



SPENDING TIME DAILY WITH GOD

This week we will look at the importance of spending time daily with God in prayer and Bible study. The foundation of our Christian life should be built upon this daily time set aside for us to be alone with God. It is important that we find not only the time, but the place where we can be alone with God in a quiet environment. God has something to say to us, He desires more than anything else for us to have an alive and growing relationship with Him. Come into each time with God expecting Him to speak to us through His Word. Pray that God will use this time to grow us closer to Him. If we want to have a successful walk with God, our daily quiet time is paramount to a growing Christian life.

Let's get the summer season off to a good start by making the commitment to set aside time for God each day.

Sunday: Read Matthew 14:1-34

In this passage, Jesus has gotten some very bad news. His cousin and preparer of the way for Him, John the Baptist had been beheaded by Herod. As soon as Jesus found out the news of John's death, He wanted to get away from the crowds and be alone with God. The crowds followed and were waiting for Him when the boat landed. Jesus ministered to the crowd healing the sick and performing the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand. Jesus dismissed the crowd and the disciples and went by Himself up on a mountainside to pray. He got away from everything and everyone to spend time alone with God. It seems to me that if Jesus needs to get away and be alone with God; that should be a mighty big HINT that we need to do the same.

- 1. When we have a bad day, do we bring it to God?**
- 2. When is the last time we spent quality alone quiet time with God?**
- 3. Does a quiet time with God prepare us for what the day holds? How?**

Monday: Read Philippians 4:4-7

Paul loved the Philippians. He wanted the best for them. Today look at what Paul wants us to do when we pray asking God.

- 1. Have we ever been anxious about a problem?**
- 2. What should every prayer or petition to God include?**
- 3. What does giving our problems to God insure?**
- 4. Have we ever given a problem to God and then taken it back after amen?**

Tuesday: Read Mark 14:32-42

Jesus knew the time was approaching for Him to die. Gethsemane was a time for Jesus to pour out His heart to God. Verse 36 is the key verse in this passage.

- 1. What did Jesus pray for Himself?**
- 2. What was Jesus more interested in at that time, what He wanted or for God's will to be done? Why?**
- 3. What lesson can we learn about praying for God's will to be done in our lives from this passage?**

Wednesday: Read Matthew 6:5-13

This passage comes from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. Jesus warns against praying for "show". We have heard prayers use words and language that leads us to believe that they are more interested in hearing their words than speaking to God. Jesus wants us to see the most effective prayer we have is the time we spend alone with God, talking to Him. A great way I have found to pray is to have a chair beside me and imagine God is in the chair and just talk to Him. Let Him know what is on my heart and in my mind. God already knows what we need, Jesus reminds us of that fact. Then why pray? Why take the time?

Just like any relationship, we must spend time with God to grow closer to Him. The Creator of this universe and everything in it desires to have a personal relationship with each of us. He desires that we spend time with Him, talking to Him. Prayer, simply put, is conversation with God.

Jesus goes on to give us a model for prayer known to most of us as the Lord's Prayer. This is probably the most dangerous prayer in all Scripture. Dangerous in the fact that if we really pray this prayer and mean it, our lives must be changed. Often teams will say this prayer before or after playing a game. The words of the prayer are just recited instead of being allowed to take

root in our hearts. How many times have we prayed this prayer just like that without thinking about what the words mean? As we examine more closely these words may we allow God to help them to take root in our hearts and lives.

The Lord's Prayer begins with the acknowledgement of God as "Our Father". God as our loving Heavenly Father is not only in heaven, but He is here with us on earth. Hallowed is giving praise honor and glory to God's name. Holding it in the esteem the name of God should be held! God is God and we aren't. Do we take time to honor God for who He is and what He has done? That is hallowing His name.

Next, we are to pray for God's kingdom to come which is directly related to His will being done on earth as it is in heaven. How is God's will done in heaven? Perfectly!! For God's Kingdom to come His will must be done in each of our lives just like it would be accomplished in heaven. When we pray those words, we in fact must be willing to surrender our will totally to Him. It is not about what we want, it is about what God wants for us. It is not about our plans, it is what God has planned for us!

We turn in the prayer to asking God to provide for our needs today. "Give us today our daily bread." God meet my needs this day is implied, not just give me a peanut butter and jelly sandwich. When we pray this part of the prayer we are saying in fact we trust God to provide for us what we need for the day. It can be physical food as well as words we might need to say to a friend or teammate. God will provide what we need each day for us to accomplish His will in our lives (here on earth like in heaven).

Be careful next for when we pray the next petition, forgive us our debts, we had better remember what we are praying for. We are praying for God to forgive our mistakes as we are willing to forgive those who have wronged us. So if we pray this prayer and have not forgiveness in our own hearts for those who have wronged us, we are praying for God not to forgive us! I don't know about you but I need God's forgiveness. Verses 14-15 give a great explanation of this part of the prayer. If we forgive others God forgives us, if we don't forgive others God will not forgive us!

Next we ask God not to lead us into temptation and to deliver us from the evil one (Satan). We are praying for God to help us fight against the temptation that comes to each of us every single day. Temptation is real, it comes in many forms and always strikes where we are most vulnerable. Satan wants nothing more than to affect our relationship with God by bringing temptation and sin into our lives. Not confessing our sins keeps us from relationship with God. Sin and God can't reside in the same heart. We are praying for God's strength to fight what we can't fight alone, the lure of temptation and sin.

In the future when we pray the Lord's Prayer, let's take the time to let the words dwell in our hearts and may we realize what we are truly praying!

- 1. Why is it important to be alone with God?**
- 2. How can we hallow God's name?**
- 3. What does it mean for God's will to be done in our lives like it is done in heaven?**

4. Are we trusting God to provide for our daily needs? Why or why not?
5. Are we able to be forgiven by God? Is there a lack of forgiveness in our hearts?
6. How can we trust God to deliver us from Satan and temptation?

Thursday: Read Hebrews 4:12-13

The writer of Hebrews gives us a great image of God's Word. Today may we examine the place God's Word has in our quiet time with Him.

1. How can God's Word be alive and active in our lives?
2. What does God's Word do to our lives?
3. Do we expect God to speak through His Word? Why or why not?

Friday: Read Psalm 119:97-105

In this longest chapter in the Bible, the Psalmist wants us to understand how great God's Word is for each of us. In this section, the Psalmist wants us to see that if we study God's Word, we will be directed in the right way to go in life.

1. How much time do we spend thinking about God's Word?
2. Why is it important to obey God's Word?
3. If we know God's Word, it will keep us off the wrong path in life. Can we remember the last time we took the wrong path and why?

Saturday: Read 1John 2:3-5

John wanted his readers to see that the way to know God is to obey his commands. The only way for God's love to be made complete in our lives is for us to obey His commands.

1. What does it mean to know God is to obey God?
2. How does obedience complete God's love in us?
3. What is the best way to learn how to walk as Jesus walked?