

The 40 Day Prayer Experiment

“Pray Earnestly” – Matthew 6:11

January 25, 2015

Our Sermon Series

THE 40 DAY PRAYER EXPERIMENT		
A Six Week Study of The Lord's Prayer		
Date	Message Title	Text
Jan 4	The 40 Day Prayer Experiment	Matthew 6:1-18
Jan 11	Pray Passionately	Matthew 6:9
Jan 18	Pray Strategically	Matthew 6:10
Jan 25	Pray Earnestly	Matthew 6:11
Feb 1	Pray Honestly (Guest speaker Terry Teykl)	Matthew 6:12
Feb 8	Pray Authoritatively	Matthew 6:13
Feb 15	Testimonies from the Prayer Experiment	Open mic

The 40 Day Prayer Experiment

- Ask God what to pray for:
 - Something specific
 - Something that only God can do (Hebrews 11:1)
 - Something on your heart (Psalm 37:4)
- Pray for that every day for 40 days (Jan 1 thru Feb 9)
- Come to church the first six Sundays of the year to learn more about prayer from the Lord's Prayer (in Jesus' Sermon on the Mount).
- On Sunday, February 15, we will share how the prayer experiment went.

Five Priorities for Praying According to Jesus (Matthew 6:11)

D – _____ – Set aside your personal agenda and seek

God's Kingdom first

- The order of The Lord's Prayer demonstrates Jesus' priorities for our prayer life:
 - First 3 requests are God-centered: praise, Kingdom, God's will
 - Last 3 requests surround our needs: provision, forgiveness, deliverance
- **Matthew 6:33** – *Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all of these things will be added to you as well.*
- Warren Wiersbe: “Here we transition from the concerns that relate especially to God's program (Matthew 6:9-10) to the specific needs of God's people (vv.11-13): sustenance, forgiveness, and protective guidance. If we are faithful to put God's concerns first, then we are better prepared to speak with Him about our own needs.”

- **Application #1** – Lord, help me seek You and Your Kingdom first. Help me praise You and pray for Your Kingdom and Your will as my highest prayer priorities.
- Video: “I Used to Be in Love” [3:56] by David Bowden found at YouTube

A – _____ – Tell God what you need

- This is the heart of this part of The Lord's Prayer. “Give us this day our daily bread” is earnestly asking for what we need.
- **Matthew 7:7,9-10** – *Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you... Which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!*
- Charles Spurgeon: “Whether we like it or not, asking is the rule of the Kingdom.”
- **Application #2** – Lord, when I am honest, here is what I need...

I – _____ – Trust God one day at a time

- The Lord's Prayer does not say, “Give us this year everything we need for the whole year.” Nor does it say, “Give us everything we need for the rest of our lives.” The Lord's Prayer petitions: “Give us this day our daily bread.”
- God's provision of daily manna for the Israelites (Exodus 16)
- **Joshua 5:11-12** – *The day after the Passover, that very day, they ate some of the produce of the land: unleavened bread and roasted grain. The manna stopped the day after they ate this food from the land; there was no longer any manna for the Israelites, but that year they ate of the produce of Canaan.*
- **Application #3** – Lord, I confess my tendency to hoard more manna than I need for today. Lord, I trust You for my daily bread.
- **Matthew 6:34** (The Message) – *Give your entire attention to what God is doing right now, and don't get worked up about what may or may not happen tomorrow. God will help you deal with whatever hard things come up when the time comes.*
- “One day at a time” is a 12-Steps saying that means...
 - I can have victory over alcohol one day at a time
 - I can deal with difficult situations one day at a time
 - I can deal with difficult people one day at a time
 - I can make it one day at a time
 - I can trust God to live this life one day at a time.

- Question: Is saving for college and retirement and an emergency fund wrong?
- **Proverbs 6:6-11** – *Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise! It has no commander, no overseer or ruler, yet it stores its provisions in summer and gathers its food at harvest. How long will you lie there, you sluggard? When will you get up from your sleep? A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest — and poverty will come on you like a bandit and scarcity like an armed man.*

L – _____ – **Pray for the needs of those around you**

- The plural personal pronouns of this part of The Lord’s Prayer (“us” and “our”) make it clear that we are to pray for more than just our own personal needs. We are to pray for the needs of others.
- God’s order of priorities for us in helping the poor:
 - 1st priority: Help your own immediate family (1 Timothy 5:8)
 - 2nd priority: Help your own spiritual family (1 John 3:17; James 2:15-17; Deuteronomy 15:1-7; Acts 2:44-45; 4:34-35; Matthew 25:40)
 - 3rd priority: Help the greater human family (Deuteronomy 15:11; Proverbs 19:17; 21:13)
- Shane Claiborne: “The early Christians said that if a child starves while a Christian has extra food, then the Christian is guilty of murder.”
- Dorothy Day: “If you have two coats, one of them belongs to the poor.”
- Application #4 – Lord, please provide for all the needs of my family, my church family, and the poor. Show me how You want to use me to help answer this prayer.
- YouTube Video: “Can The Poor Get in Your Door? Francis Chan” [3:30]
- Missions Opportunities (www.missionsatgracefellowship.com):
 - Church in Action (Sat, Feb 21; Houston area)
 - Domestic Relief Mission Trip (March 7-14; youth friendly)
 - El Salvador (May 10-16; light construction; water well)
 - Mexico (July 25-31; construction of a school building)
 - Columbia (August 1-8; medical missions; evangelism)
 - Multiple youth mission trips

Y – _____ – **Zealously ask God for daily spiritual food as well**

- **Matthew 4:4** – *Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"*
- As much as we need to ask God for daily physical bread, our greatest need is to feed our souls with God’s Word.
- Application #5 – My game plan for feeding my soul with God’s Word is...
 - Asking God to feed my soul with His Word as I read it.
 - Using the SOAP Journal method of reading the One Year Bible
 - Using the Christ-Fit method of reading the One Year Bible
 - Listening to God’s Word on my smartphone (YouVersion)
 - Reading God’s Word on my smartphone (YouVersion)
 - Using my small group homework as my daily Bible reading
 - Coming to church weekly to receive God’s Word
 - Other
- Dallas Willard: “In order to stay healthy spiritually, you must ruthlessly eliminate hurry from your life.”
- “The Keeper of the Stream” from John Ortberg’s *Soul Keeping*, pp.13-14.