

Discipleship School Growing in Prayer



Overview

Growing in prayer begins with a conversation. It is not about coming to God with a grocery list of things we need, want, or hope for. Prayer is about being real with God—our Creator—and building a genuine relationship with Him.

Prayer is where we come before God to repent, draw near to Him, and give thanks. It is not simply something we do because we feel that we have to. Prayer should be an authentic, Spirit-driven response to our relationship with God.

In the beginning, prayer can feel difficult. Treating prayer as a conversation with God may even feel unnatural at first. But just like any relationship, growing in our relationship with God requires us to spend time with Him and learn to communicate with Him.

Jesus did not leave us without guidance. In John 14:16, He tells us that the Holy Spirit is our Advocate and Helper—He is with us, guides us, and helps us in our walk with God. We do not have to figure out prayer on our own.

Praying with Scripture, or following the example Jesus gave us in the Lord's Prayer, can give us a foundation for understanding what our prayers can include. As we continue to pray, we learn to become more honest with God, more aware of His presence, and more willing to allow Him to work in our lives.

Prayer is not simply about speaking to God—it is about growing in relationship with Him.

Listen to God's Voice

Prayer cannot always be about talking to God and asking Him for the things we need. Silence is also an important part of prayer. Spending time in stillness can help us slow down, listen, and become more aware of God's presence.

We know the voices of the people we love because we spend time with them and hear them speak regularly. The more time we spend getting to know God, the more familiar His voice becomes. In the same way, we learn to recognise God's voice by spending time with Him:

- Reading His Word
- Reflecting on Scripture
- Meditating on what He says

Faith and Trusting God

To have faith in someone is to trust them and believe in their character and ability, even when you cannot see the outcome. It is important to note that faith is not simply hoping that a particular outcome will come to fruition. Faith is trusting God and knowing that He is good even when you do not understand what He is doing.

Having faith in our omniscient God means trusting that He sees the bigger picture and that He is already working, even when we cannot see it. Faith is therefore not only believing that God can do something for us; but believing in who God is and choosing to trust Him, even when we do not understand, cannot see the outcome, or do not receive the answer we expected.

Hebrews 11:1:

"Faith is the assurance of things hoped for and the conviction of things not seen."



Thanks Giving and Praise

Prayer is a way that we can turn to Jesus, praise Him, and give thanks. There is also something powerful about practising gratitude: research has found that gratitude is associated with lower levels of anxiety and can influence the way our brains respond to emotions and stress.

Philippians 4:6 reiterates this - "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God."

Praying with a grateful heart:

- Intentionally shift your focus from what you are worried about to who God is and what He has already done - you may begin to cultivate a heart of trust and gratitude.
- Reflect on what God has done in your life.
- Remember that God gave His one and only Son, Jesus, to save us.
- Understanding our debt of sin has been dealt with through Christ.
- Praise and thanksgiving become a response from the heart when we understand what Jesus has done for us.
- We can bring our worries to God while giving thanks.
- Through Jesus, we have forgiveness, freedom, and hope.

Repentance and Surrender

You cannot grow in your relationship with God if you do not surrender to Him and follow Him in obedience.

Repentance requires us to turn away from our old ways and allow God's Word and the conviction of the Holy Spirit to move in us and change us. He calls us to come to Him, accept His forgiveness, and walk in the freedom He offers.

Being obedient to God's Word requires us to know and learn Scripture diligently. When we know God's Word, we learn what He expects from us—not what we think He expects, or what the world tells us we should expect.

Surrender opens our hearts to God, repentance turns us back to Him, and obedience allows us to walk in His ways.

Hebrews 11: 6:

"Without faith it is impossible to please Him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him."

