

3. Our prayers should have at least four components or steps to them. First, we should begin by acknowledging God as our source of everything, and we should be calling out directly to Him. Secondly, our prayers should also be communicating with God. Matthew 7:6-8 tells us to ASK God—that is, to Ask, Seek, and Knock—and He will respond. Third, we are to pray believing He will answer; see Romans 8:37-39. And finally, and perhaps the most difficult of all, is to wait on the Lord's response. Isaiah 40:30-31, in the King James version, instructs us to "wait upon the Lord"; in the NIV translation, we are instructed "to hope in the Lord". Again, once we pray in the full belief that God will answer our prayer, we are to wait on the Lord and hope in the Lord; thereby leaving our time of prayer assured of God's love for us and confident that His sovereign will in our lives will be carried out according to his timing. Now read Matthew 8:5-10 and verse 13 and describe how this narrative fits with what we have just discussed.
4. In addition, I would encourage you to attempt an exercise in "stringing pearls"—a method that Paul and other teachers employed, and one that will also help us in our prayer life. Stringing Pearls describes the rabbinical method many Bible teachers employed to get their point across to their students and increase these students' knowledge of the Bible. The teacher would string together parts of several verses to get one major point across—not taking anything out of context to bend God's word to our will, but applying individual verses to form a single communication. This enables us to write a prayer to God using just His Holy Word. Jesus also seems to have incorporated this method of teaching often. He was actually so aware of the Scriptures that he would use parts of verses to make a whole point. In addition to this approach, you can also use scripture that speaks to you. For example, how many of us have prayed by reading or reciting The 23rd Psalm, or some other favorite scripture? As an exercise in "stringing pearls", look up the following verses and write them out as though they were a single prayer; see if it does not allow God to speak to you in your prayer time.
- Psalm 1:1-2
 - Psalm 119:1-2
 - Psalm 116:1-2
 - Psalm 119:33-37

May our prayer life grow stronger as we apply all that God has shown us in this lesson. Next week, we will look at the discipline of Study.

In Christ,

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