



DEEP
roots

W e e k # 2 :
prayer

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Attitude of Gratitude
By Kathy Hicks

Prayer is an amazing tool to grow your relationship with God. Let's be honest, God knows our heaviest burdens and our sweetest joys. However, God wants a relationship with us. We can do this through prayer. Did you know that your prayers do not have to be fancy or worded perfectly? Growing your relationship with God through prayer should feel like you are talking with a friend. So, lift up those prayers and let your almighty Father hear you.

Do you start with gratitude when talking with God? Regardless of what craziness is happening in life, starting with being thankful is a priority.

1 Thessalonians 5: 16-18

Rejoice always; pray without ceasing in everything give thanks, for this is the will of God for you in Jesus Christ.

Have you ever been praying through a difficult situation and found it difficult to find gratitude? It's understandable to have a hard time to find something to be thankful for when we are at a low point in our life journey. Our placement in events, situations, relationships etc. have specific reasoning in God's prepared journey for us. Sometimes we question God and struggle to understand the whys, and what- if's, but know this, down the road God will reveal the reasoning in His perfect timing. Being grateful for God's un-ending and unwavering love is where gratitude plays a huge role in our relationship with God. Our Father is all knowing and when we choose gratitude in the hard, gritty, stressful times in our lives we are forced to have a mindset shift.

The Bible tells us to give thanks in ALL situations. I'm sure your relationship with God has evolved through the years and I am no exception. A few years ago, my prayers were not so filled with gratitude and thanksgiving. I was negative, borderline condescending. Drowning in a pool of depression, bitterness, and self-pity about all of the life plans that had gone a rye. God was so, so, so gracious, He listened, and He taught me all about gratitude.

What exactly is gratitude?

To thank freely, to give thanks to celebrate fully in praise with thanksgiving.

Wow! The definition of gratitude really helps to understand what it means to truly have a grateful heart. A grateful heart embraces every season with thanks and praise. Fully recognizing that our all-knowing and all-loving God is at work in it and through it.

Gratitude is such a difficult characteristic to cultivate, here are some verses to dig into to explore thankfulness to God for His blessings.

Colossians 2:7

1 Timothy 4:4

Hebrews 12:28

Fun trivia fact: The word gratitude only appears in the three verses listed above, in the entire Bible!

The Bible tells us that gratitude is far more than just a word. It is an action as well. Showing gratitude is: Thanking God, Being thankful for others, and finding reasons to be thankful for everything in every season of life.

Being thankful to God is about shifting our focus from the negative or difficult seasons in life to putting our faith in God. Being thankful that our God is faithful... always is a great way to make that shift.

When life is hard and stressful try praying over Corinthians 15:57:

Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Be diligent in prayer and keep alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving. Colossians 4:2.

How can your family practice gratitude?

Start a gratitude jar.

Host a family gratitude day.

Keep a gratitude journal.

At bedtime talk about what you are thankful for.

Gracious God,

I am so thankful that you accept my prayers, and that you are willing to accept my gratitude. You have made yourself accessible through prayer, and despite all of my flaws, you still look upon my love, with joy and acceptance.

Amen

The Lord's Prayer

When the disciples asked Jesus how to pray, Jesus responded with the words we know so well as the Lord's Prayer. (Matthew 6:9-13, Luke 11:1-4) He didn't intend this to simply be a memory verse, or a prayer to be recited by rote. Instead, he gave the disciples a template for prayer. In it Jesus explained the different conversation points we should have in our prayers, and how crucial it is to align our hearts with God's. We memorize the Lord's Prayer not just so we can recite a prayer, but so that we can easily recall the key components of prayer.

Our Father in heaven

Earthly dads are not perfect. Some are less perfect than others. The great news is that while we were once enemies of God, we are now reconciled to Him through Jesus Christ and made His children. (see Romans 8:14-16) When we pray to Him we are talking to our heavenly "Abba", daddy, the perfect Father. He knows each of us fully and loves us deeply. Reflect on the fact that God loves us like a parent and wants to have a relationship with each one of us.

Hallowed be your name

The word "hallowed" means "honored as holy". We come before Him as our good, good Father, but also with a posture of reverence and awe. Take a moment to give God glory, honor and praise. You may want to praise God for the created world, for His love, justice and mercy, for the gift of Jesus, or for His goodness in your own life. Give proper honor to God's holiness.

Your kingdom come

Pray to acknowledge God as the sovereign ruler of your life, desiring more of His kingdom here on earth. Pray for God to transform the world, to bring it more fully under his rule. You may want to pray for peace, for compassion, for an end to poverty and sickness. You can pray for any global or local situation that you want God to set right.

Your will be done

The ultimate goal of prayer is not to convince God of our plans but to align our hearts with His will. Pray a prayer for God's plan, not yours. Pray to submit your will to God, following where he leads in trust and obedience. Ask for God's help to understand what he is calling you to do and for help to obey.

Give us today our daily bread

God created us with bodies and souls that need daily substance to sustain them. Take a moment to pray for your own needs and the needs of your family, friends, church and those in your workplace. Thank Him for all that He has already blessed you with.

Forgive us our sins

Ask God to search your hearts and reveal any sin to you. Pray a prayer of confession and repentance, asking for God's forgiveness. Ask God to help you turn from those sins and walk closer to His path. In any relationship, part of intimacy is humility and openness. Humble, open, teachable hearts apologize when they are wrong. In Christ, God gives us mercy, grace, peace and love.

As we forgive those who sin against us

When we have been made right with God through Jesus, we learn the way of forgiveness. When we have been made right with God, we can begin to show forgiveness and mercy to others. Pray for God's help in forgiving others and living a life of grace.

Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil one

We live in a world full of hostility, violence, oppression, disease, illness, and death. But God has dealt with evil through the death of His Son on the cross. Pray for God's help and protection from sin and temptation. Pray about those things that worry you, things that make your life difficult, things that cause your pain or struggle, and things that test your ability to do the right thing. Ask for God's protection from the evil in the world. Pray that others would receive this same protection.

Doxology and Prayer of Praise to God

Remind yourself God has the power to do far more than you can imagine (Ephesians 3:20). Pray for all things to be done to God's glory and believe that God is faithful to answer your prayers.

Try this:

Using the Lord's Prayer as a template, write your own prayer.

The Lord's Prayer may be committed to memory quickly, but it is slowly learnt by heart. – Frederick Denison Maurice

Journal Your Prayers
By Lydia Schooley

Let's be real for a second, sometimes prayer can be intimidating. What do I say? Am I saying the right thing? What am I forgetting? Am I praying enough? Prayer can become a checklist instead of a conversation when we let these things spiral through our heads. But here's the thing, God doesn't expect perfect prayers. Jesus came into this world to save us because he wants RELATIONSHIP not perfection. He just wants you to talk to Him.

"Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all He has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:6-7

What does God tell us to pray about?

EVERYTHING. The big, small, and everything in between. Tell God about your day. Tell him what you are struggling with. Tell Him what you are excited about. Thank God for who He is and what He has done. Thank Him for the blessings He has given you. Think of it like writing in a diary. Instead of Dear Diary, start with Dear God.

Journaling is something I've done since I was little. It has been something that's been so fun to look back on and laugh at all the funny things I said, the ways I spelled things, and just having documentation of my life. I've also loved being able to look back and see how much I've grown. The last few years I've started writing out my prayers and it is so cool to look back and see how God worked in my life. Sometimes I think we forget how far we've come and the ways God has provided.

When was a time you forgot something important?

Last year I decided to write down all the things I got for Christmas. I only remember a few things off the top of my head but since I wrote it down, I can now look back and remember each special gift. That's kinda like writing down your prayers. We forget things that God has done in our lives. We forget prayers that He has answered. We forget the little moments where God's presence was so powerful. But, when we write down what we pray in our real, honest conversations with God, we can have something to look back on and be reminded of God's goodness and faithfulness.

Anyone else a Lauren Daigle fan?! Here's a few lyrics from her song "Remember"

I remember, I remember
You have always been faithful to me
I remember, I remember
Even when my own eyes could not see
You were there, always there, with me

Remember, He has been faithful before and He will be faithful again. Talk to God, He is listening. He hears your struggles and He also hears your joys.

I know not everyone likes to write and that is ok. There are other ways to remember the things God has done in your life too! That could look like a certain place where you go to pray and every time you go there you are reminded of what God has brought you through. That could look like making a note in your phone about what God's been doing. That could look like taking a picture that represents where God had you in a particular season. The point isn't to write your prayers, it's to remember that God is here, even when we can't see it.

I have a challenge for you! As a family and/or by yourself come up with a way you are going to REMEMBER what God is doing your life. Here are some ideas but also feel free to be creative!

- get a journal and start writing down your prayers**
- make a prayer wall**
- create a special prayer place**
- make notes on your phones about what Gods doing**
- take pictures to represent your current season of life**

BE
joyful
IN HOPE,
patient
IN AFFLICTION,
faithful
IN PRAYER.

ROMANS 12:12