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Tools for Discipleship – Prayer

John 15:1-8; Philippians 4:6; Mark 11:20-25
By Kirk Gambrell

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Using This Study

❶ EXAMINE His Word

What does God SAY? Open your time with prayer. The words God uses to communicate matters, so go back and pay close attention to the details that are emphasized or repeated in the passage.

❷ EXPLORE His Word

What does God MEAN? Asking questions of the text helps surface how the details relate to the message God wants to communicate.

❸ EMBRACE His Word

Why does it MATTER to me? Embrace God by responding to what you discover in His word in faith and obedience.



Our tool for discipleship this week is prayer. Prayer is one of the most valuable and important tools that we have when it comes to seeking a closer relationship with God. With prayer, we must remember that God is able to overcome all our problems and our difficulties. We must also know that when we set our request at His feet that in His faithfulness and goodness He will help us to overcome our difficulties no matter how big or small they are. This morning we look at the promises and the instruction that we are given on how to use one of our most valuable tools, prayer.

TO BE A CHRISTIAN
WITHOUT PRAYER IS NO
MORE POSSIBLE THAN
TO BE ALIVE WITHOUT
BREATHING.

Martin Luther

EXAMINE His Word (Observation)

What does God SAY? Prayerfully note significant details and terms emphasized in these passages.

Read John 15:1-8 (NET)

“I am the true vine and my Father is the gardener. ² He takes away every branch that does not bear fruit in me. He prunes every branch that bears fruit so that it will bear more fruit. ³ You are clean already because of the word that I have spoken to you. ⁴ Remain in me, and I will remain in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it remains in the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in me.

⁵ “I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in me—and I in him—bears much fruit, because apart from me you can accomplish nothing. ⁶ If anyone does not remain in me, he is thrown out like a branch, and dries up; and such branches are gathered up and thrown into the fire, and are burned up. ⁷ If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you want, and it will be done for you. ⁸ My Father is honored by this, that you bear much fruit and show that you are my disciples.”

Read Philippians 4:6 (NET)

⁶ Do not be anxious about anything. Instead, in every situation, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, tell your requests to God.

Read Mark 11:20-25 (NET)

²⁰ In the morning as they passed by, they saw the fig tree withered from the roots. ²¹ Peter remembered and said to him, “Rabbi, look! The fig tree you cursed has withered.” ²² Jesus said to them, “Have faith in God. ²³ I tell you the truth, if someone says to this mountain, ‘Be lifted up and thrown into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it will be done for him. ²⁴ For this reason I tell you, whatever you pray and ask for, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. ²⁵ Whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven will also forgive you your sins.”

1. Who is involved in the text? Author, audience, main characters.

2. Where and when is this taking place? Geography and timeline.

3. What actions are carried out or commanded? Look for the verbs.

4. Is there anything repeated?

5. What is emphasized?

6. Is there anything in these passages that is related to other areas of scripture?

7. Are there things to be noted that are alike or unlike such as similes and metaphors?

② **EXPLORE His Word (Interpretation)**

What does God MEAN?

8. In John 15, what does it mean to remain in Him?

9. In John 15, God is the gardener and we are the branches. What does it mean in verse 2 when it says that He prunes every branch that bears fruit?

10. In John 15:7, there is a promise to give us whatever we ask for as long as we remain in Him. Why do we sometimes not get what we ask for?

11. In Philippians 4, why does Paul instruct the church to pray?

12. In Mark 11:22-24, what truths do we find about God and prayer?

③ **EMBRACE His Word (Application)**

Why does this MATTER to me?

13. When do you find it easiest to spend time in prayer?

14. How do you pray daily and keep it from being repetitive?

15. If God is in control of everything and everything happens according to His will, why should we pray?

Challenge this week: Spend time by yourself in prayer every day this week. You may want to make the commitment to start your day with prayer and make it the first thing you do when you get up, or you can have another designated time during the day.

Summarize your thoughts on the passage:

Write about what God wants you to KNOW, to FEEL, and to DO...

SERMON NOTES