

DAVID'S MEN

SEEKING THE HEART OF GOD



Prayer

This month we will narrow our focus to one major discipline – prayer. The quality of our relationship with our Heavenly Father is significantly determined by the effectiveness of our prayer life.

Prayer is hard to explain on paper. It must be experienced to be understood. Therefore, our main objective this month will be to experience prayer.

There are two assignments this month. One is to spend half a day alone with God, and the other is to keep a 30-day prayer journal. They are challenging and will likely stretch you beyond your comfort zone, but you will never be the same after these exercises. Your prayer life will radically change. However, if you cut corners on these exercises, you will regret it. DMs who give their best always come back excited about these experiences.

Spending time alone with God is not a radical assignment; it is an expectation from our God and modeled by our Savior. Jesus often retreated to be alone with God for extended periods of time (e.g., one time for 40 days to prepare for His public ministry, and one time all night to prepare for the cross).

In the book *Point Man*, Steve Farrar describes our role in the family as a point man on patrol. This month, we will prepare to lead our families through the snares and dangers of this world. To paraphrase boxing champion Joe Frazier, a champion is not made in the ring, he is only revealed in the ring. The hard work and determination that made him a champion took place in his private disciplines that prepared him for the battles to come. In the same way, God's man is only revealed during the battle; but his strength, confidence, and courage come from his relationship with God through the private discipline of prayer.

Current Month Assignments

- Read *If You Will Ask: Reflections on the Power of Prayer* (Chambers) and prepare a book summary. NOTE: This book is a change from what was originally included on this year's book list. It's a different kind of book, composed of lectures on prayer given by Oswald Chambers. We're reading the one published in 1994 (more modern language than previous versions)...a link to this version is in the Resources section below for those of you ordering your own books.
- Keep a 30-Day Prayer Journal. **Start tomorrow.** (see list of resources)
- Spend "Half a Day" with God. To prepare, read the post *How to Spend Extended Time in Prayer* (see the Resources list for the link).
- Memorize the 4 verses attached. Be prepared to quote each verse and reference. *Review your verses from previous months to ensure they become deeply rooted!*
- Man-date: When you meet, *discuss your prayer journals, the date of your half-day alone with God, and your verses.*

Resources:

- Link to *If You Will Ask: Reflections on the Power of Prayer* (Chambers) for DMs purchasing their own books: https://www.amazon.com/If-You-Will-Ask-Reflections/dp/0929239067/ref=tmm_pap_swatch_0?encoding=UTF8&qid=&sr=
- *How to Spend Extended Time in Prayer*: The idea of spending an extended time (a half day or more) in prayer can seem so difficult that we never do it. But the guidelines listed here can help you approach such a time with the right preparation and the right attitude, and to gain richly from the experience. Read this article from The Navigators for pointers on spending your half day alone with God: <http://www.navigators.org/About-Us/Stories/Navigator%20Stories/March%202006/How%20to%20Spend%20Extended%20Time%20in%20Prayer>
- *Keeping a Prayer Journal* (see following)
- *Quotes About Prayer* (see following)

Memory Verses

Philippians 4:6-7

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Hebrews 11:6

And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

Matthew 6:33

But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

John 15:7

If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you.

+ 1: Matthew 11:28-30

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

Keeping a Prayer Journal

The most important thing about a prayer journal is that it is written from the heart. A journal reflects your walk with God; it is a place where you can be real with Him, confess your weaknesses and sins, articulate your prayers, and record the answers to those prayers. King David's writings in Psalms are a good model for us. We see honesty and openness with God and a wide range of emotions: from deep sadness and grief to great celebration and joy. It can also help you "be still" before your Maker and reflect on your life. With a journal you can take time out to dream and receive God's infinite love. A prayer journal is about our relationship with God and our needs, and also about the needs of others. It is a place to record these needs and requests as you pray these prayers from your heart.

Why Keep A Prayer Journal?

- It keeps you focused during prayer. Have you ever been praying, and the next thing you know, you are thinking about your To Do List or something else totally off topic? It has happened to every believer! Writing helps keep your mind focused.
- It's a great way to build your faith! When you are going through a trial, it is great to have the Word of God there by your side. You can read through all of the times God came through for His people. But, sometimes, it is even better to have your own prayer journal there to build

your faith. You can read through all of the answered prayers in your own life. It is a steady reminder of God's faithfulness to you when you need it most.

- Journals are an excellent way to delve deeper into God's Word. When you journal on the things God reveals to you personally through His Word, the letters no longer just sit on the pages. Journaling helps make God's Word real, and allows Him to reveal what scripture means for you exactly where you are today.

How to Create a Journal

There is not a "correct" way to organize a prayer journal; it's really up to you and what you feel comfortable with. Here are some different approaches to how you might put one together:

- Use a ring binder. This is useful for keeping and collecting different things; ex. hand-outs from bible study sessions that you intend to read that week, a photo of someone you are praying for, etc. You could create a number of different sections and separate them by a tab system.
- Use a notebook. Often a plain paper notebook is the best kind (rather than a ruled one) as it allows you to make sketches and drawings as well as writing your prayers and thoughts down.
- Keep your prayer journal on your computer or tablet. There are software companies that provide template organizers for your journal, or you can devise your own.

What Should I Include in My Prayer Journal?

- Prayers – written out
- Prayer requests & answered prayers
- Things that God has taught you
- Verses that apply to the situations in your life (e.g., stress, marriage, fear, work, etc.)
- Bible study notes
- Word study notes
- Sermon notes
- Confessions
- Goals, dreams and desires that God has placed in your heart
- Recap of your day – this is a good way to add depth to what God is teaching you and what is going in your life at that time. It gives a broader perspective.

One Suggested Outline for Journaling: The SOAP Method

- Scripture – Write out a scripture or reference.
- Observation – What is God saying to you through this verse? Write down in your own words what you observed in this verse or passage.
- Application - Personalize what you have read by asking yourself how it applies to your life right now. Perhaps it is instruction, encouragement, revelation of a new promise, or corrections for a particular area of your life. Write how this scripture can apply to you today. Ultimately you are seeking to answer this question: *How will I be different today because of what I have just read?*
- Prayer - This can be as simple as asking God to help you use this scripture, or it may be a greater insight on what He may be revealing to you. Remember, prayer is a two-way conversation, so be sure to listen to what God has to say! It can be very powerful to see your prayer on paper.

Quotes About Prayer

"I have so much to do that I shall spend the first three hours in prayer." - Martin Luther

"Is prayer your steering wheel or your spare tire?" - Corrie Ten Boom

"The Church is looking for better methods; God is looking for better men. The Holy Ghost does not flow through methods, but through men. He does not come on machinery, but on men. He does not anoint plans, but men...men of prayer." - E. M. Bounds

"There is a mighty lot of difference between saying prayers and praying." - John G. Lake

"I have been driven many times to my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had absolutely no other place to go." - Abraham Lincoln

"Wishing will never be a substitute for prayer." - Ed Cole

"Pray, and let God worry." - Martin Luther

"God never gives us discernment in order that we may criticize, but that we may intercede." - Oswald Chambers

"There is nothing that makes us love a man so much as praying for him." - William Law

"Rich is the person who has a praying friend." - Janice Hughes

"In prayer, it is better to have a heart without words than words without a heart." - John Bunyan

"Prayer is not so much an act as it is an attitude—an attitude of dependency, dependency upon God." - A. W. Pink

"There is not in the world a kind of life more sweet and delightful than that of a continual conversation with God." - Brother Lawrence

"Prayer does not fit us for the greater work, prayer is the greater work." - Oswald Chambers

"Satan laughs at our toiling, mocks at our wisdom, but trembles when we pray." - *The Kneeling Christian*

"To get nations back on their feet, we must first get down on our knees." - Billy Graham