



FOUNDATIONS

BOOK FOUR

Prayer

A blueprint for building a relationship with God

"Devote yourselves to prayer with
an alert mind and a
thankful heart."
- Colossians 4:2

FOUNDATIONS

A blueprint for building a relationship with God

Prayer

BOOK FOUR OF THE FOUNDATIONS SERIES

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All the books in THE FOUNDATIONS SERIES:

BOOK ONE: DISCOVER

BOOK TWO: RESPOND

BOOK THREE: BIBLE STUDY

BOOK FOUR: PRAYER

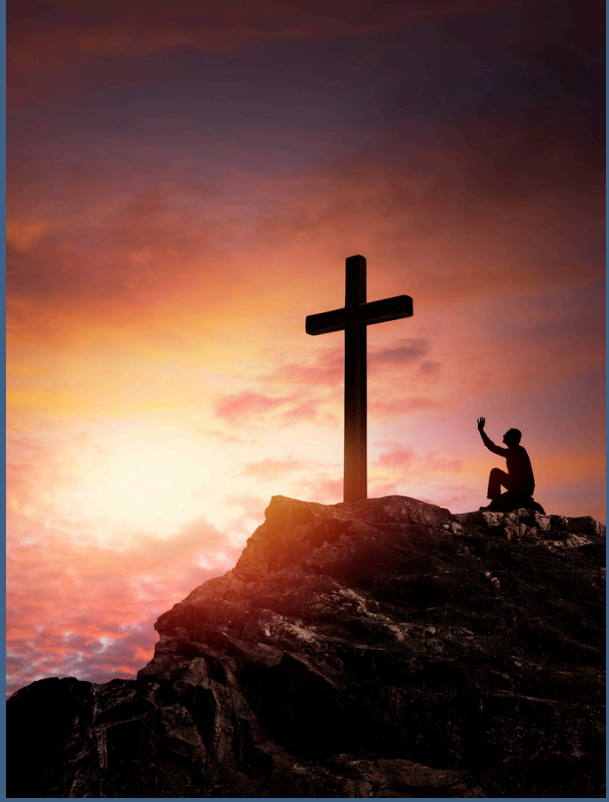
BOOK FIVE: FELLOWSHIP

BOOK SIX: EVANGELISM

BOOK SEVEN: MATURE

For more information, visit www.CollegeGolfFellowship.com
or contact us at info@collegegolffellowship.com.

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OVERVIEW

Congratulations! If you are reading this, then you have completed BOOK THREE in the FOUNDATIONS SERIES.

Remember, FOUNDATIONS is a seven book series that lays the foundation for the Christian Life and is a blueprint for building a relationship with God. DISCOVER was the first book of the series that described how you can begin a relationship with God. RESPOND was the second book and helped us understand what it means to respond to the Gospel by trusting in the Lordship of Jesus and surrendering to the power of the Holy Spirit. The remaining books will give us practical ways to respond to the Gospel through the following four spiritual disciplines: BIBLE STUDY, PRAYER, FELLOWSHIP, and EVANGELISM, as the following diagram shows:



As we move forward in this series, we will continue to use this diagram to remind us that Jesus Christ is the axel of the wheel and very center of the Christian life. The Holy Spirit is the hub of the wheel that secures our relationship with God, keeps us connected to Jesus, empowers us to trust His Lordship, and motivates us to respond to the Gospel by living a life of faith and obedience. The four spokes in the wheel - Bible Study, Prayer, Fellowship, and Evangelism - represent things we can do in response to what God has already done for us in Christ. We call these activities spiritual disciplines, and they help us grow in relationship with God. The Holy Spirit will give each believer a growing desire to pursue these disciplines helping us grow in spiritual maturity and accomplish God's purposes.

INTRODUCTION

In BOOK FOUR: PRAYER, we will explore the second vertical spoke of the wheel as we seek to respond to the Gospel and grow in our relationship with God. It is impossible to grow in any relationship unless we communicate with the other person. God communicates with us through the Bible, and we communicate with Him through prayer – which is simply talking to God.

For many people prayer is something that requires a certain vocabulary or style. If you've heard someone pray at a wedding, funeral, or church, you might think, "I could never pray like that." What we hope you discover in this book is that prayer isn't a fancy way to speak to God that requires formal training. Instead, prayer is simply talking to God in a way that you would talk to a friend. It is about building a relationship, not maintaining a religious duty. As we learn to talk to God on a regular ongoing basis, as well as set aside times of dedicated, uninterrupted prayer, we will discover how much our relationship with Him will grow.

Remember, as we continue in this series and seek to implement these spiritual disciplines, know that everything we do in the Christian life should always be done out of a grateful response for what God has already done for us in Christ. We can never do anything to earn His love or approval. Instead, since we have already been loved and accepted because of the work of Christ on the cross, we should joyfully desire to do these disciplines to get to know this incredible God better!

*"Prayer is the very way God Himself has chosen for us
To express our conscious need of Him and our humble
dependence on Him."*

– John Stott

Book FOUR



Responding to the Gospel: Growing in Your Relationship with God — Prayer

OPENING DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

Do any of these statements describe your feelings about prayer?

- “I often wonder if God is actually listening to me when I pray.”
- “My mind wanders when I pray and I get easily distracted.”
- “If God already knows all things, what’s the point of praying.”
- “I get discouraged when I don’t feel like God answers me.”
- Other...

Can you think of other reasons people find it difficult to pray? Have you prayed any specific prayers that God answered or did not answer as you had hoped? How did that affect your relationship with God?

OVERVIEW:

In this book, we will lay the foundation for how to respond to the Gospel by communicating to God in prayer. We will explore the following key elements of prayer:

- 1.THE PURPOSE: Why should we pray?
- 2.THE POSTURE: How should we pray?
- 3.THE PROMISES: What does God promise us in prayer?
- 4.THE PATTERN: When should we pray?
- 5.THE PLAN: What should we pray?
- 6.THE PEOPLE: For whom should we pray?
- 7.THE PROBLEM: What if God doesn’t seem to answer our prayers?

Chapter One: Prayer

THE PURPOSE, POSTURE, AND PROMISES OF PRAYER

THE PURPOSE: Why should we pray?

The main purpose of prayer is simply to be with God and cultivate a close personal relationship with Him. When we understand how amazing the good news of the Gospel truly is, we should be drawn to Him and want to get to know Him better. In order to do this, we must spend time talking to God and sharing our hearts with Him. Like a good earthly father, our Heavenly Father cares deeply for us and desires that we come to Him and share our lives with Him.

What do these verses tell us about why we should pray?

- **James 4:8**
- **Matthew 7:7-11**
- **Hebrews 4:16**
- **1 Peter 5:7**



“

“I didn’t yet understand prayer as a place to be with God, as much as a place where I did the right things to get what I wanted.”

- Kyle Strobel

”

HOLY BIBLE

THE POSTURE: How should we pray?

If the main purpose of prayer is to be with God and develop a close personal relationship with Him, how then should we pray? What can we learn from these passages?

- **Matthew 6:5-8**

- **Luke 18:1-8**

- **Luke 18:9-14**

Prayer obviously begins by approaching God in humility and talking to Him, but it also involves listening to Him as well. What do these passages say about sitting still and listening to God?

- **Isaiah 28:23**

- **John 8:47; 10:27**

- **Psalms 46:10**

- **Luke 11:28**

It is important to note that God primarily speaks to us through the **Bible** (2 Tim. 3:16-17), but He also speaks to us through other **people** (Prov. 1:5), through **circumstances** (Acts 8:1-4), and through the **Holy Spirit**—often heard through “a still, small voice” in our heart (John 14:26; 1 Kings 19:11-12). As we grow in our relationship with God, we will grow in our ability to hear and discern when God is speaking to us. But remember, God will never speak in any way that contradicts the Bible. Therefore, we can always use the Bible as our plumb line to discern if something you feel God is saying is truly from Him.

Have you ever felt like God was speaking to you through the Holy Spirit in your heart? What was He saying and how did you respond?

✚ MEMORY VERSES:

James 4:8

1 Peter 5:7

Psalm 46:10

Psalm 37:4



THE PROMISES: What does God promise us in prayer?

Remember, prayer is not just asking God to give us what we want. Prayer is responding to who God is and what He has done for us by humbly coming into His presence, being honest and vulnerable with Him, depending on Him to meet our every need, and growing in relationship with Him. Nevertheless, God also invites us to ask for specific things in prayer that He wants to give us. What do these passages promise those who come to Him in prayer?

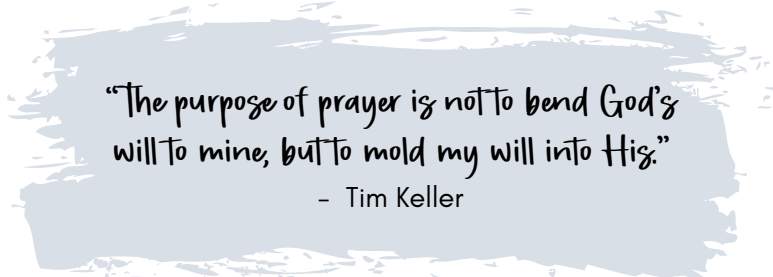
- **Philippians 4:6-7**

- **John 16:24**

- **James 1:5**

- **James 5:13-16**

- **Psalm 37:4**



“The purpose of prayer is not to bend God’s will to mine, but to mold my will into His.”

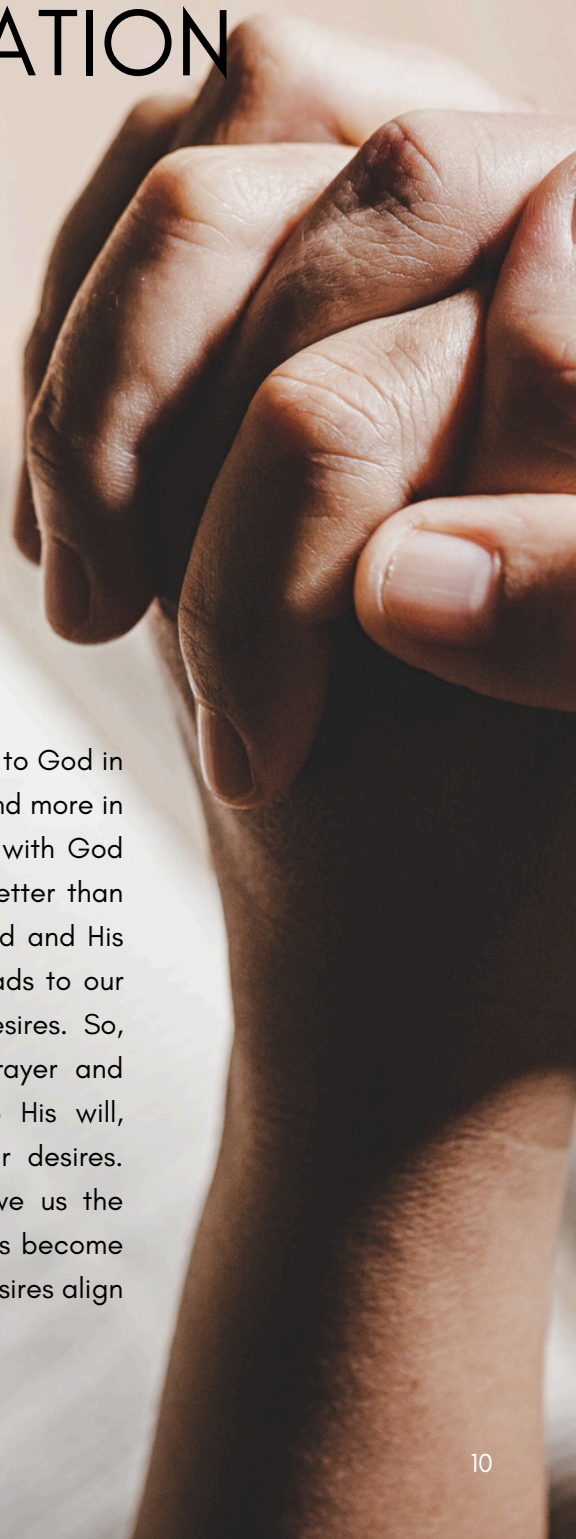
– Tim Keller

Think on this...

ILLUSTRATION

"Delight yourself in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart." - Psalm 37:4

This verse is often misunderstood. Many people think that if we just come to God in prayer and delight in Him, He will give us anything our heart desires. This, of course, is not what the verse is talking about! As the Tim Keller quote says, "The purpose of prayer is not to bend God's will to mine, but to mold my will into His." Therefore, as we come to God in prayer and delight ourselves more and more in Him—meaning we fall more in love with God and realize His will for our life is better than our own will—we begin to want God and His ways over our own. This, in turn, leads to our desires being changed into His desires. So, the more we come to God in prayer and delight in Him by surrendering to His will, God's desires actually become our desires. Therefore, God is then able to give us the desires of our heart, and our prayers become much more effective because His desires align with ours.



Chapter Two: Prayer

THE PATTERN AND PLAN OF PRAYER

In the last chapter, we discussed the purpose, posture, and promises of prayer, as we respond to who God is and what He has done in our lives. In this chapter, we will get more practical and introduce a plan and pattern for our prayer life.

THE PATTERN: When should we pray?

If the main purpose of prayer is to be with God and develop an intimate relationship with Him, when do you think would be the best time to pray?

What do these verses show us from Jesus' example and Paul's instructions for when we ought to pray?

- **Mark 1:35**
- **Luke 5:16**
- **Luke 6:12-13**
- **Luke 22:39-46**
- **Ephesians 6:18-20**
- **1 Thessalonians 5:17**

What do you think it means practically to “pray continually”?

Here are some examples of short prayers that we can pray throughout the day to stay connected to God, recognize His presence in our lives, and keep our focus on Him:

“Lord, I give this day to you.”

“Lord, help this person who seems to be struggling.”

“God, I praise you for being faithful.”

“Father, give me the right words to speak to this person.”

“Lord, thank you for helping me.”

“Father, please take away my anxiety and give me peace.”

“Lord, please forgive me for that thought.”

“Father, heal this person.”

“Jesus, you are more than enough.”

“Lord, help me trust you in this situation.”

“Jesus, help me stay focused on you right now.”

“Lord, give me strength to overcome this fear.”

“God, provide a way out of this temptation.”

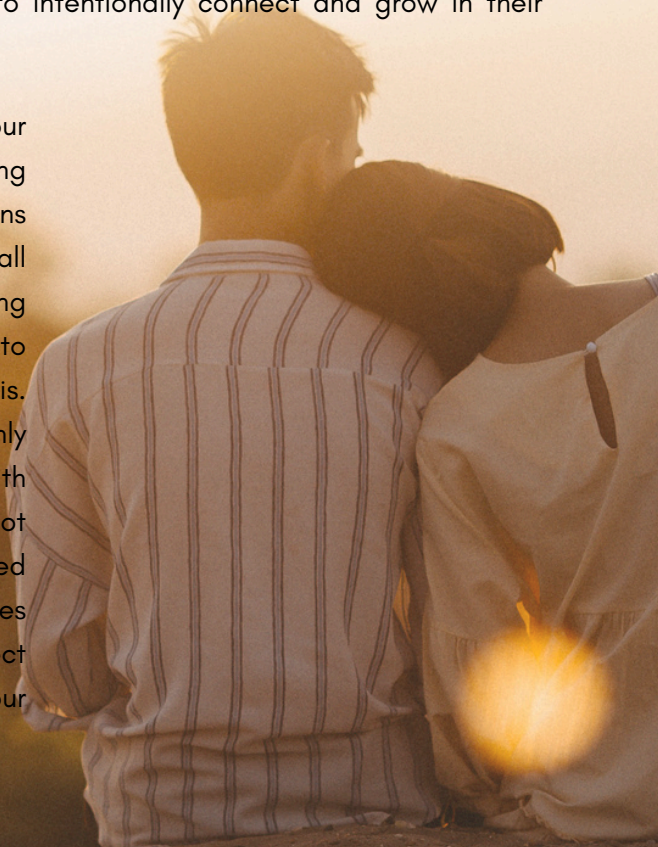
Think on this....

ILLUSTRATION

In order to have a healthy marriage, or enjoy any close relationship, we must have consistent communication.

In marriage that often means checking in several times throughout the day. Nevertheless, while quick texts or phone calls are valuable to keep in sync, our marriage would not be very intimate unless we also set aside dedicated, uninterrupted times with our spouse to share our hearts with one another. Most healthy married couples will set aside 15–20 minutes per day to connect on a deeper level. They might also plan a date night once a week for even more dedicated time to share their hearts, hopes, and struggles with one another. Even better, they will get away for a weekend from time to time to intentionally connect and grow in their affection for one another.

The same is true with our relationship with God. “Praying continuously” simply means staying connected with God all throughout our day and building a pattern of taking things to Him in prayer on a regular basis. However, if that was the only communication we had with God, our relationship would not go very deep. We also need dedicated, uninterrupted times of prayer in order to connect with God and grow in our relationship with Him.



THE PLAN: What should we pray?

In the last section, we discussed the pattern of our prayer life and showed the many different times we should pray. Ultimately, God wants us to stay connected with Him all throughout the day by praying continuously. Nevertheless, we also need to develop more dedicated and uninterrupted times of prayer to go deeper in our relationship with God. During this time, our hope is to be able to sit still, share our hearts with God, and listen to Him as He speaks to us.

As we begin to set aside more time to pray, we may feel like we don't have much to say. Thankfully the Bible can help us develop a plan to help us grow in our prayer life. The following provides an acronym to help us develop a plan for prayer:

"CAST your cares on the Lord, for He cares for you."

-1 Peter 5:7

Confession

Adoration

Supplication

Thanksgiving

onfession

Confession is simply agreeing with God and acknowledging our sin before Him and asking for His forgiveness. Remember, confession is the first step in the repentance process as we learn to trust in the Lordship of Christ and surrender to the power of the Holy Spirit on a moment-by-moment basis. Confessing our sins regularly helps us stay honest and humble before the Lord and reminds us of our need for a Savior every day. This allows us to apply the Gospel to our lives on a regular basis which should stir our affections for the Lord and lead us to a deeper connection with Him.

What do these verses remind us about confession (and repentance)?

- **Psalm 32:3-5**
- **1 John 1:9**
- **Romans 2:4**

How does it make you feel to know that God will forgive your sin when you confess it? Do you find this easy or difficult to believe and why?

Action Steps

During your dedicated times of prayer, take time to reflect on your thoughts, attitudes, and actions over the past week. Read and pray through Ps. 139:23-24 and ask God to reveal any sin that needs to be confessed. Acknowledge your sin to God, repent and turn away from it, and receive His forgiveness.

Think on this...

ILLUSTRATION

It is important to know that often times we don't "feel" like praying, but we know it is important.

Even confessing this "feeling" to not want to pray is a way to draw closer to God, and God's Word promises that if we "draw near to God, He will draw near to us" (James 4:8). It is so important to remember that being completely honest with God (about anything and everything we are feeling) is so refreshing and allows us to experience the fullness of His unconditional love and grace. Don't ever feel like you have to "perform" when you pray or say the "right" words. Instead, just talk to God and be honest with Him about what you are feeling. Confess your imperfect thoughts, feelings, and actions, and let His perfect love surround you as you experience His grace and forgiveness. There is nothing better than being fully known and fully loved, and only God is able to do this. May confession lead you to a deeper connection with God, as you rest in His unconditional love and grace.



A doration

Adoration simply means adoring, praising, or worshiping God for who He is and what He has done. As we place our attention on the Lord and recognize His amazing attributes and actions (i.e. mercy, grace, love, justice, etc. – all displayed in Christ’s death on the cross, etc.), this should stir our affections for Him. In response, we should be able to praise and worship God in adoration.

How are the following verses examples of adoration? What attributes and actions of God do they acknowledge? How do they stir your affections for the Lord and motivate you to worship Him more?

- **Psalm 18:1-2**
- **Psalm 86:15**
- **Psalm 145:1-3**
- **Revelation 5:12-13**

What are some other attributes and actions of God that are worthy of our adoration and worship?

Action Steps

During your dedicated times of prayer, spend time praising and adoring God for all His attributes you can think of. Perhaps try writing out a prayer of adoration to the Lord in a journal acknowledging all the reasons He is worthy of worship.



Think on this...

ILLUSTRATION

If you love golf and enjoy watching the major championships on T.V., then you can't help but get excited when Tiger Woods is in the hunt.

If Tiger has a 30 foot putt on the 72nd hole at Augusta to win his 16th Major, we would all be on the edge of our seat watching and waiting to see what will happen. If that putt goes in, we would jump off our seat, raise our hands in the air, and yell, "HE IS AMAZING!!!"

Whether we realize it or not, that is actually adoration and worship. We are simply responding to Tiger's awe-inspiring attributes and actions by acknowledging how great he is. When someone is able to accomplish something that no one else can do, we hold them in high esteem, and in effect worship them.

But why don't we adore and worship God in the same way? Does not God have even more awe-inspiring attributes and has He not accomplished even greater works than Tiger? Of course he has, but we don't seem to acknowledge or respond to God in the same way.

However, when you see people in church raising their hands, closing their eyes, and singing praises to God, they are actually doing the very same thing that people are doing at a golf tournament. They are simply responding to God's awe-inspiring attributes and actions by acknowledging how great He truly is. When you think about the fact that Jesus was willing to die on a cross to save us from our sins and give us eternal life, that should stir our affections for Him and cause us to want to respond to Him through worship and adoration!

upplication

Supplication is simply asking God to meet (or supply) our daily needs. Like a good parent, God wants to answer our requests and give us what we ask for, but He always has our best interest at heart and will give us only that which is good for us. Remember, God is wise enough not to always give us exactly what we think we need. However, He sometimes surprises us by giving us something even greater than we could have imagined. The important thing to remember is that God always hears our prayers and answers them according to His will—for our good and His glory!

What do these verses tell us about what we should pray for and how God will respond to these requests?

- **1 John 5:14-15**
- **Matthew 6:11**
- **Philippians 4:6-7**
- **Ephesians 3:20**

What are some things you are asking from God in prayers of supplication?



Action Steps

During your dedicated times of prayer, pray and ask God for what you or others need. Sometimes it is helpful to write out these prayers in a journal so you can remember what you prayed for and see how God answered them.

“

“God will either give us what we ask for in prayer, or give us what we would have asked for in prayer if we knew everything he knows.”

- Tim Keller

”



📌 MEMORY VERSES: *1 John 1:9*

Psalm 86:15 *Ephesians 3:20* *1 Thessalonians 5:16-18*

hanksgiving

Thanksgiving is simply thanking God for what He has done, is doing, or will do in our lives. This is another form of worship as we respond to what God has done in our lives by expressing our gratefulness to Him. Living a life of gratitude changes us from the inside out!

What can we learn from the following verses about giving thanks to God? According to the following verses, when should we give thanks and for what?

- **Luke 17:11-19**

- **Psalm 136:1-3**

- **1 Thessalonians 5:18**

What are some specific things you are thankful to God for? Even in difficult circumstances or times of suffering, how can you be thankful?

Action Steps

During your dedicated times of prayer, spend time thanking God for what He has done, is doing, or will do in your life. Sometimes it helps to write out your prayers of thanksgiving in a journal to be able to go back and remember what the Lord has done.

PRAYER CHALLENGE

Remember, God wants us to talk to Him all throughout the day (1 Thess. 5:18), but He also wants dedicated, uninterrupted times of prayer where we are able to go deeper in our relationship with Him. Try to set aside 10 minutes each morning to pray through the CAST prayer.



Now it's your turn!



onfession



doration



upplication



hanksgiving

Chapter Three: Prayer

THE PEOPLE AND PROBLEM OF PRAYER

In this chapter, we will focus our attention on the people we should pray for and the most common problem people have when they pray.

In the last chapter, we developed a plan for our dedicated times of prayer using the acronym **C**onfession, **A**doration, **S**upplication, **T**hanksgiving. During our time of supplication, we often pray for our friends, family members, and other people we care about. When we pray for other people, the Bible calls this **intercession** because we are interceding for them or praying on their behalf.

THE PEOPLE: For whom should we pray?

The Bible actually calls us to intercede for or pray on behalf of several different types of people. Who should we pray for according to the following verses?

- **1 Timothy 2:1-4**
- **Ephesians 6:18-20**
- **Colossians 4:2-4**
- **Matthew 5:43-44**
- **Matthew 9:37-38**

What does the following verse say about failing to pray or intercede for someone?

- **1 Samuel 12:23**

Who would you like to be praying for?

As we think about interceding for others, how do the following verses make you feel when you realize what God is doing for you?

- **Romans 8:34**

- **Romans 8:26-27**

“It is impossible to pray for someone without loving him, and impossible to go on praying for him without discovering that our love for him grows and matures.”

- John Stott



THE PROBLEM: What if God doesn't seem to answer our prayers?

If you feel at times like God is not answering your prayers, you are not alone. There are many times in the Bible when people cry out to God asking why their prayers are not being answered.

How do you relate to the following prayers?

- **Psalm 22:1-2**
- **Habakkuk 1:2-3**
- **Job 30:20**

There are definitely times when our prayers are hindered or ineffective. What reasons do the following verses give us for ineffective prayers?

- **Isaiah 59:2**
- **James 1:6-7**
- **James 4:3**
- **1 John 5:14-15**

We must also understand that when it feels like God is not answering our prayers, He may just be saying “No” or “Wait”.

What reasons may God say “No” to our prayer requests?

- **2 Corinthians 12:7-10**

- **2 Corinthians 4:16-17**

What reasons may God tell us to “Wait”?

- **James 5:7-11**

- **1 Peter 1:6-7**

Even Jesus’ prayer was not answered in the way He would have chosen, but what stands out in this passage?

- **Luke 22:41-44**

“Delayed answers to prayer are not only trials of faith; they also give us opportunities to honor God through our steadfast confidence in Him, even when facing the apparent denial of our request.”

- Charles Spurgeon

How might the truths about God in the following passages help us trust Him when our prayers are not answered as we would like?

- **Isaiah 55:8-9**

- **Romans 11:33-36**

Final Thoughts:

There is a fine line between trying to “perform” in prayer and simply praying to be with God and grow in our relationship with Him. Too often we can try really hard to pray the “right” way in order to get what we want from God. Or, we turn prayer into a duty that we simply check off our “to do” list to feel good about ourselves. Remember, prayer is just one of the many “means” to the “end” result of growing closer to God.

Sometimes “spiritual disciplines”, like prayer and Bible study, can be referred to as “means of grace”, since they are a “means” to the “end” result which is to grow closer to God and experience more of His grace. As we put ourselves in places to experience His grace, He begins to transform us from the inside out!

 **MEMORY VERSES:** *1 John 5:14-15*

Romans 8:26 *2 Corinthians 4:16-17* *2 Corinthians 12:9-10*

A photograph of a couple holding hands, with the sun setting in the background, creating a warm, golden glow. The couple is positioned in the foreground, with their hands clasped together in the center. The background is a soft, hazy landscape, possibly a beach or a field, with the sun low on the horizon, casting long shadows and a warm light over the scene.

Think on this...

ILLUSTRATION

Think of a dating relationship between a guy and girl that eventually leads to marriage. When first dating, the guy and girl cannot spend enough time together as they talk late into the night in order to get to know one another. They can't wait for the next time they will get to spend time together as everything is exciting and new. However, after they get married, it can be easy to start taking each other for granted and stop dating each other in the same way. Eventually, it takes intentionality and discipline for one person to plan a date night in order to spend time together and keep growing in their affection for one another. In the same way, as a new Christian, it can be exciting to read our Bible, pray, and connect with other believers and grow significantly in our relationship with God in a short amount of time. However, over time it can become easier to take our relationship with God for granted and not spend as much time with Him. This is when we must be intentional and discipline ourselves to spend time with Him through these "means of grace". Remember, we don't pray and read our Bible just to be successful, "check a box", and hopefully get what we want from God. Instead, we do these things to get more of God.

Foundations Book Four REVIEW AND APPLICATION

In this book, we have looked at why it is so important to talk to God in prayer and how this helps us grow in our relationship with Him.

Review Questions:

1. How did the concepts in this book change your understanding of prayer and why it is important to simply talk to God on a regular basis?
2. What are one or two things you learned from this book that you would like to put into practice? How are you going to implement these things?
3. Review the CAST prayer. Commit to spending 5-10 minutes of dedicated, uninterrupted prayer time with God daily and use the CAST prayer as your guide.
4. Prayer Challenge: Grab a journal and start writing down your prayer requests. You can use bullet points or you can actually write out your prayers as if you were writing a letter to God. Put a date next to each prayer request and come back each week and see how the Lord answered your prayers.

DIGGING DEEPER

Have you ever prayed Scripture? There are many prayers in the Bible that are great models for us to pray. Try using the following prayers to pray over yourself, your family, your friends, your teammates, your church, etc. Simply personalize them as you pray for others and express your heart to the Lord.

- **Ephesians 1:15-23**
- **Ephesians 3:14-21**
- **Philippians 1:9-11**
- **Colossians 1:9-13**
- **Psalm 5, 13, 51, 86** *(The whole book of Psalms are prayers and they often follow the CAST pattern.)*
- **Acts 4:24-31**
- **John 17:1-26**
- **Matthew 6:9-13**



Remember, the motivation for engaging in “spiritual disciplines” should not be out of a sense of duty or obligation, but out of a grateful heart for what God has already done for us. As we reflect on the unconditional love and acceptance God has given to us through the person and work of Christ, our affections should be stirred for the Lord and give us a greater desire to get to know Him better. The rest of the FOUNDATIONS SERIES will provide insight to help us better develop the following four spiritual disciplines: Bible Study, Prayer, Fellowship, and Evangelism. As we respond to the Gospel by implementing these disciplines, we will be putting ourselves in a place where the Holy Spirit can grow us into the image of Jesus.

As we put in motion the disciplines in the wheel diagram, we will begin to get traction in our faith journey and the wheel will begin to move as we continue to grow in spiritual maturity.



Up next:

THE FOUNDATIONS SERIES

BOOK FIVE: FELLOWSHIP

NOTES AND RESPONSES

NOTES AND RESPONSES

College Golf Fellowship

College Golf Fellowship exists to encourage you in golf, life, and faith. We desire to come alongside you and show you what an authentic relationship with Jesus looks like. We hope this series helps you lay a solid foundation for your entire life.

THE FOUNDATIONS SERIES

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