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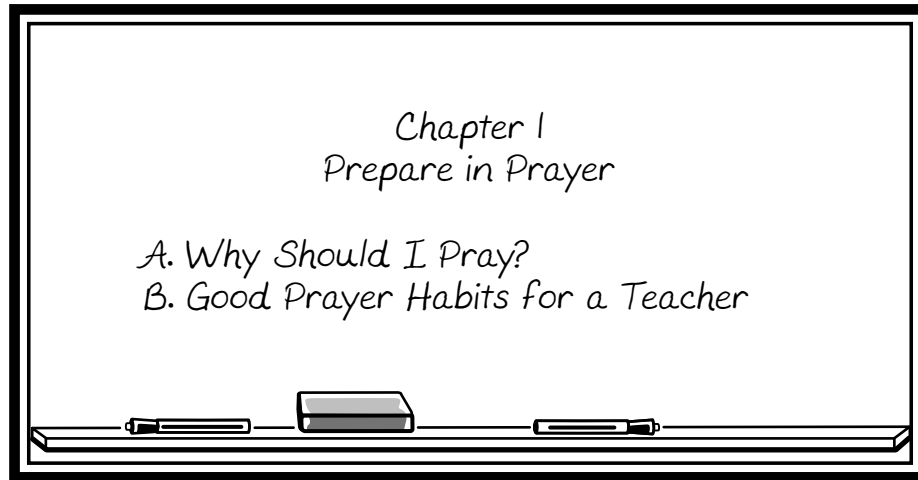
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UNIT 1

Preparation for Teaching



Chapter 1 – Prepare in Prayer

Teachers need practical and professional skills in the classroom and on the playground. These traits are developed through training and experience.

However, teaching is a spiritual work and requires much more than practical skills. Teachers help prepare souls for conversion, discipleship, service, and eternal life. Spiritual work requires spiritual skills. One essential skill is prayer.

A. Why Should I Pray?

When we realize our great need, we will pray. To get a greater sense of your need, meditate on this partial list of things every teacher needs:

- *Peace and rest*
- *Wisdom*
- *God's empowering*
- *Guidance*
- *God's help to pray*
- *Fellowship with Christ*
- *Godliness and honesty*
- *Daily needs*
- *Christlike character*
- *Repentance, restoration, healing*
- *Knowledge and understanding*
- *Help in relationships*
- *Strength and courage*
- *To bear fruit and honor God*
- *Total commitment to God's will*
- *Help to overcome temptation*
- *Grace in trials*
- *Daily physical needs*

B. Good Prayer Habits for a Teacher

Make prayer a priority. Jesus and great men of God saw the need of prayer. Schedule times to pray; don't just squeeze it into spare moments. "Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray" (Psalm 55:17). The time a teacher spends in prayer is never wasted. "Those that seek me early shall find me" (Proverbs 8:17).

Seek daily cleansing. Keep your relationship with God current. Do not let sin hinder your prayer life. "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me" (Psalm 66:18).

Pray for your students. Pray for them daily. Most of your prayer will be in private, but it will bless and encourage students to hear you pray for them. Follow Paul's example in praying for the believers at Philippi in Philippians 1:3-8:

"I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now; being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ: even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart . . . for God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ."

Pray all the time. Everything a Christian does should be done prayerfully. Live daily in communication with God. You do not need to stop and bow your head to pray, but can speak to God at any moment of the day as you work. "Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving" (Colossians 4:2). "Pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

Pray specifically. God wants us to ask for specific needs in confidence and trust. "I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them" (Mark 11:24).

Worship in prayer. Prayer is not only a time to make petitions and requests; it is also a time to reverence God for who He is and what He does. "Let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name" (Hebrews 13:15).

Submit to God. Submitting to God is more than repeating the phrase *Thy will be done*. Take pleasure in placing yourself in the will of God. Obeying God is a prerequisite to answered prayers. "Whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight" (1 John 3:22).

Pray with meditative Bible study. Let Scripture become central to your prayer. Frequently the Bible records prayers that include phrases such as *according to thy Word* (Psalm 119:169; Luke 1:38). Take the Word into yourself spiritually, for Jesus said, "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you" (John 15:7).

Fast and pray. The Lord honors fasting that is observed with right motives (Matthew 6:6-18). The teacher faces situations in which the solutions may not come "but by prayer and fasting" (Matthew 17:21). For encouragement and help in fasting, read *Fasting: A Neglected Discipline* by David R. Smith.