

SIX DISCIPLINES OF PRAYER



From 60 Seconds to 60 Minutes in Prayer

Intimacy With God

Free Online Version
February 2008

*Come with me by yourselves to
a quiet place and get some rest. – Mark 6:31*

Preface

We are living in times when "the basics" are being neglected. We assume every believer has a handle on the basics of the Christian life. We assume that most people know how to pray and do so as Jesus taught. We assume that the basics of the Christian life are picked up automatically or by the osmosis of just attending church. It just isn't so.

The fact is, the vast majority of Christian adults know no more about prayer than the average person on the street. The average Christian adult does not go to church every Sunday. A pastor friend of mine estimated his members attend only 2.5 times a month. Most never go to Sunday School and are not involved in any small group Bible Study. Shall I venture further and address just how many go to the church "prayer meeting"?

Most parents have never been taught to pray, therefore, they have not taught their children to pray either. The cycle of ignorance continues generation after generation unabated. Ignorance breeds ignorance.

God, however, tells His people in His Word in Deuteronomy 6 that we are to teach these things diligently to our children and to talk of them daily when we wake up, when we sit down to eat together (do we even do that together?) when we walk to and from home, and when we lie down. The Lord goes as far as to tell us that there should be reminders of God's truth hung around our homes. Until we adults and parents get serious about our own ignorance of prayer and bible truths things will never change.

This is a training booklet. It is not meant to be a reader, a novel, or a typical Christian book. It is what old time school teachers called a "primer." It is a starting place for learning the basics all over again. It is a training tool that every believer can use to refresh his prayer life and renew prayer disciplines, and where the novice Christian can begin to learn to pray effectively and enjoy it more.

My prayer is that God will mightily use this manual as an incentive and encouragement to a million believers to discover prayer as God intended it to be - a love relationship that is rich and rewarding - a delightful experience.

This version is a free downloadable copy from www.PrayerToday.org. The full version of over 100 pages is available as a print version or downloaded copy. At the end of this booklet you will find other prayer helps and information on how to order. The **Workbook** will be an extremely valuable part of your training.

The Struggle to Pray

Most of us, if we were honest about it, struggle with prayer. We don't pray enough, and we don't pray as we know we should. Our lives are so busy from dawn to dark that there is little, if any, time for quiet moments alone with God. We trade our walk with God for a pot of porridge. We cheat ourselves out of the richest experiences God has to offer by not learning the discipline of intercessory prayer.

Prayer Is Not Easy

Prayer is not easy. It does not come naturally. It must be learned in the school of personal discipline. It will not come to us. We must pursue it. We must want it badly enough to sacrifice treasured activities to have it. For years I read material about the prayer lives of great men of God, how they prayed for many hours. They knew God. They enjoyed His presence. They walked with God. I wanted that!

A Desperate Prayer

A number of years ago now I began to pray in earnest, "Lord teach me to pray!" Though many complimented me on my personal disciplines and my prayer life, I was acutely aware that I was falling far short of what God expected of me. My prayer life was sporadic and not very exciting. I was busy in the fields of the Lord but my romance with my Creator was dying. I was "lukewarm" - at least in prayer. I prayed that prayer every day for two years. "Teach me to pray, Lord. I don't know how to pray. I know about prayer, but I don't pray as I ought. Please, teach me to pray."

Search the Scriptures

I began to search the Scriptures for teachings on prayer and in so doing I discovered some important and neglected elements of prayer in my life. For many years prayer to me had been "asking." Prayer was not a refreshing interlude with God -- It was work! As I examined my prayer life I found that I was predominantly a beggar before the throne of God. I kept slipping into asking, begging, and pleading with God, and most often it was for my own needs. How could I prevail in prayer for others when I was so needy? Then God taught me that there was a way to deal with my needs and put them away so that I could pray for others.

New Discoveries

As I walked through the Scriptures on prayer I encountered "undiscovered territories". There were things God teaches us about prayer that I never experienced, practiced, or saw evidenced in other believers' lives. I began to compile the truths about "how to pray" and came up with 12 Steps of Intercessory Prayer. It was time to embark on a new journey into the adventure of prayer. I found a way to come into God's presence so that sleepiness never overtakes you. I discovered how to stay in the presence of God and enjoy it immensely. I searched out ways to wait on the Lord and listen to Him in which you pray what is on the heart of God, not what is on your own heart. I have discovered how to pray the purposes of God, in the will of God the way God intended.

This Book

The lessons in this book are the result of years of study, practice, and my own struggle with the discipline of prayer. It is born out of the struggle that all of us feel yet few satisfy - to spend more meaningful and intimate time with God in prayer. My hope is that these lessons will be to you what they have become to me - precious secret treasures from God. Is it perfect? No. Am I perfect in my prayer life? No. But I am far richer because of these exercises and disciplines. This booklet is designed to be a guide to intimacy in prayer. It is a training tool. Use it on a regular basis to develop skills as a God-lover.

Intimacy Before Intercession

“Are you known at the throne?” There is an interesting event in the 19th chapter of the book of Acts. Paul was preaching in Ephesus, and God was doing great wonders among these spiritist people. Two Jews took it upon themselves to cast out demons like Paul, using the name of Jesus as their magic words. It didn't work. Jesus' name is not a magic word. It represents a relationship. Without the relationship, there is no power in using His name. So, the demons jumped all over these clever guys, but before doing so the demons left us with a clear spiritual insight. They said, "Jesus we know, and Paul we know, but who are you?"

You see, Jesus was known in heavenly places because of who He is. Even the demons knew Him in His ministry as the Son of David who came to destroy them. He, Jesus, was mighty in prayer. Paul was a follower of Jesus, but he also developed intimacy with God in his closet of prayer, so that he was a familiar face before the throne of God and evidently a terrifying spectacle to demons as well. Paul was known at the throne! Paul was known in spiritual realms as a friend of God, and therefore a force to be reckoned with. God fought for him. Are you known at the throne?

Jesus calls us to develop an intimate relationship with Him and the Father by becoming frequent visitors before the throne. This is why Paul could say in Hebrews 4:12, *"Therefore, (since we are intimate with the Son of God) let us come boldly to the throne of grace to find mercy and grace to help in the time of need."* The secret was not some pretended, forced, or ad-libbed boldness of "name-it and claim-it" before the throne, but a natural result of intimacy with God developed over long hours, days, months, and years of being a regular worshipper at God's throne.

The lesson is clear. We are not magicians before the throne, calling things into existence by using the mighty name of Jesus, but we are "friends of God" known at the throne, and therefore feared by demons. William Cowper said it right in his work, *Exhortation to Prayer*, "Satan trembles when he sees the weakest saint upon his knees." (A hymn attributed to William Cowper)

Early in my ministry one of my favorite books on prayer was by the notable Baptist preacher, John R. Rice. One of his memorable chapters was titled, "Prayer Is Asking." One can easily be drawn into that kind of understanding of prayer but it is not quite true. Part of prayer is asking, but *"before the asking comes the basking."* We need to learn to bask in the presence of God, to revel in God himself, to soak ourselves in the presence of the Almighty, to hide beneath his wing, to take refuge in his everlasting arms. God seeks such to worship him who would worship (pray) in spirit and in truth. (John 4:24) Daniel reminds us that prayer is a relationship, *"but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits."* (Daniel 11:32 KJV)

Worship comes before wishing, wanting or begging. We are not beggars before the throne. We are sons. Sons who only know their Father as Santa Claus are not sons. True sons revel in the relationship with their loving Father. The "stuff" is what they get as an overflow from the relationship, not a manipulation of it. Prayer is not asking. Prayer is living in the presence of God. Prayer is loving God and letting ourselves be loved by Him. We must learn that prayer is a love relationship. If it is anything else it is no different than the prayers of all other religions - it becomes merely an attempt to manipulate God for our own benefit. Only when we see prayer as a relationship can we understand the exhortation, "Pray without ceasing." (I Thessalonians 5:17 KJV)

As I entered the school of prayer with Jesus as my instructor His first and only words for a year or more were, *"Be still and know that I am God."* (Psalm 46:10 KJV)

Time Alone With God

The Rat Race

It is fascinating what a little rat can teach us! Gerbils are glorified rats, domesticated as house pets, shoved in cages, fed pellets, and basically stink up the house. Gerbils are known for their nocturnal hyper-activity. Every night, though they should know better by now, they climb aboard their spinning wheel and begin the race of a lifetime, chasing who-knows-what to get who-knows-where, just as fast as their little stinky feet can carry them. So what's the point? Who knows? But they all do it, and always have as far as we know, so the habit goes on and on generation after generation. Parents teach it to their children (monkey see monkey do). Those children in turn pass it on to their offspring and so on and on it goes.

Did You Ever Watch a Gerbil?

We are just like gerbils. We run the same gambit of spinning wheels that our ancestors did before us. We pattern ourselves to run the rat race, perhaps believing against hope that we will somehow run it faster than our predecessors and win some glorious prize – another box of pellets! What is the point anyway?

We see Christians falling into the same ruts as the rest of the world, running faster and faster, earning and spending more than their predecessors, and all the while asking themselves, "What am I doing anyway?" Heart attacks, strokes, nervous breakdowns, divorces, are just as prevalent among Christians as with their counterparts in the world.

It Was Not Always This Way

There was a time when Christians found the secret of a fulfilling life. Years ago saints on every continent knew the secret of joy and true satisfaction that comes from an intimate walk with God. There is a cost to that walk. It cannot be had while we hold hands with the world and run to the beat of its drums. God speaks to his children of every age and calls to them in quiet whispers, "*Be still and know that I am God.*" (Psalm 46:10) And again, "*In quietness and confidence would be your strength...*" (Isaiah 30:15) Unfortunately, as with the people of Israel, so it is with us. The epitaph is the same, "but you would not." Throughout the centuries God has had his called-out-ones, the Augustines, the Francis of Assisis, the A.W. Tozers, whose longing and heart's desire is to know God.

The Choice Is Ours

Solomon said it well for all of us, "*There is a way that appears right unto man but the end of it is the ways of death.*" (Proverbs 14:12) The choice is yours. It is chosen every day of your life. We are not talking here in this booklet about a newfangled prayer fad, or some fantastic or novel prayer technique or discovery. We are talking about a decision to change our lifestyles, beginning with our prayer lifestyle. It is a decision to become "men and women apart," people who dare to walk with God as Enoch, Moses, and Elijah did. Men and women who consider it more important to be "known at the throne" in heavenly places than to be rich and famous in earthly values. Men and women who are willing to trade all the riches of Egypt just to sit at the feet of the Master and know Him, whom to know is everlasting life.

In this book I will talk much about time and stillness, for that is the crisis of our age - so many time-saving technologies, but little time for the Savior. My challenge to you is not so much one of strategy as it is of priorities.

I challenge you to change your life by changing your life aspirations. I challenge you to begin living a life of prayer. I challenge you to sacrifice sacred time - minutes, hours, yes, even days and weeks, to the Savior's call to come apart and be with him a while. A wise Christian once observed, "*Little with God, means being little for God.*" That is so true!

Practice Disciplined Prayer

I encourage you to begin your prayer adventure by learning the first step. Learn to be quiet, to be still. Learn to slow down, and focus on God alone. Learn the art of "focus" - the discipline of the mind. Settle down in God's presence until there is no hurry left in you. Learn to daily put away your "to-do lists". Shut your prayer closet door to sound, movement and distractions. Learn to lay yourself before God as a living sacrifice. Be patient. Be still. God will come, but you must wait for Him.

Once you have learned the skill of being still and quiet you can move on to the next step, which is worship. Once you learn that, you can move to thanksgiving, and so on, until you have mastered each of the six steps of intimacy with God. "How long will this take?" you ask. Well, that depends on each person. But know this: God is not in a hurry. Neither should we be.

I suspect that it takes about six weeks of regular discipline to break old habits and establish new ones. But that is just a beginning. It took me nearly two years to thoroughly become familiar with each step so that I grew to love it. It may not take you that long.

We are not suggesting that these six steps are the only way to pray. To pray poorly is better than to pray vain repetitions. To pray the Lord's Prayer by rote is better than just asking God for things and running about your business. To pray simply and briefly is better than not praying at all.

There are many different ways to pray. One of the greatest and most popular uses the acronym A.C.T.S. (Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, and Supplication). I have used it for years and it is a wonderful guide for your prayers. There are many valid prayer strategies. We are not trying to corner a market on how to pray. What I find, however, as with A.C.T.S. and other systems, is that they all leave out two important prayer disciplines: stillness and clothing yourself with the armor of God.

Six Biblical Disciplines

What I am saying is that when I deliberately use these six disciplines in my praying my prayer life is delightful. When I drift back into my old hurried and haphazard prayer habits I get dull and prayer is a labor. When I return to using this prayer pattern my prayer life is joyful, alive and fulfilling. The order of these steps is the order in which God instructed me. The order may be different for you, but the sequence is Biblical. These are oft forgotten biblical instructions for prayer. When prayer becomes knee jerk "sky-lob" to heaven without thought to God's order of things we become like the world in our praying, simply asking God for things. If you look at the Lord's Prayer of Matthew 6 the patterns we are suggesting here are found in Jesus' exemplary prayer. Note, the order is somewhat different than I have set down here, but the ingredients are the same. These ingredients make for deep and rewarding prayer experiences.

To pray deeply, systematically, regularly, and to pray God-focused, God-ordered prayers brings great satisfaction and blessing to the work of prayer. Without it we tend toward begging for our needs only; with it we tend toward a deep relationship with God that is enjoyable and satisfying.

Take Only One Step at a Time

I challenge you to go one step at a time. Reading this book is not what will change your prayer life. But disciplining yourself to pray the way God says we should pray will change your life.

Begin with one step, the first step, one step at a time. Learn it well until you can discipline yourself to spend three minutes on it without distraction. A three-minute egg timer will become your best friend as you seek to discipline your mind and heart in prayer. It is extremely important to spend adequate time in preparation for intercession since that is the discipline most often neglected or missing altogether in our times of intercession. It is important because God says it is.

Six Weeks of Disciplined Prayer

Each step presented here is a Biblical principle of prayer. After you have studied all of them go back to the beginning and begin your walk through the six steps with small one-minute prayers for each step. At the end of this book there is a sample prayer using each of these steps. Most people find a minute too short a time to really absorb the impact of intimate prayer. I have found that three minutes on each as a daily routine makes for an 18-minute prayer oasis.

From those baby steps you will grow strong and disciplined in your prayer times. You may not be able to do this plan every day for sixty minutes, but while you are learning, make yourself do it every day for 4-6 weeks. Every time you pray pattern yourself to walk into God's presence using these six steps whether you are praying for an hour or for six minutes. Doing this will build good habits into your prayer times.

Use this plan several times a week for intense intimate fellowship with God. Set aside a full hour, sixty minutes, to walk through these prayer steps slowly and luxuriously. Most people find it so helpful and so enjoyable they cannot remain with just one-minute prayers, soon they expand it to three minutes, then five minutes each and so on.

Use this strategy in your all-day prayer retreats or in extended times of fasting and prayer. During those extended prayer times you can expand your exercise from three minutes to an hour on each. Pastors can use it as a guide to prayer meetings. It will revitalize your prayer times and train your people at the same time.

Again, you may adjust the order to suit your prayer rhythms. For example, you may proceed with silence, worship, confession, then thanksgiving, clothing yourself with God's promises, and casting your cares. The Lord's Prayer itself seems to pattern silence (enter into your closet), worship, thanksgiving, cares, confession, and clothing in God's armor. However you do it, stick to your set pattern as a discipline. Otherwise, little will be learned.

The Three-Minute Timer



I suggest that you use a timer to keep yourself focused and to spend an equal amount of time on each step. It takes work. Your mind is not used to focusing on one item. Your spirit is not disciplined and will want to hurry. Do not hurry! Spend time with God. That is what intercession is all about. It is not about asking many things from God. Spend time with God getting to know Him in unhurried preparation. Bathe yourself in prayer.

Our minds are like wild stallions that do not want to be tamed. The mind refuses to be ruled. It wanders wherever it wishes. It speeds ahead to the agenda of the day. It clamors for its own way. It refuses to be bridled. It won't be still.

Peter tells us to bring it under control. "*Gird up the loins of your mind.*" (1 Peter 1:13) Put a girdle on it! Fasten it down. Make it do what you order it to. Paul says, "*Bring every thought into the captivity of Christ.*" (2 Corinthians 10:5)

I have found that it is virtually impossible for my busy mind to be still. So, I found a simple tool that helps me discipline my mind. It is a 3-minute timer. I use the three-minute egg timer to keep myself focused and to spend a disciplined amount of time on each step of intercession. It is hard. It takes work. It demands time. But if you make yourself do it the rewards are enormous.

Personally, I begin with BE STILL and force myself to lie quietly on my face before God asking Him to help me be obedient and be still. Then I push things out of my mind by saying "No" to them. I demand a complete 3 minutes of a quiet mind and heart before allowing myself to go on.

I discipline my mind for wandering by tacking on another 3-minutes when I perceive that my mind was not quiet - that is, it was not brought into subjection to the obedience of Christ. "Be still" is a command, not a suggestion!

Sometimes it takes me five or six flips of the timer until my spirit and mind begin to slow down and obey. That's 18 minutes! I have had to spend as much as 36 minutes getting quiet in God's presence before moving on. Hurry is the enemy of prayer. Hurry and busy-ness is what has always kept you out of God's throne room. Satan knows that if he can get us worried about going somewhere, or doing something, we will not be where we should be to receive God's approval and blessing.

Your mind is not used to focusing on one item. Your spirit is not disciplined and will want to hurry. Do not hurry! It is Satan who is pushing you out of the presence of God. Corral that wild stallion! Make yourself spend time with God. That is what intercession is all about. Spend time with God getting to know Him in unhurried preparation. God did not come to Adam in the cool of the day to check up on his progress or productivity in the Garden of Eden. God came to spend time with his friend.

It is not about asking many things from God. Your goal is not supplication. Your goal is not to get things from God or to convince God to do things your way. Your primary goal is to spend intimate time with God. David encouraged us in this when he said, "*Delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart.*" (Psalm 37:4 KJV)

It may be months before you get far enough along to walk through all of the steps without using this guide in front of you. Be patient. You spent a lifetime learning bad prayer habits. Now take a year to learn a few good ones. There is no hurry. God loves to spend time with you. Your goal is not to do the steps. Your goal is to develop an intimate friendship with the "Lover of Your Soul." Spend time with God.

The following chapters contain six disciplines for building an intimate and enjoyable love relationship with God. It will cost you something. It will cost you time. The more you give to it the more you will get out of it, just like the old soda pop bottles informed the user, "No deposit, no return." The athlete knows, "No pain, no gain." Just like any athletic competition, or any skill we develop, practice will make perfect. Without a lavish investment of time there will be no lasting result.

Steps to Intimacy With God

Stepping into God's Presence

F O C U S O N G O D	<u>Be Still</u> (Shhh - still your busy mind and cluttered heart)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Slow your pace - resist hurry• Silence your mind and lips• Stop fidgeting - rest in His arms• Sit, lay, or kneel before God• Surrender your body to Him - Wait patiently for Him
	<u>Be Thankful</u>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mercies new every morning - <i>bread, breath, health, life, strength</i>• My body which is wonderfully made - <i>sight, hearing, touch, smell, etc.</i>• All creation - <i>wonders of His amazing creation</i>• Blessings and Benefits received - <i>all that I have</i>• Bad, Sad, and Broken - <i>things that have gone wrong</i>
	<u>Be Worshipful</u> (It is not thinking but doing worship)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Love songs sung to God - <i>sing of His greatness</i>• Long after Him in your heart - <i>as the deer pants for water so I pant for thee</i>• Lift His Glory: Read Psalm of praise out loud - <i>declare His glory!</i>• Love His Worth: You are _____ (<i>attributes of God</i>) [adjectives]• List His Names: You are my _____ (<i>Names of God or Jesus</i>) [nouns]• Lively worship - <i>shout, exalt, extol, bow, clap, sing, dance, etc.</i> [verbs]

F O C U S O N Y O U	<u>Confess Sin</u> (Do spiritual inventory, open heart surgery)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Your <u>W</u>ords - <i>have you spoken evil of anyone, criticized, sharp words</i>• Your <u>A</u>ttitudes - <i>complaining spirit, depressed, grouchy, know-it-all</i>• Your <u>T</u>houghts - <i>evil desires, lusts, doubts, fears, hatred, bitterness</i>• Your <u>A</u>ctions - <i>broken God's laws, trespassed on forbidden ground</i>
	<u>Clothe Yourself</u>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Apply God's forgiveness x 10 - <i>covered, forgotten, buried, etc.</i>• Reckon who you are in Christ - <i>I am...</i>• Raise the shield of faith against Satan - <i>resist, rebuke, command, etc</i>• Embrace a promise of God for this day - <i>I believe you God when you said...</i>
	<u>Cast your Care</u>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Family - <i>each one by name and need</i>• Finances - <i>debts, needs, provisions, wisdom</i>• Frustrations - <i>with spouse, self, life, job, etc.</i>• Fears, worries - <i>anxieties about tomorrow</i>• Failures - <i>faults, weaknesses, struggles, etc.</i>

STEP 1: BE STILL

Without a doubt the most difficult step in intercessory prayer is this one – keep silence, be still. Learn this step and you will transform your prayer life. Remember, your mind is like an undisciplined child running constantly and refusing to be dominated. It wants its own way. It is like a wild stallion that does not want to be tamed, bridled or ruled. It wanders wherever it wishes. It clamors for its own way. It speeds ahead to its own agenda. It refuses to be brought under control. But God says it must be bridled. Peter urges us to “*gird up the loins of your mind.*” (1 Peter 1:13) Paul says, “*Bring every thought into the captivity of Christ.*” (2 Corinthians 10:5)

A Secret

There is a secret that God reveals to his servants that is hidden from all other men. It is the secret of His presence. He delights to walk and talk with us but He will only do so in the “*Secret place of the Most High.*” Therefore David exalts the mystery of that secret retreat with God alone where God shadows over His own with His protective presence. Jesus said that the secret place for believers is the “*closet of prayer*” in Matthew 6:6. The Greek word translated in KJV is “*tameion*” which means a closet, secret or inner chamber, or a storehouse – thus “a closet.” He is very specific about it. “When you have entered into your “*tameion*” (secret chamber), shut the door...and pray in secret!” God longs to have that romantic secret chamber of interlude with each of us.

A Command (not a suggestion)

God has given His people express commands governing the turbulence of their own hearts and the peace that He offers and expects. None stands out so markedly as Isaiah 30:15 “*In quietness and confidence will be your strength and you would not...*” It declares that the Lord's purpose is for His people to return to Him to find quietness and confidence before Him. The indictment was that His people “WOULD NOT,” therefore they had no peace.

- Psalm 4:4 “*Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still.*”
- Psalm 46:10 “*Be still and know that I am thy God...*”
- Isaiah 30:15 “*In quietness and confidence will be your strength and you would not...*”
- Isaiah 32:17 “*The effect of righteousness is quietness and assurance forever.*”
- Isaiah 41:1 “*Keep silence before me, O islands; and let the people renew their strength: let them come near; then let them speak: let us come near together to judgment.*”
- I Kings 19:12 “*After the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice.*”
- Ecclesiastes 3:7 “*A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;*”
- Habakkuk 2:20 “*But the LORD is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him.*”
- Mark 4:39 “*And he arose and rebuked the wind and said unto the sea, Peace be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.*”
- Revelation 8:1 “*And there was silence in heaven for about the space of a half hour.*”

It is the mandate of God that we still ourselves before Him in order to find His peace and hear his voice. So thus we have as the first and most important step in the believer's prayer life to still ourselves before the Lord.

Priority – “I set the Lord always before me...”

What is first in your life? David testified that he always, meaning every day, “*set the Lord before me.*” (Psalm 16:8) The word used here is the same used in Exodus 20:3 for the command “*to have (to place) no other Gods before Him.*” God is a jealous God and will not share his glory with another. (Exodus 34:14) There is room for only one on the Throne of Omnipotence. Either God, the Lord, is first and supreme and before all others or someone (maybe you?), or something else is first (your agenda, day-timer?) and on the throne. Jesus indicates the same priority theme in Matthew 6:33 when He commands that we “*Seek first the kingdom of God and everything else will fall in place.*”

Listen – Hear His Voice

We live in a busy, noisy, tumultuous society. There is noise and constant demands for our attention every waking hour. There may not be any quiet Judean hillsides for us to retreat to daily for prayer. Therefore we must find an inner solitude in the Lord's presence. Elijah, the mighty prevailing intercessor, learned this lesson when in weariness of the battle he fled into the wilderness. God sent first the wind and storm, then the earthquake and finally the fire. But God was not in them. After this there was “*a still small voice.*” God was found, not in the spectacular, but in the stillness.

Quiet Rest

Rest is important to God. The tireless Creator rested the seventh day from all His work. He commands us to do the same on the Lord's Day. He enforced the year of Jubilee for the land to rest. So too, He wants us to rest in Him. Get this message from Isaiah 40. “*The Creator of the ends of the earth, does not faint, neither is He weary...*” But they that wait on the Lord will renew their strength. God doesn't need to rest, we do!

Isaiah 40:28-31

Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, *that* the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? *there is* no searching of his understanding. 29 He giveth power to the faint; and to *them that have* no might he increaseth strength. 30 Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: 31 But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew *their* strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; *and* they shall walk, and not faint.

Wait on the Lord

In the age of cell phones, microwaves, satellite TVs, high speed computers, and nano-second processing, we don't like to wait. But waiting on God is an important biblical principle. Most of us are in a constant frenetic hurry. We don't like to wait. We don't have time to wait. Waiting is a waste of time. So we don't wait and we miss God's train of blessing. Waiting is part of the blessing of prayer. It requires that we put aside the rush of life and sit still and just wait. The point of prayer is not getting stuff from God. The point of prayer is getting God! Take skiing for example. The thrill of skiing is not in the arrival at the bottom of the hill, but in the joy of getting there – so it is with seeking God. The delight of prayer is not getting the answers, but being in the presence of the One who freely gives us all things.

- Psalms 27:14 Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD.
- Psalms 37:7 Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him.
- Isaiah 30:18 And therefore will the LORD wait, that he may be gracious unto you, and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you: for the LORD *is* a God of judgment: blessed *are* all they that wait for him.

One Desire – To Behold His Beauty

David again is a wonderful example of one who learned about the secret place of stillness before God. He declares, “*One thing I have desired of the Lord, that will I seek after.*” What is that one thing that consumed his desire? It was to behold the beauty of the Lord, then secondly to inquire in His temple. Beholding God’s beauty begins in the quiet place of stillness. Then it blossoms into worship, the second step of our intercessory prayer strategy. One desire... what is yours?

Songs of Quietness:

- There is a Quiet Place: There is a quiet place, far from the noise and pace, where God can soothe the troubled heart. Sheltered by tree and flower, and in that quiet hour, we find a new, new day.
- In the Garden: I come to the garden alone, while the dew is still on the roses, and the voice I hear falling on my ear, the Son of God discloses. And He walks with me and He talks with me. And He tells me I am his own. And the joy we share as we tarry there, none other has ever known.
- Be Still My Soul: Be still my soul, the Lord is on thy side. Bear patiently thy cross of grief or pain. Leave to thy God to order and provide. In every change he faithful will remain.

Try singing these songs quietly, even mentally, to help quiet your heart and mind.

On no other step is it more important to begin and continue to use the 3-minute timer. It is the only way I know of to make myself be still before the throne.



The secret is in the discipline of laying aside everything else until your heart, mind and spirit are quiet before God. God says, “Be still!” The choice to obey Him or not is up to you. Obedience begins here.

EVEN HEAVEN REQUIRES SILENCE

Revelation 8:1 And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.

As you attempt to train yourself in these prayer disciplines remember that learning new habits takes time. Don't try to apply all of the steps at the same time. May I suggest that you discipline yourself in this step of silence only for at least 4 weeks, 10 minutes per day before going on to the next step.

PRACTICAL DISCIPLINES

1. Enter into your secret chamber, your closet. Find a quiet undisturbed place. Once you are alone before God "*Shut the door.*" Block out all distractions but God Himself.
2. Kneel or lay prostrate in the Lord's presence. (Only under real medical prohibition should you do otherwise. Kneeling or prostrate are worship positions.) You need not be uncomfortable but neither should you be lazy in prayer. Philippians 2:10-11 "*every knee shall bow...confessing Jesus as Lord.*"
3. Make your mind a sanctuary. Make your mind stop its commotion and noise! Listen to the din of confused voices reminding you of duties, tasks and obligations. Then silence them! Your mind is not a noisy playground. It is a sanctuary. Your mind is yours. Make it obey you.
4. Slow down! Remember "relax" is the word for "be still" in Hebrew. Consciously loosen the tension of every muscle. It won't come naturally so work at learning to be quiet! 1 Thessalonians 4:11 "*Study (force yourself) to be quiet.*"
5. Set apart a significant amount of time to learn this slowing down process. Give yourself time to slow down. You cannot stop a train on a dime. It takes time to slow down to a stop. You cannot get still in 10 seconds and often it takes more than a 3-minute timer. 10 minutes is a good target, but it might not be long enough. Give God some room to work in you.
6. Fix your eyes on Jesus - behold the beauty of the Lord. Like the angels in heaven and all creatures before the throne present yourself to God in stillness. Imagine yourself prostrate at His feet before His throne.
7. Take a few deep breaths. At first take long slow deep breaths. Hold it a few seconds. Let it out slowly. Control it! You'll be amazed at how it begins to quiet your body, which in turn affects thoughts too. Remember, if you cannot control your body, you cannot expect to control your spirit either. 1 Corinthians 9:27 "*...I keep my body under, and bring it into subjection...*"
8. Refuse to go on to the next step until the body and mind have obeyed you. If they are not subject to your will, neither will be the rest of your thoughts in prayer. If you cannot bring your own body and mind into subjection how will you wrestle with spiritual forces and win? Proverbs 24:10 "*If you faint in the day of adversity, your strength is small.*"

*And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea,
Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. – Mark 4:39*

HINTS AND HELPS

- 1) The Gift of Silence - Stillness is a sacrificial gift we offer to God. It is costly because it is hard to do. It is hard to spare the time. But if God is worth the effort then give him this personally painful gift. It is the gift of stopping. Stillness is the absence of motion, the absence of noise, the absence of hurry. Mary Magdalene broke the alabaster box of precious ointment and wasted it on Jesus. He is worth the waste.
- 2) Picture "stillness" as a far off island. You will need to take time to get there. I cannot do it suddenly. It must be done slowly. For many people it takes a fair amount of time to get quiet and to become peaceful.
- 3) Imagine yourself before the Throne of God - that's the idea! You really are before His throne, so there's no pretending about it. Picture yourself, like Mary, sitting at Jesus' feet, quietly waiting for His still small voice - His whisper, "peace be still."
- 4) Quiet Music: Quiet music can still the raging beast within. Find a good instrumental CD with quiet gentle music. There are some wonderful nature CDs with nature noises and quiet music in the background. Stillness is a process. I put myself into a quiet mode. I am moving toward silence and stillness.
- 5) A Gentle Song in my mind that helps to slow me down and focus me on being still is helpful to the process. *Be Still My Soul* is a good one.
- 6) Light a Candle: A good tool I have found helpful is to light a small birthday candle and watch it burn down. The process of watching a slow burning candle has an affect on you in that it requires waiting. You cannot hurry it. Just wait.
- 7) Exhale Slowly: Getting still is "breathing out." I exhale my troubled, busy, and hurried thoughts. I exhale them to God. "Lord, quiet my heart. I give it to you." I may say that slowly some fifty times.
- 8) Lay It Aside: Sometimes I have to exhale by writing the thing to do down on my to-do list and physically pushing it away.
- 9) Ask Yourself: "*Am I quiet inside? Am I quiet enough to hear my own breathing, or can I hear my heartbeat?*" If not, I start all over again. If I don't succeed and run out of time, I start again tomorrow, and the next day, and the next... Eventually I will get it. Learning to ride my bike involved a lot of falling down, getting up, and falling again.
- 10) Schedule Uninterrupted Time: Remember you will need to schedule some extended times when you are not pressured by the clock so you can practice stillness. It takes practice. You'll need some white space in your life to really get still.
- 11) Discipline Yourself: Discipline is "making yourself do what you may not feel like doing because you know it is good for you." Then again, it is "doing a thing over and over again until you get it right, then doing it again and again to keep yourself doing it right."

STEP 2: BE THANKFUL

“Enter his gates with thanksgiving.”

Thanksgiving naturally follows confession and forgiveness! We did not put it in third place right next to worship lest we be tempted to think that worship and thanksgiving are the same thing. They are not. Thanksgiving is a distinct act of the will. It recognizes the hand of God and is thankful. It chooses to give God credit for what He has done, and what He has promised, while worship praises God for who He is.

In Everything Give Thanks

Thanks giving is to be as much a part of the believer’s life as breathing. We are exhorted to live in thankfulness to God, and to exalt Him with continual expressions of thanks regardless of our present circumstances. "In everything give thanks for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." (1 Thessalonians 5:18)

In prayer we are exhorted to give thanks profusely for the goodness of the Lord, for all his benefits, for His mercies, for His faithfulness, for His steadfast love, for loads of blessings. Psalm 100 is an excellent guide for entering the presence of God. "Enter His gates with thanksgiving and into His courts with praise: Be thankful unto him, and bless His name." Unthankfulness and silence curses God’s name. It brings Him shame.

Ingratitude

It was Israel's ingratitude of heart, the murmuring, the complaining, the grumbling, that brought on the wrath of God. It was not that God had not blessed. He had over and over again! It is that men soon forget the goodness of the Lord. We are quick to forget His answers to our prayers, His mercies in our troubles, His healings when we are sick, His forgiveness when we fail, His provisions in our need. Well did the psalmist groan in Psalm 107, "*O Give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good...Oh, that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!*"

The Psalms are filled with expressions of thanks to God on every side. Oh, may our lives, our lips, be continual psalms of thanksgiving! The apostle Paul commands the same principle in the New Testament, regardless of the circumstances we are to be thankful and think on the good things the Lord has done. "Be anxious for nothing but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God which passes all understanding shall keep you hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:6-7)

Good Mental Health

Good mental health begins with a thankful attitude of heart. "*A merry heart does good like medicine...He that has a merry heart has a continual feast.*" (Proverbs 15:13 / 17:22) Depression and discouragement are the inability to see the goodness of God around you. David frequently expressed his depression, "*I had fainted unless I had believed to see the goodness of God in the land of the living.*" (Psalm 27:13) The eyes of faith see the goodness of God even in the midst of adversity. God’s purposes, plans, and provisions are always good! Remember, He is working it out. Be thankful while He works it out. (Romans 8:28 and Jeremiah 29:11)

Forget Not All His Benefits

Forgetfulness of God's multiplied blessings is sin. Forgetting or neglecting to give Him thanks is the sin of ingratitude - at least it is taking God for granted. D.L. Moody in commenting on Psalm 103 said, "*I can't remember all his benefits and blessings, but I dare not forget all of them either.*" Thanksgiving is remembering God's good gifts and giving Him the credit due His name.

- Psalm 103:2-5 "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgives all your iniquities; who heals all your diseases; who redeems your life from destruction; who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies; who satisfies your mouth with good things; so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's."
- Psalm 68:19 "Blessed be the Lord, who daily loads us with benefits..."
- James 1:17 "Every good gift and every perfect gift comes down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."

Thanksgiving Is a Sacrifice to God

Hebrews 13:15 points out that thanksgiving is a sacrifice to God. A sacrifice of our lips, that is to be offered up to God continually. Thanksgiving is not easy. It is tough to be thankful and express thanks from the heart for everything. Wouldn't prayer be wonderfully transformed if we would offer 10 sacrifices of thanksgiving for every request we make of God?

PRACTICAL DISCIPLINES

1. Thank God for His Creation, your own body (Psalm 139:14)
2. Thank God for His provisions. For everything you have. List each thing for which you are thankful.
3. Thank God for people He has put into your life. Name them by name and what you are thankful for.
4. Thank God for little things. Start with the smallest things you can think of for which you are thankful. From there work toward the bigger things he has done. Never start with the big lest you despise the small. Do not despise the day of small things. (Zech. 4:10)
5. Thank God for hard things. "In everything give thanks...for this is the will of God..." Thank God for the trials and adversities that come to make us strong. They are what make us lean on Him. So thank Him!
6. Thank God for everything. Keep a notebook handy in which you write down your thanksgiving list. It helps!

Be Thankful Unto Him

- His mercies new every morn
- His benefits
- His blessings
- His way and will is perfect
- Good, bad, and the ugly

"In everything give thanks for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." – 1Thess. 5:18

He Has Made

- Earth by His great power
- Me, I am fearfully and wonderfully made
- All things small and great
- All things richly to enjoy
- This day

"Consider the work of God: for who can make that straight, which he hath made crooked?" – Ecclesiastes 7:13

Use these Psalms to guide your thanksgiving. Pray the Psalms. Mark them as "Thanksgiving" in your Bible: Psalm 103; 104; 105; 107; 111; 118; 124; 126; 136; 139

STEP 2: BE WORSHIPFUL

“The Father seeks such to worship him.”

“But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeks such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.” – John 4:23-24

To worship God is to seek His face, that is, to see the Lord in His beauty by meditating on Him and extolling (proclaiming) His worth. Isaiah saw the Lord high and lifted up and was forever changed (Is. 6:1-8). Jesus said that the Father is seeking worshippers who will worship Him in spirit and in truth. God desires for us to seek after Him in steadfast worship beholding His beauty.

- *The fear (reverence and awe) of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.* – Proverbs 9:10
 - *And the people that do know their God shall be strong and do exploits.* – Daniel 11:32
 - *Delight yourself also in the Lord; and He shall give you the desires of your heart.* – Psalm 37:4
 - *One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His temple.* – Psalm 27:4
 - *But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that you should show forth the praises of him who has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light:* – 1 Peter 2:9
 - *But you are holy, O thou that inhabits the praises of Israel.* – Psalms 22:3
-

Behold His Beauty

The worship part of intercession is to behold the beauty of the Lord. That means to take time to muse, meditate, and focus on who God is in all His splendor and glory, until the truth of His greatness fills us with awe, adoration, love. True worship is to quietly, deliberately look into the kaleidoscope of God's character, and then stand in awe of His matchless beauty. Remember that Isaiah saw the Lord high and lifted up and was never the same. This was not a worship service in the Temple or Synagogue. It was private worship, “on-your-face-before-a-living-God” worship. It stirred the heart and cleansed the soul. David said his one overriding supreme desire was this. One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in his temple. – Psalms 27:4

In Spirit and In Truth

Jesus authenticated private worship experience when He clarified for the woman at the well in Samaria that worship had nothing to do with temples made with hands. (John 4:23-24) Solomon too revealed that when at the dedication of the Great Temple in Jerusalem he confessed... “*But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded?*” (I Kings 8:27 and Stephen quotes him in Acts 7:48 “*Howbeit the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet.*”)

Confined Worship

Too often we Christians make the mistake of confining our worship to the house of God. Worship is personal adoration expressed directly to God himself. It has little to do with formal services, and music. It has everything to do with loving God with all one's heart, mind, soul, strength and expressing that love emotionally and verbally. Jesus said, "*The Father seeks such to worship him.*" "Worship in spirit" is not referring to the Holy Spirit, but to the spirit of man – his emotions, his soul, his innermost being. Each day of our lives we as believers, the blood-bought redeemed ones, should seek to fervently worship God in our spirit.

Worship is Action – Exalt the Lord!

Worship is not a quiet thing. It demands expression both verbally and physically. Angels and cherubim do it constantly before the throne. Worship is our invitation to join them. Read the book of Revelation of Jesus Christ and you will find physical and verbal declarations of the worth and holiness of God. People fell down and worshiped. You cannot truly worship and be quiet or still. To exalt the Lord requires your personal investment. It involves all of you. Peter expresses the physical and dynamic declaration of God's worth when he says, "*But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that you should show forth the praises of him who has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.*" – 1 Peter 2:9 We are to SHOW FORTH His praises, not just say praises. The word "show forth" is one word in Greek, "exaggello" which literally is "to message forth" or to make known by praising, proclaiming, or celebration. "Aggelos" is angel or "messenger of God" who heralds God's glory. The Hebrew "Shofar," or trumpet, introduced worship with a loud, long blast, so too, we are to trumpet God's praises loudly, just as angels do before the throne. Psalm 66 verses 1-3 is worth our full attention as David instructs us in the art of worship. "Shout to God, Sing to God, Make his praise glorious, Say to God." Psalm 68:4 continues the instruction, "Sing to God, Sing praise to His name, extol Him who rides on the clouds, rejoice before Him."

Worship Verbs

It helps to think of worship as an action rather than a passive emotion. Worship is a verb throughout Scripture. Work at doing each of these actions as you worship.

1. Praise - (yadah) - to throw, shoot arrows, cast laud, praise
2. Give Glory - (yahab) - make shine, to give glory, to bring splendor, to ascribe worth,
3. Magnify - (gadal) - to cause to grow, to make great, powerful, to magnify
4. Worship - (shachah) - to bow down, prostrate oneself, to crouch before superior in homage
5. Exalt / Extol - (ruwm) - to raise, to heave high, to lift up lofty, to be exalted above
6. Sing - (zamar) - to make music, to sing with voice, to play a musical instrument
7. Ascribe - (nathan) - to give, bestow, grant, permit, ascribe, employ, devote
8. Bless - (barak) - to kneel, to salute, to congratulate
9. Declare - tell of - (caphar) - to count, recount, relate, to number, take account of, reckon
10. Shout - (ranan) - to cry out, a loud shout of joy, a ringing cry (in joy, exultation, praise)
11. Delight in - (anag) - to be happy about, take exquisite pleasure in, to make merry over
12. Honor - (tiph'arah) - to glory, of rank, renown, as attribute of God, make beautiful
13. Behold - (chazah) - (means to wash off one's face) to see, to perceive, to look at
14. Love - (racham) - have tender affection, deep love
15. Clap - (taqa) - to give a blast, give a blow, to strike or applaud
16. Lift up hands - (nasa') - to raise, raise up high, to bear, hold high
17. Bow down - (kara) - curve over, sink down to one's knees,

Worship With Scripture

Use the Scriptures to prime the pump of praise by reminding yourself of God's greatness. Picture it as throwing praise as rose pedals before the throne as you prepare to enter the presence of the living God. Offer them out loud. Psalm 111, 112, 113, 117, 134, 144, 145, 147, 148, 149, 150

Who Is He?

Would to God that we would learn the secret of His presence in learning to worship the Lord for who He is, not just for all the things He has done. I am afraid for all of us that too often our praise is not real worship or adoration but fumbling attempts to "do praise" so that we can get on with the real business interest of our prayer – the asking. True worship has nothing to do with getting. True worship is worship in truth, that is, worshipping God for who He truly is. Who is God? What is He like? God has revealed Himself in His word. Worship is reviewing who He is according to that revelation. To know the Lord is to hold Him in highest "awe," and to stand amazed in His presence. True worship melts the heart before the heat of God's personal revelation. "No man can look on Him and live."

Know the Lord

Paul declared his goal in life was to "know the Lord in the power of his resurrection." Daniel similarly praises those who truly know the Lord as ones who will do exploits. (Daniel 11:32) He who knows God by showing forth his praises will do valiantly. He will be victorious.

Exalt His Holy Name(s)

There are over 600 descriptive names of God and Christ, not the least of which are His Jehovah hyphenated names. Say it out loud with "Lord you are..." then conclude, "therefore I will..."

1. Jehovah-tsidkenu = The Lord our Righteousness
2. Jehovah-shalom = The Lord our Peace
3. Jehovah-shammah = The Lord our Who is There Ever Present
4. Jehovah-m'kaddesh = The Lord our Sanctifier
5. Jehovah-jireh = The Lord our Provider
6. Jehovah-rohi = The Lord our Shepherd
7. Jehovah-nissi = The Lord our Banner
8. Jehovah-rophe = The Lord our Healer
9. Jehovah-saboath = Lord of Hosts

Practical Worship Strategies

1. Read Scripture that exalts Who He is. (Prime the pump with Scripture)
2. Sing songs to the Lord. (Sing out loud!)
3. Exalt His Names. (Magnify His names)
4. Remember His mighty works. (Think on, Meditate on)
5. Tell of His excellent greatness. (Rehearse it to Him)
6. Acknowledge His Sovereignty, Power, Wisdom, Control. (Lord you are...")
7. Physically express your worship and adoration. (Lift hands, lay prostrate, kneel)

Three Questions to Answer As You Worship:

- Who Is He? His Character, Virtues, Attributes.
- What Are His Wonderful Names?
- What He Does. How Great Is He?

Use God's Name In Prayer

Daniel said, “*The people that know their God will be strong and do exploits.*” (Daniel 11:32) Solomon said, “*The name of the Lord is a strong tower. The righteous run into it and they are safe.*” (Proverbs 18:10) The Lord through Malachi commends those who “*think on His name.*” Jesus taught to ask anything “in His name” and it will be done for us. Jesus’ name is a powerful name. It is a “*name above every name*” so that “*at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God.*” (Philippians 2:9-11)

Let us learn to exalt His name(s) in prayer.

- Lord, You are _____ (*attributes of God*) [adjectives], therefore I will ...
- Lord, You are my _____ (*Names of God or Jesus*) [nouns] , therefore I will ...
- Lord, Your name is _____ and I exalt and worship You.

Make His Praise Glorious

Praise - Give Glory - Magnify - Worship -
Exalt/Extol - Sing - Ascribe - Bless -
Declare - Shout - Delight in - Honor -
Behold - Love - Clap - Lift up hands - Bow
down -

Lord, You are _____ (*attributes of God*)
Lord, You are my _____ (*Names of Jesus*)
Lord, Your name is _____ (Jehovah-)

Jehovah Jireh-Provider / Jehovah Nissi--
Banner / Jehovah Shalom-Peace / Jehovah
Tsidkenu-Righteousness / Jehovah
Shammah-Present / Jehovah M'Kaddesh-
Sanctifier / Jehovah Rophe-Healer /
Jehovah Rohi-Shepherd

Exalt His Name Together

Ancient of Days – Almighty – Alpha and Omega –
Amen – Anchor – Author – Balm – Bread –
Bridegroom – Brightness of glory – Bright
Morning Star – Captain – Cornerstone – Counselor
– Creator – Deliverer – Defense – Door – Eternal
God – Everlasting Father – Fortress – First and
Last – Immanuel – Hiding Place – High Tower –
Judge – King of kings – King Eternal – Lamb of
God – Lilly of the Valley – Lord Mighty in Battle
– Lion of Judah – Life – Lifter of my head – Light
– Living Bread – Living Way – Lord Strong
Mighty – Love – Mediator – Mighty God –
Omnipotent – Only Potentate –Prince of Peace –
Potter – Redeemer – Refiner – Refuge – Rock –
Rose of Sharon – Savior – Shelter – Shepherd –
Shield – Sun of Righteous – Truth – Victor – Vine
– Way – Wonderful

STEP 4: CONFESS SIN

"If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" 1 John 1:9

John, the beloved disciple, warns us against an attitude of innocence before a holy God. To say that we have nothing to confess to God is to call Him a liar, and to practice self-deception before our Maker. David says: *"Behold I was shaped in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me."* (Psalm 51:5) And Isaiah adds to his own unworthiness before a holy God when he says: *"All of our righteousnesses (that is, our best efforts) are as filthy rags."* (Isaiah 64:6) Most of us misread that passage and think that God means *"all of our unrighteousnesses."* But it is all our best effort at right living that are still as filthy rags. Even if we could keep all the law and stumble in only one small point we would be guilty of all.

Woe Is Me!

Isaiah, a man filled with the Spirit, a prophet of God, a man above reproach, is a good example of this truth. In Isaiah 6 he first sees the Lord in all His beauty, high and lifted up, and glorified. The sight was so awesome that the just and righteous Isaiah fell on His face before God with an acute awareness of his own sinful nature. He was not exaggerating. He was not bemoaning the sinfulness of other people. He saw himself in the light of God's holiness and cried *"Woe is me I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips."* (Isaiah 6:1-5)

We are not just to come into God's presence presumptuously, but humbly (2 Chronicles 7:14) contritely, with a sincere perspective on our own nature. We need a vision of ourselves, our true fallen nature, our minds which are unclean, and of which God knows every passing thought. (Psalm 139:1-5)

Bankruptcy

Until we recognize our own state of bankruptcy before a holy God we cannot truly lean upon His Righteousness, without which no man will see the Lord. (Hebrews 12:14) We would instead come into his presence as the Pharisee, proud, bragging of his kept laws, righteous deeds, his right to gain the Father's favor. We need to see ourselves as destitute, and totally depraved, without the righteousness of Christ. We have nothing of which to boast. We, are as the rich church of Laodicea in Revelation 3:14-22. We need to see ourselves as God sees us. *"Lukewarm...wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked."*

A.W. Tozer says:

"We need to admit...the shallowness of our inner experience, the hollowness of our worship, the worldliness of our lives, our fleshly fallen nature that lives on, yet unjudged within us, uncrucified and unrepudiated, and the hyphenated sins of the human spirit, self-righteousness, self-pity, self-confidence, self-sufficiency, self-admiration, self-love, self-indulgence, and a host of other self-sins. They are not something we do, they are something we are..."

The Pursuit of God

REGARDING INIQUITY IN MY HEART

"If I regard iniquity in my heart the Lord will not hear me." Psalm 66:18

To regard iniquity means to leave it alone, to tolerate it, to know it is there and do nothing about it. It is to hide it, to cover it by excuses, to consider it unimportant, to ignore its dangers.

God considers any iniquity to be an abomination. An abomination is a horrible disgusting thing. There are no "good guy" iniquities, no little white lies, no insignificant rebellions of the heart! God calls rebellion in any form "as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness as idolatry." (1 Samuel 15:23) God considers sin as sin and all equally appalling to His holiness. Sin in our heart is to the Lord as festering sores, and maggots in His holy offerings – slimy, crawling, slithering, disgusting, maggots defiling the whole! (Isaiah 1:6)

Daniel was conscious of the subtle ways in which sin surrounds us and creeps into our thoughts, actions, and in-actions. In his exemplary prayer in Daniel 9 he identifies nine faces of sin.

WE HAVE ...

1. Sinned v 5 Missed the mark, fallen short
2. Committed iniquity v 5 Deliberate conscious sin
3. Done wickedly v 5 Life-style habitual sin
4. Rebelled v 5/9 Said no to God!
5. Not hearkened v 6 Closed our ears, ignored
6. Not obeyed voice v 10 Grieved the Holy Spirit
7. Transgressed law v 11 Legal term, to know law and disobey
8. Departed from God v 11 Backslidden, wandered away
9. Made not prayer v 13 Sin of prayerlessness

DEAL WITH SIN !

Jesus emphasized the need to deal with sin each time He spoke of prayer. In the Lord's prayer He deals heavily with the need to deal severely with sin. That is, in fact, the primary lesson of the Lord's Prayer. Immediately after citing it He pointed out the need to forgive as well as ask for forgiveness. In Matthew 5:23-26 Jesus further deals with sin in prayer by saying that when we come to God's altar with an offering we must first do something about broken relationships before we pray and offer praise!!! An attempt at reconciliation must be made before our prayers will be heard. I Peter 3:7 includes the marital relationship as being a hindering factor in prayer.

CONFESSION OF SIN

A man that truly enters into the presence of God cannot but help to see himself as unclean. Even the Scripture admits that *"all of our good deeds are as filthy rags."* So was the feeling of Isaiah before the throne in Isaiah 6, and of Daniel in chapter 9. The holiness of God cannot tolerate the presence of sin! We are exhorted to confess our sins to God (I John 1:8-9), and even admit our faults one to another (James 5:16) so as to pray effectively and fervently and be healed.

WHAT TO DO WITH YOUR SIN

Conviction is seeing sin as exceedingly sinful.

Repentance is "Agreeing with God about my sin," and turning from it.

Confession is exposing it to God & asking Him to forgive and cleanse.

We cannot do penance for our sins, it would do no good. We cannot pay the penalty of our sins. The penalty or "wage of sin is death." Therefore God has provided a better way. We lay our sins on Jesus.

Isaiah 53 is a magnificent passage that describes the atonement of Jesus Christ for sins. Jesus paid it all on the cross. That is why He could say, "It is finished." Verse five says, *"He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed."* Verse six goes on, *"All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned everyone to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquities of us all."* Verse twelve goes even further, *"He was numbered with the transgressors; and he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."*

There is nothing more for me to do but lay my sins on Jesus. That is why the thief on the cross could be saved. He could not do penance. He could not make restitution for what he had done. He could not even prove his sincerity. He simply laid his sin on Jesus and said, "Have mercy on me." That is what Jesus came to do. *"Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world."*

Lay your sins on Jesus - He is your sin-bearer. Then rejoice in what God says He has done with your sins. Confession is not commiserating or grieving over your fallen nature, your secret thoughts, or your sins of commission or omission, but asking and receiving forgiveness and the covering of the blood of Jesus. Do not leave the altar of confession without appropriating the provisions of the cross!. Be forgiven and give thanks.

What Happened To Our Sins?

1. They were paid in full - Romans 5:11 / Isaiah 53:6
2. They were pardoned - 1 John 1:9
3. They were laid on Him - Isaiah 53:6
4. They were washed whiter than snow - Isaiah 1:18
5. They were covered - Psalm 32:1
6. They were cleansed by blood of Jesus - Hebrews 9:22/ 10:4
7. They were blotted out - Isaiah 44:22
8. They were removed as far as east from west - Psalm 103:12
9. They were cast in depths of sea - Micah 7:19
10. They were forever forgotten - Jeremiah 31:34

It is Well

My sin, O the bliss of this glorious thought
My sin, not in part but the whole,
Is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more,
Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord, O my soul.

READ PSALM 51 AND PSALM 139
AS PART OF YOUR CONFESSION OF SIN.

What God Did With My Sin

1. They were paid in full – Romans 5:11. Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.
2. They were forgiven/pardoned – I John 1:9. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.
3. They were laid on Jesus – Is 53:6. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.
4. They were washed whiter than snow – Is 1:18. "Come now, let us reason together," says the LORD. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool.
5. They were covered – Ps 32:1. Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.
6. They were cleansed by blood of Jesus – Heb 9:22. In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.
7. They were blotted out (swept away) – Is 44:22. I have swept away (blotted out) your offenses like a cloud, your sins like the morning mist. Return to me, for I have redeemed you." (Ps 51:1)
8. They were removed as far as east from west – Ps 103:12. as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.
9. They were cast in depths of sea – Micah 7:19. You will again have compassion on us; you will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea.
10. They were forever forgotten – Jeremiah 31:34. No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest," declares the LORD. "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."

Seven Categories of Temptations

We are all tempted. Even Jesus was tempted of the devil. James tells us that we are all tempted when we are drawn away of our own lusts and enticed. Be honest with yourself.

- Where are your weakness?
- What are your easily besetting sins?
- What are your re-occurring temptations?

Rom 1:29-32, 1 Cor. 6:8-10, 1 Cor 10:6-10, Gal 5:19-21, Eph 4:25-31, 2 Tim 3:1-8, Rev. 21:8

Spiritual	Mental	Emotional	Verbal	Physical	Financial	Ego
Idolatry	Doubts	Hatred	Curse	Sexual	Cheating	Pride
Witchcraft	Fears	Jealousy	Swear	Sensual	Workaholic	Self-pity
Fortunes	Worry	Anger	Lie	Drugs	Things	Ambition
Horoscopes	Anxiety	Bitterness	Criticize	Alcohol	Not Tithing	Greed
Ouija Boards	Evil Thoughts	Prejudice	Condemn	Smoking	Stealing	Coveting
Charms	Fantasies	Self-Pity	Gossip	Body worship	Lotto	Prejudice
		Discouraged	Slander	Beauty obsession	Gambling	
		Depressed	Blasphemy	Figure obsession	Fraud	

Hebrews 12:1 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which does so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

How To Deal With Temptation

- Flee Temptation – 2 Timothy 2:22
- Resist Temptation – James 4:7 & 1 Peter 5:9
- Endure Temptation – James 1:12
- Pray to Escape Temptation – Luke 22:40

Confess Sin

(Do spiritual inventory, open heart surgery)

Words - *have you spoken evil of anyone, criticized, sharp words*

Attitudes - *complaining spirit, depressed, grouchy, know-it-all*

Thoughts - *evil desires, lusts, doubts, fears, hatred, bitterness*

Actions - *broken God's laws, trespassed on forbidden ground*

STEP 5: CLOTHE YOURSELF

What is the first thing you do after taking a bath? Get dressed! I am so glad provision has been made for our nakedness! God commands us to “Put on”, as elect of God. We are commanded to “put on the Lord Jesus,” “Put on the new man,” and to “Put on the whole armor of God.” So put it on! That means dress in it. Reckon it to be so before the throne. Stand in Him complete.

Abraham believed God and it was “imputed” to him as righteousness. That word imputed means it was *credited to his account*. Though he was bankrupt himself, God applied it to his account because of his faith. Believe God and apply His provision for your nakedness.

The Old Testament book of Zechariah, chapter three contains a wonderful example of the need to put on, or to reckon ourselves clothed in the righteousness of God, and in the armor of the Lord. Joshua, the high priest, was standing before the Lord and Satan was at his right hand accusing him before the throne of God. Everything Satan brought against him was true except for one thing - God said, “I forgave him. I clothed him. Leave him alone!” Therefore God commanded the angel of the Lord to take off Joshua’s dirty tattered garments and give him a robe of pure white, a turban on his head, and a scepter in his hand. Then God looks at him and says, “Is not this the brand plucked out of the fire?”

There Are Two Parts to Reckoning:

1. Principle of Position - seeing yourself in heavenly places as God sees you.
2. Principle of Practice - exercising authority in Christ in heavenly places

Principle of Position

There is a “Principle of Position” that we all need to learn. It is the principle that though we all fall far short of the glory of God, God Himself has made provision for us. His provision is that we can put on Christ. We wear His righteousness, His white robe, His crown, His authority. As God sees us in heaven He sees us through His perfect sacrifice, Jesus Christ His Son. We are brands plucked out of the fire. Reckon it to be so! See yourself as God sees you... “*and you are complete in him.*”(Colossians 2:10)

“To Reckon” is to appropriate God’s invisible truth as our visible reality.

“To Believe” is to see the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

Faith applies to our hearts the heavenly realities that God already sees.

- Put on the Lord Jesus Christ
- Put on His Righteousness
- Put on the Whole Armor of God

Principle of Practice – Using Your Authority

How do we exercise our God-given authority in Christ? How do we address the devil in our prayers? (We certainly don't pray to him.)

Weapons

God has clearly given us "Weapons of our Warfare" for the pulling down of strongholds. Our weapons (the word literally is "strategies") *are mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds, casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself above the knowledge of God, and brings every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.*" (2 Corinthians 10:4-6)

Words

The sword of the Spirit, is the Word of God. God's Word is that which we use as our offense. It cuts, penetrates, convicts, declares, exposes, and casts out the enemies of God. Jesus said, "*All authority is given unto me in heaven and in earth.*" That is why whatever we bind on earth will be bound in heaven. (Matt. 16:19, 18:18) That authority is in his word, his ultimate authoritative command. We simply wield the sword. Just point it in the right direction.

Prayers

Our prayers, offered up to God in Jesus name, have powerful effects in spiritual realms.

- "*The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man has great effect.*" – James 5:16
- "*Be strong*" or be bold, boldfaced, courageous, aggressive, un-intimidated - Eph 6:10
- "*A hand upon the throne*" - Exodus 17:16
- "*A hedge of protection*" - Ezekiel 22:30
- "*Come boldly to the throne of grace*" - Hebrews 4:16

SPIRITUAL WARFARE TOOLS

Like it or not, we are involved in this wrestling match against spiritual forces. Since we cannot get away from it we'd better put on God's armor and do as he did to win the day.

- | | |
|---|------------------------|
| 1. <u>Be strong</u> in the Lord! | Ephesians 6:10 |
| 2. <u>Put on</u> the armor of God | Ephesians 6:11-18 |
| 3. <u>Bind</u> the enemy | Matthew 18:18-20 |
| 4. <u>Resist</u> the devil | James 4:7 |
| 5. <u>Claim</u> the blood | Revelation 12:11 |
| 6. <u>Declare</u> loosing of the captives | Luke 4:18 |
| 7. <u>Pull down</u> strongholds | II Corinthians. 10:3-5 |
| 8. <u>Put a hedge</u> of protection | Ezekiel 22:30 |
| 9. <u>Command</u> him to leave | Matthew 10:1 |
| 10. <u>Rebuke</u> him in Jesus name | Matthew 17:18 |

It is only when we stand in our own righteousness that we should be afraid to stand before the enemy, for our righteousnesses are as "filthy rags" but the righteousness of Christ is called the armor of God.

STEP 6: CAST YOUR CARE

Casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you. – I Peter 5:7

Ps. 55:22 Cast your burden on the Lord...He shall sustain you.

Phil. 4:6 In everything...let your requests be made known unto God.

Job 1:5 Job rose up early in the morning and offered burnt offerings for all of them.

Unpacked Baggage

We cannot properly intercede for others until we have cleared away the baggage of personal concerns, needs, and cares. We must find a resting place where we can lay down our burdens, in order to bear other's burdens in prayer. Hearts that are "overloaded" with care will be distracted in prayer and made ineffective in their intercession.

In Luke 21:34, Jesus warned his disciples to beware of the danger of three distracting pitfalls:

1. Over-abundance (surfeiting, over-spending, over-charging, too many possessions)
2. Over-indulgence (drunkenness, lover of pleasures, over-eating, over-playing)
3. Over-load (cares, burdens, worries, fears of this life)

Take Your Burden To The Lord

The most deceptive and innocent looking is the "overload...with cares of this life." We cannot escape the cares of normal living, but we can UNLOAD the OVERLOAD. Jesus concludes the issue in verse 36 by saying, "Therefore watch and pray always..."

Leave It There!

The solution to overloaded cares is to pray. That means to bring those excess burdens, cares, concerns, problems, worries, fears, anxieties, and troubles TO THE LORD and leave them there! Too often we take these concerns to the Lord, and walk away just as burdened as before we prayed. There is no "leaving it there."

Cast, Roll, Dump It!

David used an interesting word for "leaving it there." "Cast thy burden on the Lord."

Psalm 55:22 The word "CAST" is the key. It literally means... ROLL... DUMP...

UNLOAD... as one who is carrying a backpack of heavy equipment allows it to slide from his shoulders to another who is stronger, more able to carry the load.

You cannot carry your own burdens and the burdens of others!

BURDENS ARE LIFTED AS WE ROLL THEM ONTO THE LORD

PRACTICAL DISCIPLINES

Pray for yourself:

- Your troubles
- Your aches & pains
- Your faith & faithfulness
- Your courage to witness
- Your heart's secret goals
- Your needs, provisions
- Your finances, funds
- Your enemies

Pray for your future

- Your plans
- Your goals
- Your ministries
- Your vision

Pray for your family

- Each member by name and need
- Salvation of children
- Spouse needs
- Spiritual growth & love of all in family
- Health and safety
- Protection from evil & temptation

Pray for your faults

- Your struggles
- Your worries
- Your temptations
- Your wants & wishes
- Your heartaches
- Your failures

SONGS:

Burdens Are Lifted At Calvary / Jesus Knows Just What I Need / No One Understands Like Jesus / What a Friend We Have in Jesus / Take Your Burden to the Lord and Leave It There / I Cast All My Cares Upon You.

Cast your burden on the Lord...He shall sustain you. – Ps. 55:22

Casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you. – I Pet.5:7

CLOSE YOUR TIME OF INTIMACY

Say Amen!

Extended Times With God

Intimacy with God is very personal. It is a rich time of fellowship with God and personal inventory through the work of God's Spirit. It is a good thing to take a break at this point in your prayer time, unless of course you are doing the hour of intercession and not an extended time. Go for a walk. Give yourself a time of rejoicing. Listen to worship tapes and let your heart be glad in the Lord. He is with you. Enjoy basking in His presence.

Take Time

Developing Intimacy with God takes time. There are no shortcuts, no quick fixes, no speed-praying techniques, and no easy ways. Spending time with God is about s p e n d i n g t i m e w i t h G o d! God is not in a hurry. He never was and never will be. Slow down and get to know Him. Your journey is the journey of a lifetime.

A Prepared Heart

There are many ways to search your own heart and mind to see if there is any wicked way in you. Allow the Holy Spirit to convict, cleanse and fill you, so that you can pray "in the Spirit."

Work The Workbook

Utilize this workbook often to exhaust the possibilities of worship and thanksgiving. We often cheat God and ourselves by not spending adequate time basking in His presence. Worship and thanksgiving are not bribes offered to an angry God. They are our expressions of true heart-felt adoration and gratitude.

Take Spiritual Inventory

We have prepared a number of tools that can be useful in self evaluation. We encourage you to use them as the Spirit leads.

- Disciple's Maturity Check-up
- Hindrances to Prayer
- Spiritual Maturity Inventory
- Strongholds in My Life

Spiritual Warfare is Not War Games

It is serious business to take God and His word seriously. When Paul exhorts that we wrestle not against flesh and blood but against spiritual forces, he was not speaking in hyperbole. That is a reality. You cannot learn spiritual warfare by occasionally practicing it. It only comes through daily discipline and exercise.

SPENDING TIME WITH GOD

"In quietness and confidence will be your strength and you would not..." – Isaiah 30:15



Record What God Has Said

I really believe that God speaks in whispers to the soul. Whether you have spent three minutes or three days in retreat alone with God I believe He will have spoken to your heart. His whispers are love letters to your soul. They are significant messages of the Heavenly Father to one of His beloved children. Take the time at the end of your time of intimacy to remember and record what the

Lord has whispered to you. There is a short space here, but a better tool is to record it in your daily prayer journal.

What I Learned About Silence

What I Learned About Worship

What I Learned About Thanksgiving

What I Learned About My Sin

What I Learned About My Covering

What I Learned About My Cares

A Sample God-Focused Prayer

This is a sample prayer using the Steps of Intimacy. Read it out loud or rewrite it (in your own words) so that you become familiar with this type of prayer. The repetition of these truths out loud will pattern them in your mind and heart so that soon these things will flow out of your heart and you will not need the prompting sheet.

Find a quiet, secluded place away from noise and every distraction. Find a suitable prayer position. Use a new prayer position, perhaps sit on the floor, kneel, lay prostrate, (or bow). Use a three-minute egg timer if you are new at spending extended times with God. Keep your favorite Bible in front of you. Open it to the Psalms. Read Scripture out loud when words fail you. Let Scripture be your guide.

BE STILL...

Lord, I come to You to quietly wait in Your presence.
As the deer pants after the water brooks so my soul pants after You, O God.
I long to see You high and lifted up and Your glory streaming through Your temple.

Still my racing heart, and quiet my busy mind.
I lay aside my busy schedule and my to-do list. I refuse to be hurried.
I wait upon You to renew my strength.
I wait to hear Your whisper.

Close your eyes and imagine yourself laying face down before the King of Kings in His throne room, or as a child sitting on your Heavenly Father's lap. Lean on Him. Rest in Him. Delight to be silent in His presence. Open your heart to his whisper, his touch, and his love for you. Maintain an attitude of surrender. Let your heart speak, not your mind or lips. Breathe only, "Lord, here I am. I am yours."

Maintain this position and attitude for at least three minutes or until your heart is quiet and your spirit is restful. It may take you six, nine, or twelve minutes to get quiet. (Be patient. Work at it.)

Be Worshipful...

Lord, be glorified, be magnified, be exalted, O God, above the heavens.
Lord You are Great and greatly to be praised.
You are to be praised above all gods.
Lord, You are Sovereign, Lord of Creation, Potentate of the Universe.
Jesus, You are exalted to the right hand of God, to the majesty on high.
You are clothed with honor and majesty.
You are clothed with light as with a garment.
You are Mighty - mighty to save. Your arm is not shortened that it cannot save.
You are the same yesterday, today, and forever. You are Eternal.
Your throne is from everlasting to everlasting.
You are the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the Ending.
You are the Ruler of all. All heaven and earth bow before You.
You are far above all principalities, and powers, and dominions and might.
Your name is above every name.
You are Lord alone and at Your name, Jesus, every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that You are Lord.

You are the Giver of all good gifts.
You are the God of all comfort.
You are Faithful, Merciful, tender in mercies, and long-suffering.
You are Lord of all, Lord Supreme, Lord God Almighty.
You are King of Kings and Lord of lords.
You are Creator, Sustainer of life.
You uphold all things by the word of Your power.
You are before all things and by You all things consist.
I worship You and You alone!
Sing God a song. (Tell Him why you love Him.)

Be Thankful...

God You are good. I affirm Your goodness.
You do all things well.
I thank You that You are working all things together for my good and Your glory.
Thank You for Your mercies, they are new every morning. Great is Your faithfulness.
I thank You for Your steadfast love and faithfulness.
You are good and the giver of all good things. All that I have comes from You.
You daily load me with benefits. I give You thanks for all Your benefits.
You have forgiven all my sins, You heal all my diseases.
You redeemed me from destruction. You saved my soul.
You crown me with loving kindness and tender mercies.
You satisfy me with good things.
You give me food, shelter, clothes, air to breathe, water to drink.
You number the hairs of my head.
You supply all my needs according to Your riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

Thank You, Lord, for Your marvelous creation.

I am fearfully and wonderfully made.
Thank You for eyes to see, ears to hear, a mouth to speak, and a brain that functions.
Thank You for blue sky, clouds and rain, wind and storms,
Thank You for mountains, rivers, seas, the sun, moon, stars.
Thank You for birds, flowers, grass, trees, for seasons that change.
All creation declares Your glory and I give You thanks.
(Thank God for the good, the bad, and the ugly in your life)

Confess Sin...

Lord, You alone are holy. I am a man of unclean lips, thoughts, and loves.
I dwell in and act like my sinful culture.
Lord, I confess I am blind by my sin and stubbornness.
I am naked and my sin is exposed to You. I cannot hide from You.
You know my innermost thoughts and desires.
Cleanse me with hyssop and I shall be clean. Wash me and I will be whiter than snow.
I admit before You that I am wretched, pitiful, blind and naked.
I come to You for white clothing. Cleanse me in the blood of the Lamb.
I come to You for the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.

Forgive my apathy and prayerlessness.
Forgive my lustful self-centered thoughts.
Forgive me for anger, bitterness, and an unforgiving spirit.
Forgive me for loving and allowing wickedness on TV to influence me.
Forgive me for allowing the world to squeeze me into its mold.
Forgive me for my debts and love of things.

Forgive my negligence of spiritual disciplines.
Forgive me for not tithing and putting You first in my finances.
Forgive me for griping and arguing with my spouse.
Forgive me for things I have said about other people.

I open my heart to You right now. Search me, O God, and know my thoughts. Try me and see if there be any wicked way in me and lead me in the way everlasting.

I acknowledge that my thoughts are not Your thoughts and my ways are not Your ways.
My heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked.
I am carnal, sold under sin. In sin did my mother conceive me.
I am no better than Adam and Eve. I am fallen, rebellious in nature, stubborn in my spirit. I must admit that against You, and You only, have I sinned and done evil in Your sight.
I cannot hide from You. You know my thoughts and are acquainted with all my ways.
Purge me with hyssop, and I will be clean. Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow.
Create in me a clean heart and renew a right spirit within me.
Cleans me from all my unrighteousness. Wash me in the precious blood of Jesus.
I ask for Your forgiveness. I receive Your cleansing now in Jesus' name.

(Confess to God specific sins of Words, Actions, Thoughts and Attitudes.)

Clothe Yourself...

Lord Jesus, I come to You in weakness to be clothed in Your strength.
I take You as my Shield and Defender, my Hiding Place and my High Tower.
I choose this day to dwell in the Secret place of the Most High and abide under the shadow of the Almighty.
I put on the whole armor of God to stand against all the work of the enemy.
I stand complete in the finished work Christ did for me.
I take refuge in the powerful cleansing blood of Jesus.
I put on the armor of God - Your armor, not mine.
I put on Your helmet of salvation – because I am saved to the uttermost.
I wrap myself with the girdle of Your truth for my mind - what You have spoken I reckon to be so.
I lay hold of Your promises - they are always true, they have never failed, and never will.
I put on the shoes of the Gospel to tread the serpent under my feet.
I put on the breastplate of Your righteousness - not my own which is but filthy rags.
I put on the Lord Jesus Christ as my righteousness, sanctification and redemption.
All that He is I am in Him, an heir of God and joint-heir with Christ.
I take my rightful place before the throne, seated with him in heavenly places.
I take refuge behind the shield of faith to quench the devil's accusations against me.
I lift the sword of His Spirit, the Word of God, against the devil's schemes.

I claim Your promises this day for my provision and covering.
I claim my cleansing through the blood of Jesus. (Quote I John 1:9 "If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.")
I have confessed my sin and You have forgiven me all my transgressions.
You have forgiven all my trespasses.
You have covered me with the blood of Jesus.
You have removed my sin as far as the east is from the west.
You buried them in the depths of the sea. You remember them no more.

I declare Your truth concerning me.
I am the head and not the tail.
I am a victor, not a victim. I am strong and not weak.
I am a saint, not a sinner. I am a child of God, not a child of the devil.

I am free, not a slave to sin. I am clean, not dirty. I am above and not below.
I am whole, not broken and bruised. I am rich, not poor.
I am wise, not ignorant. I am adopted, not abandoned. I am strong, not weak.
I am kept by the power of God. I am able, not disabled.
I am seated in heavenly places in Christ, an heir of God, joint heir with Christ.
I am more-than-conqueror. I am a warrior, not a wimp.
I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.
No evil can strike me, and no plague can come near my dwelling.
I am safe and secure, kept in the palm of Your hand.
He that began a good work in me will perform it 'til the day Jesus comes again.
I am a temple of God and filled with the Holy Spirit.
I am a vessel sanctified and ready for the Master's use.

Cast Your Care...

I cast my cares on You today, for I know that You are caring for me. I bring You the burdens of my heart, Lord. Take them, remake them and remold me into what You want me to be. I pray for Your provisions today for my needs. You have promised to supply my every need through Your riches in glory in Christ Jesus. You know my needs even before I ask You. You see the hairs on my head and count each one.

I pray for my family... (name them one by one).
I pray over my frustrations... (tell God your frustrations this day).
I pray over my fears... (tell the Lord what's troubling you).
I pray over my struggle with my faults... (some sins easily beset me).
I pray over my failures... (I am weak and often fail).
I pray for my finances... (my God shall supply all my needs).

Closing Commitment...

I take the mind of Christ as my thoughts for today. I am thankful and rejoicing in everything knowing that "this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning me."

I affirm that You are all in control of all things "working them together for the good of them that love You." You are at work in me "both to will and do Your good pleasure" and You "will perform this good work in me until Jesus comes."

And now, O Lord, I commit myself to You that You might fill me with Your Holy Spirit and anoint Your cleansed and ready vessel with a spirit of grace and supplication. I quiet my heart in Your presence right now that I might hear Your voice. *"Speak Lord, Your servant is listening."* Whisper Your concerns to my heart. I want to hear Your heartbeat. I quietly wait in Your presence. Thank You for praying through me right now.

This I ask in the matchless name of Jesus, my Savior, AMEN!

Other Useful Prayer Tools For Developing *Intimacy with God*

1. The Prayer Manual – the complete book on developing Intimacy with God. This manual has more than 100 pages of information and inspiration to developing a powerful prayer disciplines that will transform the way you pray.
2. The Workbook – this workbook accompanies the *Six Disciplines of Intimacy of God*. Each step is briefly reviewed and exercises and helps are presented in a fill in the blank format. It is used on all of our Prayer Training Retreats.
3. Hints and Helps Manual – We found that after the workbook people wanted more helps to guide them through these disciplines. So we developed an in-depth coaching manual to help people go deeper in their disciplines. Included are songs to accompany prayer, 640 Names of Jesus to explore and claim, guide to prayer retreats and concerts of prayer, and much more. Probably the most useful and popular helps are the “What God Did With My Sin” and “Who Am I In Christ” pages.
4. The Disciple’s “Sin-ventory” – We have found that most people are fairly lost when it comes to personal introspection and self examination. This helpful guide in workbook fashion guides the seeker through various inventories of discipleship, strongholds, and sins that easily beset.
5. The Scriptorium – Compiled Scriptural resources in one place. Over the years people have asked to see my Bible, which is heavily marked and underlined with passages that have become precious and useful to me in prayer. Many times at prayer summits and colleges of prayer it is helpful to pray the Scriptures. I can do that easily from my well-worn Bible but others less exercised are lost. This is my guide to marking your Bible and topically highlighting important prayer related passages and promises. Among my favorites are the Psalms and Isaiah passages.