



Unlocking the Power of Prayer

RECAP

This week's focus: The secret to consistent prayer is knowing you are deeply loved by God.

There is a way of looking at the world which says that life is hard, but everything happens for a reason. This way of thinking says, "to survive, you have to learn to trust in the divine plan, strengthen your resolve to be good, and to endure hardships". The mindset that "life is hard, but God is good", is incomplete and misses the personal dimension of God. Many Christians fall into the trap of believing it's up to individuals to grit their teeth, accept their fate, and muscle through the hardship. They believe God has a plan, and that He is wise and powerful. Then, something happens in life that confuses or wounds them. They either run from their faith or try to find the strength to make themselves believe that God knows what He is doing. Questions get buried and a subtle sense of hopelessness grips the heart.

Scripture is clear God does have a plan for our lives and wants to answer our questions. Psalm 62:8 says, *"Trust in him at all times, you people; pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge."* Our questions are not signs that we do not trust God, they are proof that we do trust Him. We are seeking to trust Him more by seeking to understand who He is, what He is doing, and why. 1 Peter 5:6-7 says something very similar: *"Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you."* Verse 6 by itself sounds a lot like God is present but not personal. Verse 7 makes all the difference. God cares for you and desires you to be free from your anxiety and worry. This is not through your own effort but through casting your worry on him and letting him take it. Prayer is the difference.

Prayer is the way we pour out our hearts to God. Prayer is how we seek God. Nowhere is this more important than when it comes to sin and repentance. Prayer is how we return to Him when we have sinned. Frequently, when we have done wrong, we are tempted to act like children. We either run and hide or remain defiant. Both are motivated by fear. 2 Chronicles 7:14 promises, *"if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land."*

In the middle of the visions that fill the second half of the book of Daniel, there is a pause as Daniel stops to pray for himself and his people. It is a prayer of confession, repentance, and longing for forgiveness. He is seeking the restoration that only God can provide.

By studying this prayer, we can gain a glimpse into how we can seek God and return to Him when we have gone astray. Just as Daniel did in his day, we too can "Shine like Stars" by turning from our wicked ways and seeking Him with all our heart.



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SHARE (5-10 min)

1. Icebreaker Questions: What is something that scared you growing up? What scares you today? How do you react when you are scared?
2. If you could ask God to answer one question, what question would you ask Him and why?

STUDY (about 30 min) Read Jeremiah 29:10-14 & Daniel 9

3. What about the message on Sunday and this passage stood out to you? What is the primary takeaway from Daniel 9?
4. Why do you think so many people find it difficult to pray? What gets in your way of praying more often?
5. Pastor Dan said, "The Word of God unlocks prayer and prayer unlocks the promises of God." How do you see this dynamic playing out in Daniel chapter 9?
6. Read Jeremiah 25:8-11 & 29:10-14. Why did Daniel pray at this time in history? What can we learn from Daniel's attitude towards prayer?
7. Read Daniel 9:15-19. What does Daniel ask God for? What do you think it means to pray with God's glory and honor in mind?
8. A major part of Daniel's prayer is confession. Why is confession important when it comes to prayer? Why does Daniel confess for the whole nation? How does Daniel's prayer recorded in chapter 9 impact your prayer life today?
9. What are some practical ways that you can talk with God more during the day? Who would you like the LIFE GROUP to pray for?

SUPPORT (15 min)

Pray: When Daniel prayed, he began by worshipping God, then he asked for mercy for himself and others. Try this as a group and pray for one another's needs.

Challenge: At some point during this week, use Daniel's manner of praying as your example. Offer yourself a living sacrifice to God with your heart pouring out to Him in humble prayer.