**Spiritual Formation**

**Key Questions on Prayer**

**Lecture 7**

**Archie Parrish**

**Introduction**

Hello, my name is Archie Parrish. I had the privilege of working with Jim Kennedy for over 10 years in the early days of evangelism explosion and I consider it a real privilege to be able to come to you now and speak on the subject of “Key Questions on Prayer”. First, here is a word of exhortation, and a word of encouragement. By way of exhortation, let me suggest we either pray or we become “prey”. Scripture makes it clear that Satan goes about as a roaring lion, seeking who he may devour. The one thing he flees from is the weakest Christian on his knees in prayer.

**Praying with Kingdom Focus**

Here is a story that I think will encourage you. It goes back to George Washington Carver. He was born somewhere around 1864. He didn’t even remember when he was born. He was a slave who died in 1943. George Washington Carver was one of the world’s most well respected and honored men. He was invited, when he finished his training, to go to some of the most prestigious colleges in the north to teach. But instead he chose Tuskegee Institute in Tuskegee, Alabama, a struggling, “black” school. One day as he was walking on the grounds of Tuskegee, he tells the story that he looked up at the starry sky and he said, “God, help me understand your universe.” Then God said, “George, that’s too big for you.” On another occasion, as George was walking through the trees and out across a field he said, “God, help me understand planet earth.” And God said, “George, that’s too big for you.” As he was walking along, he stumbled on a peanut and he picked it up, looked at it, and said, “God, help me understand peanuts.” And God said, “That’s just right for you.” Over the years, he developed 399 different products from the peanut. Actually, his expertise in agriculture changed the whole way that the United States and the whole world does its agriculture. That happened because this man understood a key verse: Ephesians 2:10. God has a plan for our lives. God has a purpose for our lives. George Washington Carver didn’t tell God what he wanted him to do. He sought what God wanted him to do and he found his peanut. **Praying with Kingdom focus will help you discover the good works that God has for you.** It will help you find “your peanut”.

**Kingdom Focused Prayer - Symbol**

To form a symbol for Kingdom focused prayer, we have taken a Jerusalem Cross, which symbolizes the advancement of the Kingdom of God’s grace throughout the whole world. Let me explain the symbolism that is in it:

* 5 crosses refer to the 5 wounds of Christ at his Passion.
* The 4 small crosses represent the 4 Gospels proclaimed to the 4 corners of the Earth moving outward towards Jerusalem.
* By combining the Jerusalem Cross with the kneeling believer, we come up with the symbol for Kingdom focused prayer. You will be seeing that symbol throughout this presentation.

**8** **Questions** - The answers to 8 questions will help you understand and practice praying with Kingdom focus. Let’s look at those questions:

1. **What is the reality of your prayer life?**
2. What is the present reality of your prayer life? - The first task in any endeavor should not be prayer or counting the cost. I agree with both of those, but **the first task is to determine what reality is**. You don’t know how to pray if you don’t know what reality is. You don’t know what the cost will be if you don’t know where you are now.
3. To determine this, we provided you with a personal prayer survey. Take a few minutes now to complete the survey and then come back to this lecture.
   1. The function of a survey is important for us to know. **Surveys provide a snapshot of present reality, of individuals and of groups.** If your church takes a survey, for example, the results will give you a picture of whether your church is a house of prayer for all nations or not.
   2. When you take this prayer reality check, it usually will reveal gaps in your life. The biggest gap that Christians need to be concerned about is the **sanctification gap**. That is the gap between belief and behavior. That is what we say we believe and how we behave. This is the biggest problem for evangelism these days because too many people have met Christians whose behavior was so radically different than what they said they believed.
   3. **Sifting Zone** – Read Luke 22:31
      1. This is after the Lord’s Supper and after Peter said he would die for Christ.
      2. What does it mean to be sifted as wheat? – Wheat that grows in the field needs to be processed so that it can make bread. In the ancient days, first the wheat was threshed. Oxen would walk around on wheat that was already cut, sometimes pulling heavy sleds and it would crush the wheat. After the wheat had been thrashed, or crushed, then it had to be sifted. A man would take a pitching fork and toss the wheat in the air. The breeze would blow the husks away and the heavier wheat would fall to the ground.
      3. Now what Jesus was saying was that Satan wanted to sift the 12 disciples as if they were wheat, but Jesus interceded for them. When the disciples asked why their ministry was powerless to defeat Satan’s bondage of a child, Jesus said, “This kind can be driven out by nothing but prayer”.
      4. Over the years I have discovered that when Christians are not strong in their prayer life they make themselves especially vulnerable for the sifting of Satan. And God lets it happen sometimes. It may sound strange, but God uses Satan to sanctify us and close that gap.

Before we go into this, let me suggest that you take a little time and think about what you just experienced with the personal prayer life survey and this section about sifting.

1. **What is prayer?**
   1. **Prayer is a Creation Ordinance** - **At its deepest essence, prayer is the impressed image of God, the Creator, in human creatures seeking the original image in God himself.** 
      1. Read Psalm 65:2 – Notice, he doesn’t say ‘the people of Israel will come’, but ‘all flesh will come’. **That is because God put prayer into the very DNA of all human beings.** No cultural anthropologist throughout history has ever found a tribe of people who did not have an instinct for prayer.
      2. The writer of Ecclesiastes put it this way, “God has put eternity into man’s heart”.
   2. **Not all Prayer is the Same** - The Fall of humanity shattered the image of God in us. Today we hear people cursing and blaspheming. We hear people praying very self-centered prayers. These are evidence that the prayer instinct has been corrupted. When you hear someone speaking profanity, that is this person’s way of praying. It’s depraved, but true. Some prayer is offensive to God. In Isaiah’s day, God spoke of the prayers of Israel as “wailing” or “howling of an animal” Psalm 84 makes it clear that some prayer makes the Lord angry.

Before we go further, take a minute and think about what has been taught so far about prayer.

1. **What is Christian prayer?**
   1. **Christian Prayer is Not Magic** – God is not a genie who comes out of bottle when we rub it or when we have the right incantation.
   2. **Christian prayer is Not a Merit Badge for Acts of Contrition** – If a person confesses their sins to a priest and he tells them to say 10 “Hail Mary” or 10 “Our Father”, God does not look on that as a meritorious act as some people do.
   3. **Christian prayer is not one person’s aura impacting another person’s aura**
      1. I shared the Gospel with a very successful businessman once. He listened politely; he was a southern gentleman. When I asked, “Does this make sense?” He said, “No, Archie.” He stood up and looked down at me so condescendingly and said, “If you were as intelligent as I am, if you had read half of what I have read, you would know that what you just said was simplistic clap-trap.” I looked back up at him and said, “It’s obvious that I am not as intelligent as you, I probably will never read as much as you, so you leave me only one alternative: I am going to tell God about you and let him take care of you.” The man became livid and said, “Don’t you dare pray for me!” I said, “What’s the problem?” He said, “You do not have permission to impact my aura with your aura. You cannot pray for me unless I give you permission to do it.” This is a standard way of treating prayer with new age theology.
   4. **Christian prayer is not an end; it is a God-ordained means to an end.** 
      1. Jesus said, “Ask and it will be given to you”.
   5. **Christian prayer is the Spirit enabled loving, obedient, conversational response of God’s adopted sons in harmony with his self-revelation in the Bible, and most clearly in the person, and work, and teaching of his only begotten Son.** Let’s define each of those phrases:
      1. **Spirit Enabled** – Human beings need the Spirit’s help. He is the Spirit of supplication who helps us transform our self-centered prayer instinct into instinctive, God-centered, Biblical prayer.
         1. Read Ezekiel 36:26 - The Holy Spirit starts by giving life to the soul. In a spiritual sense, God gives us a heart transplant. Without the Spirit of supplication, Christians cannot pray the way they ou
         2. Read Romans 8:26 - This is a very key passage for anyone interested in improving their prayer life. We do not know what to pray for.
            1. You are a finite creature. God is infinite and omniscient. History has been going on for a long time. God has been answering prayers for hundreds and thousands of years. He is the only one who knows what the master plan for all of his creation is. The object of prayer is not to inform God of things he doesn’t know. **The object of prayer is to wait in God’s presence until the Spirit of God puts on our hearts what we should pray for then we join in praying for the things God wants to happen.**
            2. We are not only finite, but also sinful people. We tend to pray with a bias towards sin. **Before I pray I stop and say, “Holy Spirit, cleanse me of all sin. Fill me. Help me to know what it is you want me to pray for.”** Usually there will be a passage of Scripture that I’m meditating on and from that he will give me something that I need to be praying about and often times it is really something I cannot explain to anyone else.
      2. **Loving Obedience** – If you want to receive a closer consciousness of the person of Christ, it comes through obedience, not just dutiful obedience, but loving obedience.
         1. Read John 14:21
         2. Exodus 21:1-6 - Paul calls himself a bond-slave of Jesus Christ. He gets this image from Exodus, where a slave who is about to be freed after 7 years of service decides that he loves his master and he wants to remain a slave for that master as long as he lives. He comes to the master and tells him that. The master then takes him to the doorpost, takes a nail, and puts in through the earlobe of the slave through the doorpost. The slave becomes a bond-slave forever. That’s what we should be with Christ. We should have loving obedience and be driven by loving compassion.
      3. **Conversational Response** – Conversation requires listening and speaking. God speaks to his people by his Spirit through his Word. God’s people speak to him by prayer.
         1. Some prayer is groaning too deep for words. Sometimes we’ll pause in the presence of God when there has been a death in the family or something of that nature, and God understands that as well.
      4. **God’s Adopted Sons** – We address God directly. The one mediator between God and man is Jesus Christ, the God-man. When we address him, we do not need to go through any other mediator. I suggest that it is better to talk to God before you talk to others about God, especially if you are in the process of sharing the Gospel or something like that. You really need to talk to God first.
         1. Read Galatians 4:6 – Crying “Abba Father” is a sign of the new birth. It is prayer. Prayer is a sign that a person has genuinely come to know Christ. This is to their heavenly Father.
         2. Read 2 Chronicles 6:18 - Paul is echoing the covenant given many times in the Old Testament.
      5. **Harmony with His Self-Revelation in the Bible** –
         1. Precepts – These are very specific words from the Scripture. Often as I’m praying Psalms, I will read the words and personalize them as my prayer to God.
         2. Principles – Other times I am dealing with situations that are not explicitly dealt with in Scripture, but there are principles that deal with those situations.
            1. Example: When God made it clear to me that I was not supposed to be a single man, I started looking for Scripture that would give me guidance about picking the right woman. I didn’t find a particular verse, but I found verses that gave principles. I prayed and God gave me the woman that I have been married to for 59 years.
      6. **Most Clearly Seen in the Person, Work, and Teaching of His Only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ** – Jesus’ example of praying, his preaching and teaching, inspired his disciples to ask, “Lord, teach us to pray”. When was the last time you were praying and someone came to you and said, “Would you teach me to pray?” These disciples were not people who didn’t pray at all. Jewish men learned to pray as soon as they learned to talk. They were not wanting to start to pray for the first time, but they saw in Jesus that he was praying in a way that they wanted to pray, but didn’t know how to. In response to the disciples’ request, Jesus gave the model prayer. Archbishop Harry Goodhew explains this very well in his book *Green*. I want to bring up a few things the he didn’t discussed:
         1. Read Matthew 6:5-13 & Luke 11:1-4
            1. **Prayer has its greatest power when it is a concord of hearts involved in it, not just one individual -** In the Lord’s Prayer there are 9 personal plural pronouns, such as “we”, “us”, and “our”.
            2. **The Lord’s Prayer is Comprehensive** – Prayer deals with the past, the present, and the future.

“Forgive our sins” – That is looking back to the past. **If we do not come to the Lord with the past cleared up, that past account of sin will block the blessings and the prayers will not be answered.**

“Give us our daily bread” – This deals with the present. **We are asking for physical necessities that are renewed day by day. And God provides for us.**

The Greek word for “daily bread” was used in Greek literature for a soldier’s daily ration of food. So what is Jesus saying here in the Model Prayer? **Those who are in the fight for Christ, actively engaged in spiritual warfare, have a right to ask him for their daily food.** Can you figure out what the other people have a right to?

“Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil” – This is talking about the future. We’re praying proactively. That is a wise thing to do, especially in the matter of temptation and being delivered from the devil.

* + - * 1. **The Lord’s Prayer is Confident** – Each part of the petition has an imperative verb. Greek scholars have struggled with this because if you are talking to the God of the universe, how could you possibly command him to do anything? That is what an imperative verb does.

Imperatives of Entreaty– This is what Greek scholars call these imperative verbs found in the Lord’s Prayer and other prayers in the New Testament. When passion is felt so deep on one’s heart and the fervency is so hot that it sounds like you are telling God what to do, but what you are really doing is claiming His promises.

Confidence is not irreverent or presumptuous. It is boldness, a complete freedom of speech. It is a covenant child, claiming the promises of his Father.

Read Hebrews 4:15-16 – Our sympathetic, empathetic high priest who has endured every testing we could ever endure and came out sinless is the one who is there interceding for us at the Father’s right hand.

* + - * 1. **The Lord’s Prayer is Concise** – Martin Luther said, “Few words and much meaning is Christian prayer, but many words and little meaning is pagan prayer”.

Matthew’s version of the Lord’s Prayer is 57 words. Luke’s version is only 38 words.

Read Ecclesiastes 5:2-3 – Don’t take prayer for granted.

* + - * 1. **The Lord’s Prayer is Combative** – We pray, “Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven”.

**Combat Requires Training -** John Piper said, “You will never know what prayer is for until you learn that life is war”.

Remember war that is described in Revelation 12. **We need to realize that in spiritual warfare, we need training.**

Example: I served with the US Marines in the Korean War. I was a medical corpsman. I will never forget the first 6 dead marines I pulled of the hill Incheon, South Korea. All we young marines, who had little combat training. Some of them fired their weapons over the fantail of the ship for the first as we were going to war.

**Training saves lives. Training in spiritual warfare will help you be victorious.** Christian prayer is a spiritual discipline. You have already talked about spiritual disciplines in this course.

Donald Whitney says, “Spiritual disciplines are God given activities believers are to use in the spirit-filled pursuit of Godliness. When properly used, they bring us into more effective cooperation with Christ and his Kingdom.

Paul told Timothy, “Exercise yourself toward Godliness”. The English word “exercise” comes from the Greek word *gymnasticize*, which in this verse refers to a workout in a spiritual gym.

**Combat Requires Teamwork** – I cannot speak for other military organizations, but I can speak for the US Marine Corps. The fireteam of 4 men is the core of the Marine Corps. A fireteam is a small [military unit](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Military_unit) of [infantry](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Infantry). Fireteams generally consist of 4 or fewer soldiers and are usually grouped. Those little teams do the most effective work. If it weren’t for the functioning of those 4 men, the fireteams all across Korea wouldn’t be here today. We need to realize that spiritual warfare works the same way. You are not to become a spiritual “Rambo”, going out and doing it all yourself. Rambo is a fictional character in a US film series. The term "[Rambo](http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/Rambo)" is used commonly to describe a person who is reckless, disregards orders, using violence to solve all problems, and being exceptionally tough and aggressive. We work with brothers and sisters in Christ.

* + - * 1. **The Lord’s Prayer is Kingdom Focused** – In both Matthew and Luke “your kingdom come” is recorded.That raises the question: What is Kingdom focused prayer? Before we discuss that question, take a few minutes to pause and think about what we have just discussed about Christian prayer.

1. **What is Kingdom Focused prayer?** – Rabbis of Jesus’ day had different views on the Kingdom, but they all agreed on one thing: **Any prayer that makes no mention of the Kingdom is no prayer at all.**
   1. God’s Kingdom is the central theme of both the Old and New Testaments. God’s Kingdom is the central focus of the Lord’s Prayer. **The Lord’s Prayer is the pattern of prayer; therefore, I conclude that all prayer should be Kingdom focused.** 
      1. Kingdom focused prayer is not mere instinctive prayer, which is usually self-serving, man-centered, sentimental, doubtful, a reaction to crisis, and works oriented.
      2. All prayer is not pleasing to God.
      3. All prayer will not accomplish God’s will in this world. – Human beings as fallen sinners have the tendency to pervert anything given by God; prayer is not exempt from that.
   2. **Kingdom focused prayer is Christian prayer with a special focus on advancing God’s Kingdom of grace, preparing for God’s Kingdom of glory, and destroying the kingdom of Satan and sin.** 
      1. Read Matthew 24:14 – The Kingdom of grace is where the Gospel transforms peoples’ lives drawing them to faith in Christ and building them up to be like Christ. One day, that task will be finished and the Kingdom of glory will come.
      2. Read 2 Peter 3:11-12 – Right now, parallel to the Kingdom of grace is the kingdom of Satan. One day he will be cast into the lake of fire that was prepared for him and his angels. You might wonder what I am talking about when I say, “the kingdom of Satan”. It consists of the devil, evil angels, and all fallen humans who do not trust Jesus as Lord. We live in enemy territory.
      3. Read Acts 6:4 - Paul recognized the importance of prayer.
         1. Example: Eagles are of special interest to me. God did make eagles to fly only if both wings work. I’d like to parallel that God also made believers to do His work only when prayer and the ministry of the word are cooperating together. **When the Holy Spirit blends your prayer with His word, God releases His power.** The power you see in the sun every day in nothing compared to the power that transforms a sinner into a saint. Are you flying with both wings: prayer and the ministry of the Word?
         2. In the Greek language, the order of these words is important. It is significant that in Acts the apostles devoted themselves to prayer first, then to the ministry of the Word. The ministry of the Word is not unimportant, but in this sense prayer comes first.

Take a moment to pause and think about what we have discussed thus far.

1. **For whom should I pray?**
   1. **Christians are like special-ops forces** - They drop into enemy territory. One of the most important tasks that special-ops has ispainting specific targets with laser designators, so that power from on high destroys those designated targets.
   2. **4 Battlefields -** Christians should develop the habit of painting strategic targets on 4 battlefields (people within these battlefields) with Kingdom focused prayer. Sometimes the Spirit will lead you to pray for grace. Other times the Spirit will lead you to pray for judgment and destruction.
      1. **You** – This target is key to all the others.
         1. **Your Heart -** The first aspect that you need to be praying about is your own heart.
            1. Read Proverbs 4:23 – Your heart must be given to Christ totally, completely; then you will find that He will guide you as you go through the battles with yourself.
         2. **The Ability to Pray** – When the disciples said, “Lord, teach us to pray” they were praying to improve their prayer life, praying for their ability to pray.
         3. **Leadership** – **Leadership is getting on God’s agenda, helping other to get on God’s agenda, so that together you can do God’s will in this world.** The leadership I’m referring to is not public leadership from the pulpit or another corporation, but I’m talking about the average family, for example, where parents are the leaders. They should work with their children to raise them up in the admonition of the Lord. **All public leadership has its foundation in private leadership.** I suggest that we pray about that.
         4. **3 Enemies –** These will invade your life. If you work on your heart, your ability to pray, and your leadership you will find the flesh, the devil and the world will lead you astray less.
            1. **The Flesh -** Have you ever picked up an apple that was nice and shiny, but when you bit into it you looked down to see half a worm in the apple? That is not a pleasant picture. How did the worm get there? He was always there. He was inside. He didn’t bore a whole into the apple, but he lived in the apple. The worm is a picture of the flesh, the enemy within. The flesh is the first enemy listed because the flesh has to be open to being led astray by the devil and the broken world in order for those enemies to lead you astray at all.
            2. **The Devil**
            3. **The World**
      2. **Your Home**
         1. **Praying for and with your family**
            1. Read Joshua 24:15
            2. I have worked in this field of prayer now for over 15 years. The survey you took earlier I have given to more than 10,000 people. I have found the following to be true:

Husbands and wives agree they should pray together, but they don’t as much as they should.

Husbands and wives agree they should pray for and with their children, but they don’t as much as they should.

Husbands will confess that they don’t pray with their wives as much as they pray with their children.

* + - * 1. Training in prayer and discipleship of the young has to happen in the home and start from the very beginning. This will help you to become an outpost of heaven on earth.
    1. **Your Church –** Think about a school of fish of various colors.
       1. Read Ephesians 6:10-20 – Most people apply the words in this passage to individual believers, but when Archbishop Harry Goodhew started his exposition on the book of Ephesians he said, “This was a letter sent to the churches and it was the church Paul was trying to deal with”. Notice how Paul finishes that chapter in Ephesians.
          1. **One of the most important things a Christian can do is pray for their pastor** - That pastor is the most visible target for the fiery darts of the evil one. And without the prayers of his people, he is too vulnerable; he cannot stand.

Paul was asking for prayer for himself. He was the founder of the church at Ephesus. You might call him the founding pastor. Timothy was probably there at this point.

I’ve done what I call “Armor bearer intercessory ministry”, conferences in churches where we organize the whole congregation to pray for the pastor and the staff.

We live in a day when many pastors have suffered disgracefully. I’m convinced that if we as the flock were interceding for them, as we should, that wouldn’t be happening.

* + - 1. Church is to be involved as a mighty army. It is not just a resting place. It is a place where we become equipped and go out for battle.
    1. **Your Personal World -** Read Matthew 5:13
       1. **Two Circles of Influence**
          1. **Those you influence** – This circle includes your family, your friends, your neighbors, and your associates.
          2. **Those who influence you** – This circle ranges from the president of your country to your elected officials tothe educators and business leaders.
       2. **Everywhere you go, ask God to give you “evangel” eyes** – Eyes that can see unplanned targets of opportunity in every place.
       3. **With the Holy Spirit’s help, a believer’s prayer instinct can be disciplined into a God-centered, Kingdom focused, powerful means of grace that enables believers to be joyful, fruitful workers with Christ in His ministry of intercession.**
          1. Read Romans 8:34 – Believers are seated with Christ in the heavenly realms, so in a positional sense, where are you? **We are called to be coworkers with Christ in his ministry of intercession.** How does that affect you? – I try to keep that in mind whenever I am interceding for others.
          2. Example: When I was a kid, there was a boy who was always waiting around the corner to bully me. One time, I got so tired of it that I asked my big brother to go with me to get rid of him, and my brother did. I picture that when I think about Christ at the right hand of the Father interceding. I ask Him to help me enter into that intercession with Him. This lifts the ministry of prayer to a new level.

1. **What are 3 motivations for prayer?** – As I look back at men whom I admire because of their writings, such as St. Augustine. I tend to pick my heroes from men who are already dead. I do that because when I choose someone who is still alive, I get disappointed when they do things they should not do.
   1. **Devotion** - St. Augustine said, “Devotion should be the primary motivation for prayer. Prayer is the articulation of our love for God. It is the affectionate reaching out of the mind for God. But while the desires of the heart find expression in prayer, our prayers in turn are the breezes, which fan the flame of our love. Prayer is prayer that develops our desire, enlarges our heart until it’s capable for containing God’s gift of Himself. Ask. Seek. Knock. By asking and seeking we grow big enough to receive.”
      1. **Loving God for who he is and what he has done should move us to unending praise**.
   2. **Duty** - John Calvin said, “God’s command and promise is our sole motive for prayer. Nothing could be more precise than what is stated in the Psalm, ‘Call on me in the day of tribulation and I will answer you.’”
      1. **God’s command to pray should spur us to obedience**.
   3. **Desperation** - Martin Luther said, “The best circumstances for prayer are disease, danger, disaster, and death.”
      1. Neither devotion, nor duty is enough to make us people of prayer sometimes. **When devotion and duty are not enough, the awareness of our desperate dependence on the Lord will drive us to our knees.** I have found desperation is a powerful force that shapes my life and moves me to pray. When God is the only one who can help, we tend to really pray.
      2. Read Deuteronomy 32:11 – I don’t know if you are aware of what this verse is describing, but I am a collector of eagles. I have read a lot about eagles. When two eagles come together and decide to set up a house, they build a large nest. That nest is composed mostly of broken tree limbs with jagged ends. The eagles somehow get those limbs to stick together. After they have formed the nest, they bring the skins of small game animals, such as rabbits and foxes, and line the inside of the nest. Then comes time for the mother to lay the eggs. The two eagles watch over those eggs for a while and when the eaglets hatch out, they take turns bringing food to the little ones. The little eagles have no concerns, no worries, their food is brought to them, and it is nice and cozy on those furs. Then the time comes when they are big enough to fly, but they have never flown before. Usually what happens is the mother and father eagles will tear the soft lining out of the nest so that there is nothing but jagged sticks, which poke the little eagles every way they turn. Then one of the parent eagles will get into the nest and the eaglets find that there is one place where the sticks don’t poke them: on the back of that parent eagle. When they get on the back of the parent, they are in for a surprise because the parent steps up to the side of the nest, spreads its wings, catches an updraft, and begins to soar. They will soar higher and higher until all that can be seen from the ground is just a small speck. Then suddenly, the parent turns over and the little eagles fall off, flopping and screaming towards the earth. Just before he hits the earth, the parent will pick the little eaglet on its back and start the process all over again. The parents will continue until the eaglets learn this lesson: Flapping its wings does not make the eagle fly; it’s the soaring. When the eagle spreads its wings and catches the wind, it will fly. **My motivation for prayer is that when I do it, I find of the Spirit comes under my wings and bears me.**
      3. There is an allegory about birds when they were first created: God made the wings separate and all the birds had to stand in a line and let the Father put their wings on them. All of them looked with anticipation at those big wings and thought, ‘They must be heavy’. When one little bird arrived to get his wings, he found the wings were not heavy at all; those wings carried him. He could fly. That is what prayer does for us.
      4. **The problem is most people make no significant change without coming to a place of intolerable dissatisfaction.** – You come to a point when you would rather be dead than stay the way you are.
         1. God brought me to that place 15 years ago. I looked back over my life and I had seen God do some amazing things. I was grateful for all of that, but there was an internal dissatisfaction, an emptiness that I could not bear. I had prayed before but I had never become a man of prayer. I found Psalm 109:5 where the psalmist talks about the wicked coming after him seeking with all their might to destroy him. His response translated from Hebrew is “I prayer”. There is no verb. The thrust of it is that David is saying, ‘I become prayer. Not that I become one who practices prayer, but I become prayer incarnate.’ As I spent time in the presence of the Lord, dealing with this intolerable dissatisfaction, I came to the conclusion that the only way it would ever be satisfied would be communing with Christ with such intimacy by prayer that when I come to the day of death, I will change my location from earth to heaven, but I won’t change my primary companion.
         2. I pray that as you come to your place of intolerable dissatisfaction, something like that would happen too.
2. **When should I pray?**
   1. **Pray Without Ceasing**
      1. John Calvin said, “We should ever aspire to God with prayer without ceasing, but our weakness is such that it has to be supported by many aids, and our sluggishness is such that it needs to be goaded. Therefore, each of us should set aside certain hours with this exercise. These designated hours should not pass without prayer. During those hours, all the devotion of the heart should be completely engaged in prayer.”
         1. **These designated hours are:** 
            1. When you get up in the morning – When you wake up in the morning, greet the Lord. Get on your knees and talk to him.
            2. When you go to bed at night – Before you get in bed, get on your knees and talk to the Lord.
            3. Around each meal – “Any person who does not thank God for his food is no better than a thief.” Around the breakfast table, at lunch, and dinner thank God for his food.
         2. When these designated hours are observed and you continue the process of training yourself, you will find that your prayer as an unending activity during the day will be much more meaningful and much more fruitful.
         3. These become reminders of times when we should pray. They are very important.
         4. These designated hours must not become superstitious, or legalistic observances. Do not think of yourself as “paid up” for the remaining hours of the day.
   2. **We are being trained for our weakness, which should be thus exercised and repeatedly stimulated.**

Now take some time to think about what we have discussed so far.

1. **How should I pray?** 
   1. **Pray to God, don’t try to impress people.**
   2. **Prayer must never be lifeless lip service.**
   3. **Prayer should usually be audible** – Praying aloud will help you focus your thoughts.
      1. Most of the prayers in Scripture are audible.
   4. **Prayer can be spontaneous and prepared carefully** – Some people think that spontaneous prayer is the only legitimate prayer because as the Spirit moves on your heart, you can really pray. If that is the case, we should not pray the Lord’s prayer. The Lord gave it to us. It is prepared. There are numerous situations where prepared prayers are better.
      1. **The book of Job** – When his contention with God was at its height, he said he was going to prepare his prayer like a legal brief. He was going to prepare his prayer and argue his situation and win his position with God. He prepared that prayer and God did not condemn him for it.
   5. **Prayer should be fervent; it has fire** – It is always in proportion to the depth of felt need that my fervor fires up.
   6. **Martin Luther’s Method of Prayer** – “A simple way to pray”
      1. **Recite the “Lay Bible”** - Luther believed that every Christian should either read the following aloud or recite it. If you do this the number of times Luther recommends, you will be doing it 5 times each day. In so doing, you will memorize it without trying.
         1. The 10 Commandments - reveals to man his great need and his inability to save himself
            1. This is the Law. The Law doesn’t save us, but it points us to Christ.
            2. We live in a time when this should be written on the hearts of every Christian.
         2. The Apostles Creed - provides the Gospel remedy
            1. This is a problem for some people. I have heard many people say, ‘We have no creed, but Christ, no creed but the Bible; we don’t need extra creeds.’
            2. If you look at the Apostles Creed and study its history, we don’t know exactly when it began or who composed it. We do know it was composed over a period of time.
            3. In my opinion I think the Apostles Creed is one of the most succinct, comprehensive statements of the Gospel I have ever seen. I did a survey with church history professors, asking them, “Is it possible that the Apostles Creed was one of the first Gospel outlines that was used to share Christ with people?” It is easier for me to picture people standing and talking to their neighbors by reciting the Apostles Creed.
            4. If you can take a little less than 100 words and summarize Christianity as well as the Apostles Creed does, then use that.
         3. The Lord’s Prayer - shows us how to secure the remedy.
            1. Luther said, “These are the most necessary parts, which one should first learn to repeat word for word and which our children should be accustomed to recite daily when they arise in the morning, when they sit down to their meals, and when they retire at night. And until they repeat them, they should be given neither food nor drink.”
            2. You may think that is harsh and rigid, but I think what Luther is saying that man should not live on bread alone but one every word that comes from the mouth of God. This was his way of trying to get parents to ingrain in their children: nothing is more important than the word of God, especially this summary, this “Lay Bible”, which is the core of Scripture.
            3. Luther said, “Everything that we have in Scripture here is comprehended in short, plain, simple terms.” Luther called believers to return from the prayer of that day, which were filled with works based righteousness and errors to a simple, Christian prayer.
            4. By his example in prayer, by his preaching, teaching, and writing Luther equipped pastors to equip parents to equip their children to pray. Luther’s method was a simple one.
      2. **Focus Using the ITCP Process** – Focus on each commandment, article, and petition from the “Lay Bible”.
         1. **I = Instruction from the Spirit**
            1. Read John 16:13
         2. **T = Thanks for the instruction given by the Spirit**
            1. Give thanks always
         3. **C = Confess your sin wherever you fall short of this instruction**
            1. Read 1 John 1:9
         4. **P = Prayer for others and yourself in light of the Spirit’s instruction of what you have just read.**
            1. Read Matthew 6:33
            2. Read 1 Timothy 2:1
            3. Luther applied this ITCP Process, not only to the “Lay Bible”, but also to all Scripture, especially to Psalms and his catecism. He prayed doctrine and devotion in his heart.
            4. **Martin Luther’s 2 Warnings:**

“Don’t take on too much that you become weary in spirit. It is enough to take on one section or even half a section of Scripture, which kindles a fire in your heart.”

“If in the midst of such thoughts the Holy Sprit begins to preach in your heart with rich, enlightening thoughts, honor Him by letting go of this written scheme. Be still and listen to Him, who can do better than you can.”

We finished the 8 Questions. Reflect back on what has been said on how to pray.

**Conclusion**

As we conclude this session, I hope the answers to these 8 Questions will help you understand praying with Kingdom focus. As you pray with Kingdom focus, may God reveal to you the great things he planned long ago for you to do. May you find your “peanut”. I end where I started with an exhortation: Pray, or become prey.

**Assignments**

A. Certificate of Ministry Track:

1. Complete the Prayer Survey
2. Make a List: Who is God telling you to pray for?
3. Read “Winning Life’s Battles”
4. Read “A Simple Way to Pray”

B. Accredited

1. “A Simple Way to Pray - Participants Guide” – 42 daily exercises
2. “A Simple Way to Pray - Facilitators Guide”
3. Start a small group discussion based on “A Simple Way to Pray”