

Personal Focus in Prayer

INTRODUCTION:

Whether you are new to prayer or have been praying for years, you can *learn* to pray! Jesus' disciples asked that they be taught to pray. Learning and teaching implies instruction, information and effort. Prayer is too important and has too much powerful possibilities to just be taken for granted. This month's personal focus is to receive instruction to grow in your understanding and practice of prayer. Let's learn to pray together.

FIRST FOCUS:

- Read through Matthew 6:5-15, a major portion of Scripture concerning prayer. Jesus presumed that His disciples prayed because He said, "... when you pray..."
- Reflect on what prayer isn't...
- It isn't to be done to impress others (vs. 5).
- It isn't to be vain repetition of words with little meaning (vs. 7).
- It isn't self at the center of attention (vs. 7).
- Luke 20:47 says, "...they make long prayers in public..." Carefully review your prayer habits. Even those most "schooled in prayer" are never beyond being taught to pray.

SECOND FOCUS:

- Read what is commonly called "The Lord's Prayer" in Matthew 6:9-13.
- This example was given to us as an agenda for prayer and as such, it covers everything we need.
- Now, pray it daily, slowly pausing after each phrase to fill in your own thoughts pertaining to each part.

THIRD FOCUS:

- You will note there are five phrases of the Lord's prayer that concern God and only four phrases that concern us.
- Perhaps this is leading us to discover that our prayers should focus more on God, His character, His glory and His will than on our own personal needs.
- As you go about your "prayer business" this week, see how closely you are following Jesus' model of prayer and adjust accordingly.

FOURTH FOCUS:

- It is very interesting, isn't it, that Jesus said we can ask for daily bread before we ask for forgiveness (vs. 11-12).
- Meditate on this scripture, "Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about what happens to you" (1 Peter 5:7, NLT). Do you truly believe this? Or do you think there are exceptions?
- And remember, our being forgiven is dependent on our forgiving.
- Seriously consider verses 12, 14 and 15.

Personal Prayer Focus adapted from *Praying the Bible: The Pathway to Spirituality* by Thetus Tenney.