

COURSE 1 - 2025
Basic Discipleship

The
JOURNEY
STEP SIX



HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

We are so glad you're here! As you step into this journey of discipleship, know that you are entering a path designed to deepen your relationship with God and build a firm biblical foundation. This material is meant to guide you, no matter where you are on your faith journey. The tools and lessons you'll find here are adaptable to many settings—whether you're meeting one-on-one, gathering with a small group, or sharing in a larger community. It can be simplified to nurture the hearts of youth and children or enriched to challenge and inspire mature believers to grow even further.

Discipleship is a journey, not a race.

Our prayer is that this journey will help you engage with Scripture, build meaningful relationships, and discover how God is working in and through your life. Let's take this next step together with faith and intentionality as we grow closer to Him. Trust the process of growth and transformation that occurs over time as you walk with God.



WHAT IS PRAYER AND HOW DO I DO IT?



I. PRAYER BASICS AND FOUNDATIONS

What is your prayer life like right now and why?

Are there things you want to know (or struggle with) concerning prayer?

What assumptions are you making that influence how you approach God in prayer?

WHO CAN PRAY?

- Certainly anyone can pray.
- However, God hears and answers the prayers of people differently who have a saving relationship with Him through His Son Jesus.
- This is because through the blood of Jesus they are now His sons and daughters. Because of Jesus' death on the cross, we can now enjoy fellowship and direct communication with God.

TO WHOM DO WE PRAY?

- We pray **to** God the Father. Many times Christians will begin with "Dear God," or "Father," "Father God," "Heavenly Father," or similar (Philippians 4:6-7).
- We pray **in** Jesus' name. You may have heard prayers ended with "In Jesus' Name." We are now God's children and the separation between us and God has been closed because of Jesus' death on the cross for our sins (John 14:13-14).
- We pray **by** means (or through the power) of the Holy Spirit. We may not always directly address The Holy Spirit, but He plays a key role as well (Romans 8:26).



WHAT ARE SOME GOOD WAYS TO LEARN/ REMEMBER WHAT TO PRAY?

THE LORD'S PRAYER

There is nothing better than learning from Jesus Himself, who taught us how to pray. Every phrase has some good stuff to dig into! (Matthew 6:5-15)

A.C.T.S.

An outline and a good order if you're getting started or want to re-balance.

Adoration - Telling and celebrating God for who He is! ("God, you are Loving, Kind, and amazingly Generous...") (Psalm 100:4)

Confession - Telling God what He already knows about us, and asking His forgiveness and the Holy Spirit's help to avoid it in the future.

Thanksgiving - Being thankful for all the blessings in our lives. Most of the time, we are oblivious to the things that God has given and is doing, but God can transform the life of someone who adopts an attitude of gratitude in prayer.

Supplication - Asking for what we need and/or want.

P.R.A.Y.

Similar to A.C.T.S. and a good way to get started or to help re-balance.

Praise - Similar to Adoration, telling and celebrating God for who He is.

Repent - Same as Confession, telling God what He already knows, and asking His forgiveness.

Ask - Same as Supplication, ask for what we need and/or want.

Yes - God, Your will be done, not mine! Acknowledging that God's in charge, and you are okay with whatever His will is and whatever He asks of you.

THE ALPHABET PRAYER *(focuses on adoration).*

Start with the letter "A" and think of one word that describes God. For "A" you might choose "Amazing", Then "B" -- "Beautiful!", For the "C" "Creator!", "D" "Deliverer"... and so on.

Recommendations: Use this for creativity in learning more about who God is. Take a long walk and do this, and every time before you begin a new letter repeat all the words prior. It's an adoration prayer workout!



HOW DOES GOD TYPICALLY ANSWER PRAYERS?

God hears all of your prayers AND He always answers, typically in the following ways:

YES

God often delights to answer "yes!" Matthew 7:7-15 talks about God being like a perfect parent, desiring to give His children the things they need, especially as it aligns with His will in the Bible.

NO

God answers "no" when something isn't in His will for you or for the person you're praying for.

However, sometimes the thing we are praying for seems like a really good thing, and in the center of His will, but the answer is still "no." It seems like God saying "no" in these situations might mean He doesn't care, or that He means you harm (but that is never the case). It's in these situations that we have to trust that God understands the master plan and big picture so much better than we ever will.

However, looking back on our lives we can often say with that old Garth Brooks song, "Sometimes I thank God for unanswered prayers."

NOT YET

God answers in His timing, which is always perfect. The old saying is that "God is seldom early...but He's never late."

God's timing is often different than when we want our prayer to be answered.

For instance, "God, I really need to get a new job this week!" or "God, I'm ready to meet the person soon who I'm going to someday marry."

It can be hard to wait and trust God during this time, but it's also something that can develop our patience and faith.

NOTES

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II. PRAYER INSIGHTS

WHAT ARE SOME SIMPLE TIPS FOR BEGINNERS ON PRAYER?

Christian prayer is simply a believer talking to God (about anything) in Jesus' name.

You can pray out loud (verbally) or just in your head - God hears both in full (Psalm 139:23-24; Hebrews 4:12). Occasionally people will even write their prayers out - It's up to you.

Note: One nice thing about journaling your prayers is that you can later write down how God has answered your prayers as this will encourage your faith in God.

Pray in your normal tone of voice -- not overly formal or in "King James language," but respectfully and with confidence (1 John 5:14).

Prayer is about a personal relationship with God, just like talking to your loved ones or a friend.

"Amen" is simply a Hebrew word expressing agreement, having meanings like "yes" or "truly" or "it is so."

How comfortable are you praying right now? Are you able to do it naturally?



WHAT PRAYER IS NOT

- Bargaining with God - We have nothing He needs (Acts 17:24-25).
- Making demands of God - We are in His debt, not the other way around (Romans 11:35; Matthew 18:21-35).
- Only asking God for things - How would you feel if you had a child that only ever did this? (James 4:3)
- A therapeutic, New Age meditation-style exercise—Instead of emptying ourselves, we are called to fill our hearts and minds with good things and with God. (Ephesians 3:18-19; Ephesians 5:18; Philippians 4:8).
- Bothering God and taking up His time - God hears all our prayers and His time is unlimited (2 Peter 3:8).
- A way to control the Lord - God will never be manipulated (Matthew 6:7-8).
- A way to show off one's spirituality before others - Jesus had harsh words for this (Matthew 6:5).



HOW OFTEN SHOULD WE PRAY?

We are to **"pray continually,"** (1 Thessalonians 5:17). Work on keeping a free-flowing conversation going between you and God throughout the day. A sentence or two is fine (even an emoji!), just like texting.

It's important to have a set appointment daily for more extended prayer, just like Jesus did (Mark 1:35).

Try starting with just 2 or 3 minutes per day at a set time every day and work your way up to a comfortable amount of daily time in prayer. The strength of any relationship always includes quality time.

Be sure to spend some time listening as well, which is an important part of any relationship.

WHAT SHOULD WE ASK GOD FOR IN PRAYER?

First and foremost, we pray for God's will to be done in our lives. Like Jesus before the cross, we pray for God's will, not our own (Luke 22:42; Matthew 6:10).

Things related to the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20) or about doing what is (biblically) in His will are honorable requests.

We are also invited to pray for the things we truly need and for wisdom. We should not be shy in asking for the things we need. Sometimes it just takes wisdom to see the difference between our needs and our wants. (Matthew 6:11; Luke 11:1-12 John 15:7; James 1:5-8).

It's also okay to pray for things we want, in addition to what we need (as long as those "wants" are good).

It's the sign of a maturing believer to surround these requests with a sincere surrender to God's will either way (having "submissive neutrality" about our requests). God wants us to come to Him with all our needs and wants. Over time He desires us to align our wants closer and closer to His will. Jesus set the example, praying for God's will to be done, not His own.

Keep in mind James 4:2-3, which says that sometimes we don't have because we don't ask! Other times the answer is "no" because we ask with wrong motives, or He has another plan for our lives.



EXAMPLES OF PRAYER IN SUBMISSION TO GOD'S WILL

"God, I'd like to someday find and marry a spouse who truly loves You. It's the desire of my heart, but in the end, I trust You with this."

"Father God, I'd really like to go on that trip. Not my will, but Yours be done."

"Dear God, I'd really love to get that promotion. But You know best, and I will trust and honor You either way."

"Father, will You help me with this problem I have in my family? I really need help on this. Regardless, I know You love me and are working all things for good for those who love You."

"Father, I ask that you heal my family member. I know you are fully capable but I also realize you may have other plans that we don't fully understand. We will praise You either way because You are worthy."



SHOULD WE OFFER PRAYERS TO OTHERS

Yes! Offering to pray for someone in the moment, as well as later, can be very encouraging to others.

Remember: Keep the volume and duration appropriate for the situation, especially at work, where often prayer in private is sometimes better due to confidentiality. Don't victimize someone with your loud and showy prayer -- this will have the opposite effect of sharing your faith.

Praying for others is an excellent way to love people around you out in the world (work, neighbors, gym, grocery store, etc.) as long as it's done sincerely and appropriately.

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NOTES

Want to dive deeper into your journey?

Scan the QR code for an in-depth exploration of Step 6: What is Prayer?



NOTE: All verses are quoted from the NIV translation. The Bible remains the ultimate authority for understanding who God is.

BASIC DISCIPLESHIP STEP SIX

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Ice Breaker Questions

Growing up, what role did prayer have in your family? What were your thoughts on it? How did these thoughts change over time?

Question 1 - *Who Can Pray?*

How do parents hear the voices of their children differently than others? Why? Is there anyone in your life whose voice you hear much better than anyone else's?

Question 2 - *To Whom Do We Pray?*

Have you ever thought about the fact that the entire Trinity is involved whenever you pray?

Question 3 - *What Are Some Good Ways To Learn/Remember What To Pray?*

Have you ever run across any of these helps on prayer (if so, discuss)? Do you feel like you understand each of these well enough to put them into practice whenever you are ready?

Question 4 - *How Does God Typically Answer Prayer?*

Can you share some examples of each response of God to prayer from your own life?

Question 5 - *What Are Some Simple Tips For Beginners On Prayer?*

Do you ever struggle with praying out loud? How about praying in a normal voice; or knowing what to say?

Question 6 - *Prayer Is Not*

Which one of these "What Prayer is Not" ways do you relate to the most, and why?

Question 7 - *How Often Should We Pray?*

Which of these two kinds of prayer (throughout the day; set appointment) is easier for you and why?

Question 8 - *What Should We Ask God For In Prayer?*

What kinds of things are hard for you to ask God for, and why?

Question 9 - *Should We Offer To Pray For Others?*

Does praying out loud for others come naturally to you, or is this something you want to keep getting better at? How can you try this out sometime today?



26600 Westheimer Parkway
Katy TX 77494
281-395-4722 | www.currentchristian.org

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