

WEEK 4 - WHAT SHOULD WE PRAY FOR?

DAY 1

Last week we learned about many times when we should pray. Perhaps you are thinking, "There are so many times when we should pray. It seems we must be praying almost all the time." Yes, that is the way it should be. Do you remember the verse we read, 1 Thessalonians 5:17:

Pray continually.

Now you are thinking, "But what can I pray for all the time. The things to pray for will soon become finished, and then what will I say?" That is what we want to talk about this week. I think by the time we finish this lesson you will not be asking what to pray for.

1. Can you write down the times when we should pray? If you need to, look back over last week's lesson before you write, but do not copy them.

(1) _____

(2) _____

(3) _____

(4) _____

Now what shall we pray for in all these times? If praying is talking with God we should not just be asking for many things. Let us begin our praying by praising him and thanking him for his love.

2. Should I begin my time of prayer by asking God to heal me? _____

But what should we thank him for? Sometimes when we are having many troubles it seems there is nothing good to think about. But just begin to think about the things God has given you. Thank him for food and for a house to sleep in. Thank him for your family. Thank him for work to do.

3. Write down something else in your life that you should thank God for when you pray?

Then begin to think about God and thank him for the way he is himself.

4. Here is a list of things about how God is. Put a mark like this + after the ones that seem most important to you and begin thanking God for them.

God has all power.
God is everywhere.
God knows everything.
God loves you.
God is always with you.

God never changes.
God forgives sins.
God understands you.
God answers prayer.
God is preparing a place for you.

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5. It is good to begin praying by _____
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God loves us and wants our love too. When we begin praying and thanking him for what he is, then we show our love to him. Our hearts become warm. Then we are ready to pray for other things.

6. How should we begin praying? _____

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ANSWERS

5. Thanking God.
3. This can be anything like rain, friends, good health.
1. Look back to page 45 for the answer.
6. We should begin praying by thanking God.
2. No, we should begin by praising.
4. You know which ones are important to you.

**WEEK 4 - WHAT SHOULD WE PRAY FOR?
DAY 2**

We have learned that praying is not just asking for things. Praying is talking with God as we would talk with a friend.

1. How should we begin praying? _____

After thanking, then what should we pray? Because God is our Friend and our Father he is also interested in our needs. There are so many needs to pray for that it is hard to know which ones to pray for first.

2. Whose needs do you know best? _____ Whom do you pray for first? _____

What should you pray about for yourself? We could write many things. There are things like food, clothes, money and success in your work. Do you remember what Jesus told his disciples to ask for when he was teaching them to pray? He told them to say in Matthew 6:11:

Give us today our daily bread.

3. Is it right for us to ask God to help us with our daily needs? _____

Yes, God cares about these things and wants to help us. But we should spend only a small part of our time praying for these. Jesus told his disciples in the same chapter, Matthew 6:25:

‘Therefore I bid you put away anxious thoughts about food and drink to keep you alive, and clothes to cover your body. Surely life is more than food, the body more than clothes.’

4. What did Jesus mean when he said, ‘Surely life is more than food, the body more than clothes?’

Jesus went on to say, Matthew 6:33:

Set your mind on God's kingdom and his justice before everything else, and all the rest will come to you as well.

This helps us to see what we should pray for for ourselves.

5. If we are thinking about God's kingdom and his justice, what kind of things will we pray for for ourselves?

The person who really wants God's kingdom needs to know God's way. He will pray that he may understand God's word and he will pray for strength to obey it. If he is praying for God's kingdom he will ask for strength and wisdom to do God's work.

6. Do you often pray for these things for yourself? _____

Praying for understanding and strength is more important than praying for food and clothes and other things to make ourselves happy. God promises to hear us when we ask for these more important things. James 1:5:

If any of you falls short of wisdom, he should ask God for it and it will be given him, for God is a generous giver who neither refuses nor reproaches anyone.

7. What are we told to ask for in this verse? _____

So let us not just pray for things to make our lives easy. Let us pray to be as God wants us to be. Let us pray to have wisdom, strength, and love in our lives. Paul said that the biggest thing he wanted in his life was to have God's righteousness and to know Christ. Philippians 3:10:

All I care for is to know Christ, to experience the power of his resurrection, and to share his sufferings, in growing conformity with his death.

8. Look back over this lesson and write down the things that we should pray for for ourselves.

ANSWERS

1. By thanking God.
5. We will talk about this in class.
4. You should have written something like this: There are some things more important than food or clothes.
7. Wisdom
3. Yes
6. I hope that you pray for these things. If you do not, begin praying for them now.
2. We usually pray for ourselves first because we know our own needs best.
8. Food, clothes, money, success in our work, that we may know God's way, strength to obey God, wisdom, love.

WEEK 4 - WHAT SHOULD WE PRAY FOR?

DAY 3

We learned yesterday that one of the big things we need to pray for is ourselves. We also learned that we should not only pray for things like food and clothes and happiness for ourselves.

1. What are the most important things that we should pray for for ourselves?

Pray much for yourself. But while you are praying for yourself, do not forget the other people. Did you know that it is possible to be greedy even in prayer? We do not like a person who wants and keeps everything for himself. Prayer is something that we can share with other people in such a way that it will help them very much.

2. If I do not share my prayers with other people, what kind of person am I?

Begin by sharing your prayers with your family. If you are married pray for your wife or husband. Ask God for good things in his life -- things for the body and things for the spirit as you ask for yourself. (While you are praying for him, you will also think of praying for yourself again so that you will be a good husband or wife too.) If you have children, remember that you are the one who helped to bring them into the world. You have a very great responsibility to help them find the right way in life. Pray for your children every day, and do not forget to ask God to make you a good parent.

3. You can help your wife and children every day by _____

Pray for your parents. Thank God for them. You will never know until you are as old as they are how much they have given you and how much they have done for you. Ask God what you can do to help them. Pray for your brothers and sisters, your aunts and uncles, and any other relatives whom God puts into your mind. As you think about your relatives God will show

you certain ones who have special needs. Some are sick. Some have troubles. Some are refusing to follow God. Pray especially for these.

4. Since it is not possible to pray for all your relatives all the time, which ones should you pray for?

Reach out in prayer also for your neighbours. Many of them do not go to church or read their Bibles. They do not pray. The only way they know about God is what they see in you. Do you remember what Jesus said about the light of the world? In John 8:12 he said:

‘I am the light of the world.’

But another time he said, Matthew 5:14:

‘You are light for the world.’

And he said, Matthew 5:13:

‘You are salt to the world.’

As we love and pray for our neighbours, we are like light and salt to them. Think how salt changes our food from bad to good. Think how your prayers for your neighbours can change your community from bad to good.

5. Can you help to change your community from bad to good? _____

How can you do this? _____

Again it is not possible to pray for all your neighbours all the time. So how shall you pray for them? One way is to pray for certain ones on certain days. Let us say you pray for the ones to the east on Monday. The ones to the south on Tuesday. The ones to the west on Wednesday. The ones to the north on Thursday.

6. Have you ever thought of praying for your neighbours in this way? _____

Another way is to choose one or two or three to pray for every day for a time. Ask God which ones to pray for. Think about their needs and the power they have to lead other people who are around them. Listen for God to put a special concern for certain ones in your heart. Then pray for them every day that they may become Christians.

7. How can you choose which neighbours to pray for? _____

You are thinking that this is a very big work! But this is not all there is to pray for. Read this verse from 1 Timothy 2:1-2:

First of all, then, I urge that petitions, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be offered for all men; for sovereigns and all in high office that we might lead a tranquil and quiet life in full observance of religion and high standards of morality.

8. Who are we told to pray for in this verse? _____

Our work of prayer reaches out to more than our families and our neighbours. We are told in this verse to pray for all men, especially those who are in authority over us.

9. Should we pray for our president? _____

Our leaders are trying to help us. It is right for us to pray for them in their work. But there are other people who are not trying to help us. These are our enemies. Even these, God has told us to pray for. Matthew 5:44:

But what I tell you is this: Love your enemies and pray for your persecutors.

These are perhaps the hardest of all to pray for, but this is what God asks.

10. Besides loving our enemies, what should we do for them? _____

There are so many things to pray for!

11. Look back over this lesson and write down all the people for whom we should pray.

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

ANSWERS

8. For all men, and especially for rulers.
5. Yes. By praying.
2. A greedy person.
11. You can find the answers to this yourself in the lesson.
9. Yes.
6. You have to answer this yourself.
3. Praying for them.
1. To know God's way and to obey him, to have wisdom, strength and love
10. We are to pray for them.
7. Ask God to show you.
4. Those whom God puts into your mind because they have special needs.

WEEK 4 - WHAT SHOULD WE PRAY ABOUT?

DAY 4

By this time we have learned many, many things which we should pray for. But we should not begin our prayers by asking for things.

1. How should we begin our prayers? _____

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After we have been praising God we begin to think how he can help us. We pray for ourselves and things we need. It is easy to pray for ourselves but if we are not greedy with our prayers we will share them with other people.

2. Without looking back, write down all the other people we should pray for.

=====

Let us now look into the Bible to find another group of people we should pray for. Read these verses carefully to see what kind of people need our prayers.

Ephesians 6:18:

Give yourselves wholly to prayer and entreaty: pray on every occasion in the power of the Spirit. To this end keep watch and persevere, always interceding for all God's people.

1 Samuel 12:23:

As for me, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord and cease to pray for you. I will show you what is right and good. (Spoken by Samuel to the children of Israel.)

Philippians 1:3-4:

I thank my God whenever I think of you: and when I pray for you all, my prayers are always joyful. (Written by Paul to the Christians at Philippi.)

Colossians 4:2-3:

Persevere in prayer, with mind awake and thankful heart; and include a prayer for us, that God may give us an opening for preaching, to tell the secret of Christ; that indeed is why I am now in prison. (Written by Paul to the Christians at Colossi.)

James 5:16:

Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, and then you will be healed. A good man's prayer is powerful and effective.

3. What kind of people are being prayed for in these verses? _____

Here is a kind of people that we sometimes forget to pray for. It is the Christians in the church. Sometimes we think the church does not need to be prayed for. We think that those people have already given themselves to God and they are strong already.

4. Does the Bible say that the people of the church need to be prayed for?

Yes, the Bible says more about praying for other Christians than it does about praying for sinners. The leaders of the church especially need our prayers. In Colossians 4:2-3 which we read in starting this lesson, Paul asked the Christians to pray for him. Read this verse again.

5. What did Paul want the Christians to ask God for him?

Do we pray for open places for the leaders of our church to preach? At another place Paul asks for prayer saying, Ephesians 6:19:

And pray for me, that I may be granted the right words when I open my mouth and may holdly and freely make known his hidden purpose.

6. Are church leaders sometimes afraid to open their mouths boldly? _____

But it is not just the leaders who should be prayed for. Read Ephesians 6:18 again as it is written at the beginning of this lesson.

7. Whom does this verse say we should pray for? _____

Who are the people of God? Are they not the Christians in the church? This means that we should pray for each other as Christians. We should pray for the other people who worship with us each Sunday.

8. Write down the names of some of the Christians at your church for whom you should pray.

If you are the pastor, then you have a very great responsibility to pray for each of the people in your church. Notice that Samuel said in the verse that we read that if he would fail to pray for his people he would be sinning.

9. Did you know that a leader is sinning if he fails to pray for his people?

But let us remember that it is not only the pastor who has work to do in the church. James said in the verse which we read that each of us should confess our sins to each other and pray for each other.

10. How many people in the church should be praying for the church?

ANSWERS

4. Yes.
1. By thanking and praising God
10. All of them
3. Christians
5. That God would give them an opening for preaching.
8. Did you write names of people who go to church with you? If you did, then you are right.
2. Wives or husbands, children, brothers and sisters, aunts and uncles, relatives, neighbours, rulers and enemies.
7. For God's people
9. If you did not know it before, you know it now.
6. Yes, they are people as we are and sometimes afraid.

WEEK 4 . WHAT SHOULD WE PRAY ABOUT?

DAY 5

Yesterday we learned about a group of people whom we sometimes forget to pray for.

1. Who are they? _____

Up to now we have been talking about people who are near to us and who touch our lives. There is one more thing which we should pray for which is not easy to see. Paul wrote in Ephesians 6:12:

For our fight is not against human foes, but against cosmic power, against the authorities and potentates of this dark world, against the superhuman forces of evil in the heavens.

By these words Paul tells us that Christians are fighting a battle.

2. Is this battle against people? _____

This is a battle which is much different from battles on earth. It is a spiritual battle. It is a battle against the power of Satan. Satan wants to win this earth and the people in it for himself. We must fight against him.

*Sickness
of*

3. Can this battle be fought with swords and guns? _____

This battle can only be fought with something which is of the spirit. Paul tells us it must be fought with prayer. It is after telling about this battle that Paul wrote the words which we read yesterday from Ephesians 6:18:

Give yourselves wholly to prayer and entreaty; pray on every occasion in the power of the Spirit. To this end keep watch and persevere always interceding for all God's people.

4. How can we fight the battle against Satan? _____

God promises us that as we pray, we will win the victory over Satan.

Romans 8:37-39:

--and yet, in spite of all, overwhelming victory is ours through him who loved us. For I am convinced that there is nothing in death or life, in the realm of the spirits or superhuman powers, in the world as it is or the world as it shall be, in the forces of the universe, in heights or depths -- nothing in all creation that can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

5. Can Satan defeat us if we keep praying? _____

When Jesus was teaching his disciples how to pray he told them to say in Matthew 6:10:

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as in heaven.

This is what we are fighting for and this is what we must pray for. We want God's will to be done on earth.

6. When fighting against Satan's power, what should we pray for?

Notice how Daniel prayed for God's will to be done in Daniel 9:2-3:

I Daniel, was reading the scriptures and reflecting on the seventy years which, according to the word of the Lord to the prophet Jeremiah, were to pass while Jerusalem lay in ruins. Then I turned to the Lord God in earnest prayer and supplication with fasting and sackcloth and ashes.

By reading the words of the prophet, Daniel saw that God wanted to free Jerusalem after 70 years. Daniel saw that the 70 years were nearly finished. What did he do? Did he say, "Well, that is good. Now God is going to free Jerusalem?" No, he began to pray that God's will would be done.

7. Did Daniel pray a little bit or with his whole heart? _____

Here is work for us to do also. God wants to do things in this world, but he has decided that he will work when we pray. He wants us to have a share in this battle against Satan. So he has asked us to pray that his will may be done.

8. What happens to God's work if we do not pray? _____

We see the power of Satan around us in many ways. We see people who heal the sick by the power of evil spirits. We see people bound by Satan as they keep on drinking beer and cannot stop. We see whole countries where the Christians are persecuted because Satan is in control.

9. How can we fight against this power of Satan? _____

10. What should we pray for when we see the power of Satan?

In this week's lesson we have talked about a great number of things to be prayed for. Can you remember all of them? Perhaps it will help you if you think of them in these four ways.

- We should pray for:
- (1) Ourselves.
 - (2) The people around us.
 - (3) The church.
 - (4) That God's will may be done.

11. Cover these things and say them to yourself.

ANSWERS

- 4. By praying
- 2. No
- 10. We should pray that God's will may be done.
- 8. Some of the things which God wants to do are not done.
- 1. The Christians.
- 5. No.
- 9. By praying.
- 3. No, you cannot shoot a spirit.
- 7. With his whole heart.
- 6. That God's will may be done.