

RPC Prayer Discipleship

As Christians we are to experience the power of the Gospel in our present lives: to be rooted and grounded in the love of Christ, to find strength to change, and comprehend the breadth and length and height and depth of what God has done for us and has in store for us. The apostle Paul wrote to the Ephesians the following and we long to experience this in our lives.

Ephesians 3:14-17

¹⁴For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, ¹⁵from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, ¹⁶that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, ¹⁹and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

The Christian life requires a community of people united in the pursuit of God's glory and his presence in their lives. The reason this is important is because the task of the Gospel has only just begun when we come to understand the salvation Jesus offers us through his life. Our salvation is just the beginning of bringing God's glory to this world by denying ourselves, taking up our cross and following Christ. There is so much more to come. It is through this act of self-denial and pursuit of Jesus, and this act alone, that we will find life.

Matthew 16:24-25

24 Then Jesus told his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. 25 For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

GOALS OF THE PRAYER DISCIPLESHIP PROGRAM

The purpose of our discipleship/prayer program is to accomplish the following goals:

- Build Christian friendship.
- Build a consistent daily inner life with God.
- Learn how to pray and find delight in being with God in prayer.
- Develop spiritually as we walk with the Spirit of God and are changed by his power in our lives.

FORMAT

It is helpful to have a fellow Christian who desires to know God more deeply and follow him; someone who desires the same thing that you desire.

- **Prayer:** Instruction in contemplative prayer and meditation and how to pray using Scripture and guidance from the Holy Spirit.
- **Spiritual Development:** Utilizing reading material provided by Pastor Ryan, to initiate discussion and reflection with your fellow Christian.
- **Daily Devotion:** Setting time goals each day for prayer through meditation and contemplation on Scripture and communion with the Holy Spirit.

MEETING PARAMETERS

At least 2 face-to-face meetings per month. This may include using Facetime or Zoom type applications. This is the minimum amount, meet as often as you desire.

Meetings: What will you do when you meet together?

1. Discussion: Topics for Discussion:

- **Weekly Readings:** Readings will include articles and excerpts from books on the topic of Spiritual Life, Spiritual Disciplines, and building and inner life with God. Everyone will receive the same articles.
- **Psalm Meditations:** These are expanded prayers based on a Psalm to be used by individuals to help with prayer and meditation. Each meditation will have prompt questions to be used with your discipleship partner.
- **Encourage one another.** Bring blessing into the life of your fellow Christian. Speak of God's goodness, love, and passion for your brother or sister in Christ. Remind each other that our Father is a God of grace.
- **Life Conversations:** Natural conversations about life, family, work, ups and downs, what you hope and want for your marriage, friendship, children, work, etc. This will lead to prayer for one another.

2. Prayer

- **Pray Together:** Practice praying together and for one another. There are no set time limits on this. Everyone has a different level of comfort when it comes to praying aloud, but the more we do this the more we learn to minister to the body of Christ through prayer.

PERSONAL WORSHIP / DAILY TIME WITH GOD:

- The goal is to “show up” out of a want to build a life of prayer and friendship with God. We don’t always feel close to God, or feel we have time, or don’t always feel like taking time to pray contemplatively. Make a commitment to God to “show up” each day even if your time with God may feel less connected or stimulating than other times. As with any relationship, if you are chasing a feeling, the relationship will never be able to grow.
- It’s natural for the mind to wander. If your mind wanders do not give up. Each time you find your thoughts wandering just bring yourself back into focus.
- Work at each tier (see GOALS below) until you accomplish that tier. Work at your pace. Once you accomplish the goal for a particular tier, move on and work on the next tier until you accomplish that goal. Don’t be afraid to use a timer if you find it helpful.
- Do not lose sight of the goal! The pursuit is God, not checking off boxes or meeting a standard. The “tier” goals below are only meant to be a guide to help build spiritual discipline and habits. This may take longer for some than others.
- What do we mean by meditative/contemplative prayer? Meditative/Contemplative Prayer is direct engagement and communication with God in your inner being and mind, not just reading an article or a passage.
- When you meet with your partner, discuss how you are doing so you can encourage each other. Each person may move at a different pace. This is not a competition between fellow Christians, but a want and desire to have a better prayer life, deeper relationship with God, and to live for Christ and honor him. God will bless your desire to pursue him at whatever pace.

PERSONAL WORSHIP/PRAYER GOALS

- **Tier 1**
5 minutes quiet and alone with God in prayer focusing on worship using the Psalms or another passage of Scripture you choose. When this is accomplished for 14 consecutive days move to tier 2. If you miss a day, you start over until you accomplish 14 consecutive days.
- **Tier 2**
8 minutes a day – 14 days. If you miss a day you start over until you accomplish 14 consecutive days. You do not need to go back to tier 1. Once you accomplish a tier you work on the next tier until you accomplish that goal.
- **Tier 3**
12 minutes a day – 21 days consecutive
- **Tier 4**
15 minutes a day – 21 days consecutive
- **Tier 5**
20 minutes – 25 out of 30 days.
- **Tier 6**
30 minutes – 25 out of 30 days.

ARTICLE EXAMPLE:

The Lord's Prayer: A Model

Matthew 6:9-13

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth, as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.

1. *Our Father* – The right to be called the sons of God has been given to every Christian. To anyone who puts their faith in Christ, they are also united to him by being made a part of God's family. Therefore, God is your father and in every sense of the word. Jesus uses this word to address God in order to communicate the depth of relationship that exists between God and his children. The term father is a intimate term denoting personal knowledge of God and personal relationship with him.

2. *Hallowed be your name* – God is holy and his name is holy. At the heart of his holiness is his allocentrism, which means that God is *others-centered*. God's allocentrism is to be contrasted with our autocrism which is focus on self and the root of the flesh. God's allocentrism connects God's love for you with the way he interacts with you. This means that God is without sin and will never sin against you. His name is hallowed. We are to be in awe, amazed, and in wonder at who he is: morally pure, just, righteous judge, peaceful, forgiving, truthful, faithful, generous, abounding in love, without malice, perfect, loves what is good, hates what is evil, gracious, kind, joyful, longsuffering and patient, wrathful, vengeful, etc.

3. *Your kingdom come your will be done on earth as it is in heaven* – This is where we focus on the heart of God and his desires. We seek to do what he wants over what we want. This is where we choose God over ourselves, recognizing that the choice we make is what makes us free. We choose God over slavery, and we believe his kingdom is better than ours, and his future is better than the one we would create. We express regard for his wisdom and his position of authority. We honor his kingship and his right to rule and reign over his creation.

4. *Give us this day our daily bread* – We are dependent on God and he seeks to meet our needs. Typically, we place this in slot number 2 after our initial greeting, "Our Father". When we spend most of our time in prayer with requests, and when we emphasize our requests over our relationship with our Father, the holiness of his name, and his supreme authority, we get prayer out of order. If asking God to fix our problems or meet our needs (give us this day our bread) takes precedence over "hallowed be your name" and "your kingdom come, your will be done", our prayer life tends to be stunted and our relationship with our Father immature. We want to move away from bargaining with God or negotiating with him to get him to fix our problems. When we treat God as more of a sidekick for our agenda than a Father who is God, we never rightly deal with our fear and idolatry. He invites us to come and plead for our daily bread. He desires to hear our requests and meet our needs, but we cannot love the "bread"

more than we love and worship him, loving the physical things we receive from God more than loving God.

5. *Forgive our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors* – Here we see the connection between repentance and forgiveness. If we see that God has a right to speak into our lives, then we should welcome his input and his voice. As we experience his forgiveness, so then we are equipped and expected to forgive those who have sinned against us, recognizing that a person's sin against us is only a fraction of the total debt we owed that has been forgiven by Christ.

6. *And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil* – This does not imply that God tempts men. God does not lead men into sin. What is being said here is the antithesis of that, directing our attention to God as more powerful than our temptations and desires, and his deliverance from evil as very real. Evil exists, and Jesus faced it for us so that we do not have to face that great temptation or bear the weight of evil. We come to our Father who is greater than our desires, seeing having him as better than our devotion to self. He will not lead you into temptation. He will deliver you from evil; and he has, through the cross, and nothing can separate you from his love; as Romans 8 says: ³⁸ For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

PSALM MEDIATION EXAMPLES:

Psalm Meditations – Psalm 45

The column on the right is not a paraphrase or translation, but a possible prayer that generally follows the Scripture provided in the left column. This is designed to model direct engagement with God in your inner being and to be used as a guide to meditate on God's word. Feel free to use your own words, to expound on what's provided, or write out your own response as you spend time with God each day.

Psalm 45 – English Standard Version

My heart overflows with a pleasing theme;
I address my verses to the king;
my tongue is like the pen of a ready scribe.

2 You are the most handsome of the sons of men;
grace is poured upon your lips;
therefore God has blessed you forever.

3 Gird your sword on your thigh, O mighty one,
in your splendor and majesty!

4 In your majesty ride out victoriously
for the cause of truth and meekness and
righteousness;
let your right hand teach you awesome deeds!

5 Your arrows are sharp
in the heart of the king's enemies;

I have been made to reflect your glory, to experience the joy of the Trinity. Make my heart full to overflowing with your love. It is good for me to sing over you, to praise your name and speak of your glorious kingship. Accept my praise o, Lord. Accept my love for you. You are handsome my king in your uniform and sword. I see you on your steed, ready to ride out for Israel and the world, to bring justice and righteousness. You are a meek warrior, my king, my God, my Lord. I am so proud of you, so proud to belong to your family and your people. With your right hand instruct me with deeds of righteousness, that I may live my life in honor of your kingdom, bringing righteousness to the earth in your name. My enemies cower before you. Your arrows are sharp, your sword's blade runs with clean lines, is balanced perfectly, and

the peoples fall under you.

6 Your throne, O God, is forever and ever.

The scepter of your kingdom is a scepter of
uprightness;

7 you have loved righteousness and hated
wickedness.

Therefore God, your God, has anointed you
with the oil of gladness beyond your
companions;

8 your robes are all fragrant with myrrh and
aloes and cassia.

From ivory palaces stringed instruments make
you glad;

9 daughters of kings are among your ladies of
honor;

at your right hand stands the queen in gold of
Ophir.

10 Hear, O daughter, and consider, and incline
your ear:

forget your people and your father's house,

11 and the king will desire your beauty.

Since he is your lord, bow to him.

12 The people of Tyre will seek your favor with
gifts,

the richest of the people.

13 All glorious is the princess in her chamber,
with robes interwoven with gold.

14 In many-colored robes she is led to the king,
with her virgin companions following behind
her.

15 With joy and gladness they are led along
as they enter the palace of the king.

16 In place of your fathers shall be your sons;
you will make them princes in all the earth.

17 I will cause your name to be remembered in all
generations;

therefore nations will praise you forever and
ever.

falls on those who bring harm against your
people.

I rejoice for your throne is forever. I look at the
world's leaders and they are anemic, impotent,
compromised, and weak, but when I think of your
leadership I am at ease, for your judgments are
fair, your righteousness brings peace, your
compassion is deep and wide. Your heart is pure
and upright, and your scepter represents integrity
and honor. This is my Lord and my God! Shouts of
joy are on my lips when I think of living under
your rule. My false gods torment me and bleed
my soul dry, but your yoke is easy, and your
burden is light. You love righteousness and
goodness, cause me to love these things too. You
are the perfect king, selected by your Father to
rule and reign over the earth. I anoint your head
with oil and want to honor you with my life. I
want you to know you have my allegiance.

The world calls to me. It tells me to build my
kingdom in this place, to give my heart and my
soul to this world, to revere earthly power and
celebrity. Help me to forget these kingdoms,
these counterfeit kingdoms and know your
untamed love for me. I bring my life as a gift to
you and will live offering you gifts and praises.
Look what you've done for the church, your
queen and bride. You lavish her with your love,
you give your life for her, and she is adorned with
the jewels and gold and fine linen of your love.
One day I will know, with all your people, just
what you have done, my savior king. I will know
the depths of your sacrifice, your power over
death, the fullness of the light of your glory. I will
enter your palace, the place you have prepared
for your bride, and I will see the moment this
ragged church is presented to you, robed in your
righteousness, our faces shining with smiles and
laughter and rejoicing. No one will be able to stop
smiling, no one will be able to stop laughing with
joy. We will be princes on the earth, and your
name and ours will never be forgotten. I long to
rejoice with the nations, hearing your name
echoed in eternity for ever and ever and ever
without end, and the goodness of my king will
never leave the earth again.

Psalm Meditations – Psalm 114

The column on the right is not a paraphrase or translation, but a possible prayer that generally follows the Scripture provided in the left column. This is designed to model direct engagement with God in your inner being and to be used as a guide to meditate on God's word. Feel free to use your own words, to expound on what's provided, or write out your own response as you spend time with God each day.

When Israel went out from Egypt,
the house of Jacob from a people of strange
language,
2 Judah became his sanctuary,
Israel his dominion.

3 The sea looked and fled;
Jordan turned back.

4 The mountains skipped like rams,
the hills like lambs.

5 What ails you, O sea, that you flee?
O Jordan, that you turn back?

6 O mountains, that you skip like rams?
O hills, like lambs?

7 Tremble, O earth, at the presence of the Lord,
at the presence of the God of Jacob,
8 who turns the rock into a pool of water,
the flint into a spring of water.

Out of slavery you have brought your people. I am one of them. I was lost in the darkness of my sin, my mind enslaved and darkened by the deceiver's primordial lies. The world speaks a strange language, different than yours, Lord. They speak a language of false gods and false hopes. This is what you are saving me from, just as you brought your people out of Egypt: those who speak a strange language.

When you brought out your people from Egypt you made your dwelling place with them. In the middle of the desert there was an oasis where you could be found in the midst of your people. Your people have always been your sanctuary and your dominion, and even now they are. I am your sanctuary now; my heart is the place you reside. My heart is your dominion and your dwelling place. I marvel at this, your concern for me and my soul and wellbeing.

Creation is afraid of you, my God. We have made creation afraid because of the darkness we have brought. Creation runs from you, it is under a curse, but you will restore and redeem it. You will bring peace again. I have been remade and creation will follow.

I should tremble in your presence for you are not created or made, you are God. But I will not run from you or cower in fear for water flows from the rock at your word. This water is available for me to drink and so I come to you to drink this life-giving water. This water from your hand is careful attention to what I need. You are the water that flows from the rock. I tremble at this thought. You are mysterious in every way and so gentle and kind in your provision. You are the God of all power and the source of life for my soul. Tremble oh tender heart of mine before the cool springs of my Savior's love, my rock, and my king.