the “big day” finally arrived? Your beautiful bride was dressed in a fairytale dress that she had been dreaming about since she was a little girl. The wedding took place and the honeymoon began. This lasted a few days and then reality began to set back in, but in a new way. Every where you went, she was there. Every decision you made, she was there. You were a team and enjoyed doing things together as a newly married couple.

Then what happened? Eventually, the newness of the marriage was over and life went on as it did before. You might have started to disagree more. You may have even started to notice things about her that annoyed you...during your dating stages you thought they were cute. No longer was she “Ms. Perfect” in your eyes. Although you still loved her, things had changed and life got busy.

Many marriages get stuck in a rut. Why? Before the marriage took place, there were weekly dates and fun things to make memorable moments. After the marriage, reality kicked in and jobs, family, and other aspects began to take your time and there seemed to be rocky roads. What changed? The pursuit. Before the wedding, the man was pursuing the woman. He was charming her and doing everything in his power to stand out and make incredible moments for the girl. After the wedding, the husband knew a covenant was made and it was time to work and support his wife. The pursuit seemed to daily fade away with familiarity in the relationship. This was where the woman began to feel she was not being taken care of. At the time in the relationship when it was most important for the husband to pursue the wife – he didn’t. She needed to know she was still loved the way he loved her before the wedding.

This is a great illustration of why you should pray. At the beginning of your relationship with God you are ready to charge hell with a water pistol. There is a pursuit. There is an

excitement that wants to make a difference and be a part of changing people's lives. Then what happens? You get back in the swing of your daily life and that passion dissipates. Prayer is a pursuit to know God more. Just like you are to pursue your wife or husband, Christ wants you to pursue Him. When you were pursuing your wife, you were learning about her. When you pursue God, you are learning about Him, His attributes, His desires, and His wants for your life. This pursuit causes you to want to know God more.

I have been a golfer for many years now. The first time I went out and played golf, I was terrible. I spent more time digging my golf balls out of the ponds and trees than I actually played the game. But the more I played, the better I got and the more I wanted to go out and play.

When you pursue God and pray, you are going to get better at it, and the better you get at it, the more you are going to want to pray. The more you do something, the greater the desire you have for it. When you believe you are a person called to pray, you need to understand it is a priority as a Christian.

I have had many people tell me they do not have time to pray. My response is always, "What is something you enjoy doing?" I often get a response like, "Working out, going out to eat with friends and family..." Then I remind them that they have time to do what they want because it is a priority in their life.

You make time for what you think is important. There are no excuses for neglecting prayer. It is a lifestyle and a must-have to know God more.

Martin Luther King Jr. once said, *"To be a Christian without prayer is no more possible than to be alive without breathing."* Dr. King knew the importance of prayer. He knew that his life could not be led the way he deemed it should be without prayer being at the forefront.

In my personal life, I give the first portion of my day to God. I wake up and spend time with Him in prayer. I pray about my day. I pray about what I have going on, my family and situations I know I am going to be facing in the day. Prayer has become a part of my daily life and has helped me establish my relationship with the Father. I know that no matter what I am going to go through, I have the wisdom and guidance from Heaven to get me through it.

In Luke, chapter 18, he writes, *"Always pray and do not give up."* Why are you to pray? Because Jesus commanded you to. You are to pray and not give up, pray in season and out of season. Pray that the Lord of Hosts gives you the peace that passes all

understanding and the strength to get you through whatever situation you are going through.

Oftentimes, it seems many of today's preachers and teachers are teaching prayer as a "receiving" mindset—pray to get this financial breakthrough or pray to get that. Although there is truth to that thought process (John 16:24), prayer is intended to allow you, the person praying, to establish and build a relationship with your Heavenly Father. It is a two-way dialogue that allows you to know Him, to fellowship and commune with Him, to get to know Him better.

What are a few reasons why you can pray?

1. Prayer is one way you have to access heaven.

When you have access to Heaven, it gives you the ability to access everything Heaven has to offer. Blessings come into your life. Favor comes into your life. And that favor may come when you are trying to apply for a job or wanting to advance in your current position. That kind of favor is something that comes when you have access to Heaven. Expect God to open doors in your life that other people cannot get opened. Heaven has a limitless supply of health, healing, advancement, protection and every other benefit of Christian living.

2. Prayer allows you to know God more intimately.

When you spend time with God, you become like Him. You take on His characteristics and nature.

There is nothing on earth I want more than to know God more intimately. This reason alone is enough for me to pursue God with everything I have. I want to know Him. I want to understand why He does what He does. I want to be so close to Jesus that everything I look at during my day is looked at through the eyes of Jesus.

This will help you in your daily relationships and your family. Imagine if you looked at your co-workers through the eyes of Jesus. You would have a higher level of respect for them. You would not talk bad about them when they are not in the room. Why? You no longer have the desire to gossip because you have looked at them through the eyes of Christ. As you look at them through those eyes, you see Jesus. The only way you can see Jesus in those around you is to know God more intimately.

3. Prayer gives you the ability to have access to a better understanding of situations.

There comes a wisdom and understanding in your life when you spend time with the Father. The Bible says His ways are higher than your ways and His thoughts are higher than your thoughts. In other words, when you learn to depend on your relationship and time you spend with the Father, you begin to think like Him. You will operate in the ways He operates. There will come supernatural understanding of situations you could not have in your own power.

4. *Prayer gives you the heart of Jesus.*

Have you ever heard it said that “You become like those who you hang around?” This is a principle that applies to the friends you spend time with. When you hang around people who do not have a relationship with God and do questionable things, you will have to bend your thought process to do the same. When you hang around people who enjoy playing basketball, you will have a greater desire to be a better basketball player. When you spend time with people who love to shop, you’re going to want to shop more.

My dad has often told me, “Show me the friends that you have and the books that you read and I will show you your future.” I have come to find he was right on.

If you want to have the heart of Jesus, it will only come by spending time with Him through prayer and His Word.

As you can see by now, prayer is important for a Christian lifestyle. Prayer unleashes God’s power so that He is able to work on your behalf. Prayer opens the channels of God’s blessings. Prayer is how God accomplishes the things He wants to see happen in your life.

This next chapter will give you some helpful and insightful tips on how to pray.