

# **GROWING IN PRAYER**

**LEARNING TO PRAY WITH  
DEPENDENCE AND DELIGHT**

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## APPENDIX 2: BIBLE STUDIES

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## —| STUDY 1 |—

# “OUR FATHER IN HEAVEN”

1. When it comes to prayer, what are your biggest struggles or difficulties? Write down your own main difficulties and share these in your group.
2. Read or listen to John 1:12-13. If you are a Christian, what is your relationship to God?
3. What do you need to do to have that relationship?

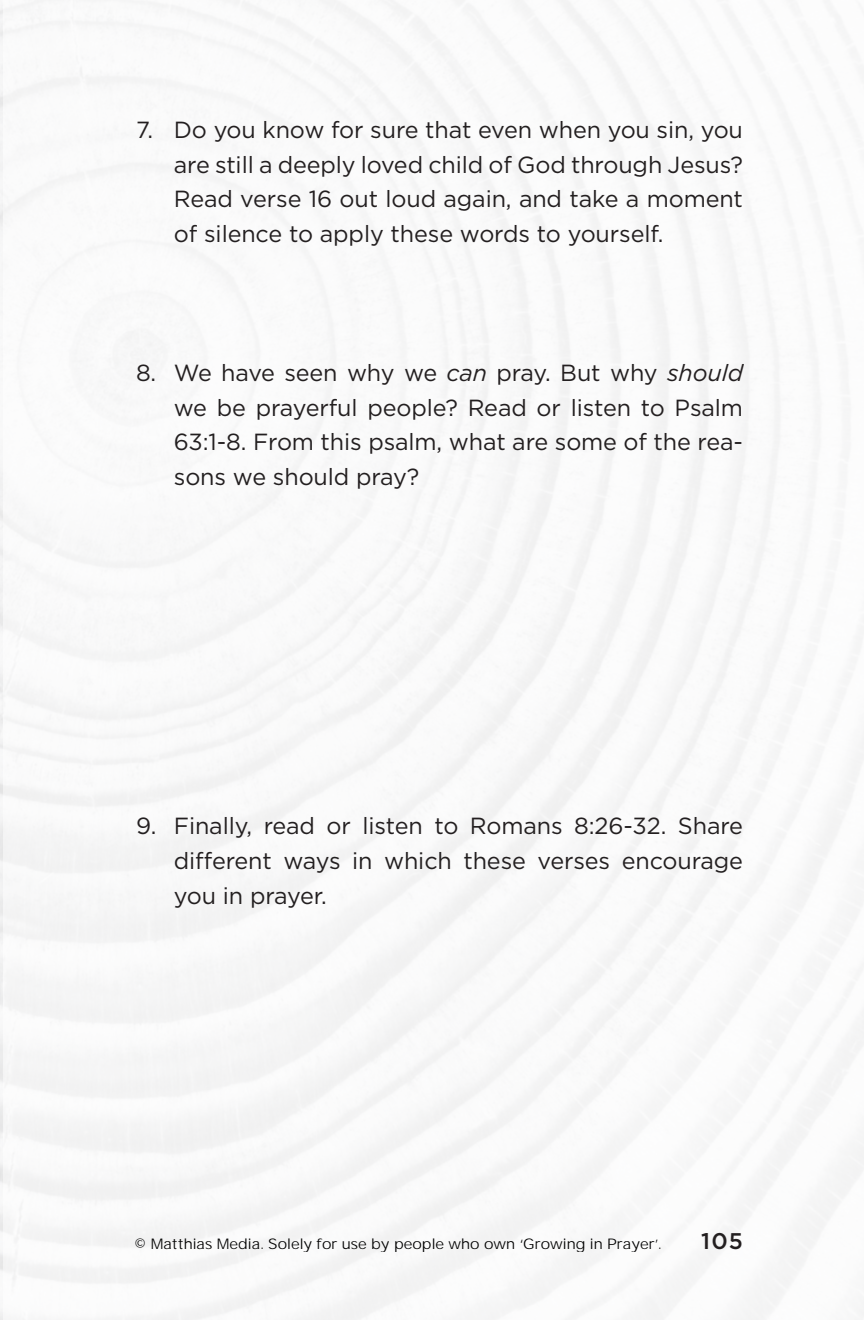
4. Do you ever feel that you can't pray because you are too sinful and unworthy of God? If so, how can the following verses help you?

- Hebrews 7:23-26

- 1 John 3:1

5. Read or listen to Romans 8:14-17. What gift has every Christian received?

6. What can we do because we have received the Spirit (v. 15)?

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7. Do you know for sure that even when you sin, you are still a deeply loved child of God through Jesus? Read verse 16 out loud again, and take a moment of silence to apply these words to yourself.
  
  8. We have seen why we *can* pray. But why *should* we be prayerful people? Read or listen to Psalm 63:1-8. From this psalm, what are some of the reasons we should pray?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  9. Finally, read or listen to Romans 8:26-32. Share different ways in which these verses encourage you in prayer.

In the weeks to come, we will focus on *what* things to talk to God about. But for now, reflect on the amazing privilege of being God's child through Jesus, and on how that encourages you to pray.

Finish with a time of prayer. Here are some things you may like to talk to God about:

- » Thank him that we can come to him as our Father.
- » Thank him for the sacrifice of Jesus for us, and for the gift of his Spirit.
- » Tell him about one of your struggles with prayer, and ask him to help you.

### **Note on praying in a group**

Some Christians find it difficult to pray aloud in a group. Your group may like to start with a few minutes of silent prayer, so that each person can talk to God privately.

It is good if everyone can get up the courage to pray out loud. However, it helps if we all keep our prayers short, simple and honest. The worst thing to do when praying out loud is try to sound impressive or worry about what other people think! You can just tell your heavenly Father one thing that is on your heart, in a few words.



## — | STUDY 2 | —

# DEPENDING ON GOD

There are two basic aspects of our relationship with God that should shape our prayer life: we were made to *delight in God* and to *depend on God*. Prayer is, in essence, learning to depend on God and delight in God as we speak to him. In this study, we are going to think about depending on God in different areas of life.

1. Think about your last week. What particular things did you worry or stress about? What did you do about your worry?





Although we can and should talk freely to God about anything at all, there are some things that are *more important* to ask God for than others. We will look at two short passages to help us think about our priorities in depending on God.

Read or listen to Psalm 32:1-5.

6. Can you relate to what David says in verses 3-4 about hiding and not confessing sin? (You may not want to share details in a group, which is fine!)
  
7. What is the promise if we confess our sin to God? (See 1 John 1:9-10.)
  
8. Is honesty with God a regular part of your life? How much do you depend on him for forgiveness?

It is helpful to see what Paul asks God for when he prays for other Christians.

Read or listen to Colossians 1:9-12.

9. Summarize in one or two words the main thing Paul asks for in each verse:

- verse 9
  
- verse 10
  
- verse 11
  
- verse 12

10. In verse 9, what do you think it means to know God's will and have the Spirit's wisdom? How can you grow in this? (Hint: the result of knowing God's will is everything Paul says in verses 10-12.)

When you look at the list of spiritual "fruit" in verses 9-12, you will probably feel weak in some or maybe all of them. Of course you do! We are *all* weak, but God invites us to ask him for help and learn to depend on him.

11. Choose two things from the list that you especially need God's help with at the moment. Share with the group why you chose them.

- Wisdom and knowing God's will (v. 9)
- Pleasing God in the way that you live, bearing fruit in good works (v. 10)
- Growing to know God better (v. 10)
- Patiently persevering in faith when it's hard (v. 11)
- Being joyful and thankful to God (v. 12)

To finish, spend some time depending on God. Again, if you're in a group, you may choose to have a few moments of silence first so that each person can pray quietly to God.

When you pray aloud, your words should be simple and from the heart, but try to reflect the words and thoughts we have read from Scripture.





## — | STUDY 3 | —

# DELIGHTING IN GOD

In study 2 we looked at what the Bible says about depending on God. In this study, we will focus on delighting in God, using Psalm 145 to guide us. This will also help us to learn how to do two things: (1) use the words of Scripture to inform and inspire our prayers, and (2) relate the prayers of the Old Testament to Jesus.

For this study, you will read through Psalm 145 twice out loud. Remember that one purpose of prayer is to grow in your love and enjoyment of God himself. So as you read or listen to the psalm, don't just think about answering the questions. Focus on God himself—on his character, his glory and what he has done. Direct your thoughts to him, and talk to him quietly as well as to the group.



1. Read Psalm 145 one section at a time, and for each section answer the questions below.

Verses	What sort of prayer or speech about God is this? (E.g. thanks, praise, description.)	Write down anything David (the writer of this psalm) says about (a) what God is like—his character—or (b) what he does or has done.
1-2		
3-7		
8-9		

10-13a		
13b-14		
15-16		
17-20		
21		

2. Read it through again, thinking about how knowing Jesus enriches our appreciation of the psalm. With each section, think about whether those words apply especially to Jesus, or whether they describe something that God has done for us through Jesus. The New Testament passages listed may give you ideas for how the psalm can point us to Jesus—or you might be able to think of other relevant verses or ideas.

Verses	Applying them to Jesus or to what God has done through Jesus
1-2	Revelation 5:13 [Example: We will all praise Jesus together with his Father forever.]
3-7	Ephesians 1:19-20

8-9	Romans 5:8
10-13a	Revelation 11:15
13b-14	Philippians 2:8
15-16	Luke 12:29-32

17-20	Romans 10:9, 13
21	Revelation 5:13 again!

3. Share ideas on how you can make delighting in God a constant part of your life, either in your regular 'quiet times' or throughout the day.



To finish, spend some time delighting in God. Again, if you're in a group, you may choose to have a few moments of silence first so that each person can pray quietly to God before praying out loud together.

When you pray aloud, your words should be simple and from the heart, but try to reflect the words and thoughts we have read from Scripture.



## — | STUDY 4 | —

# PRAYING FOR OTHERS

1. When you pray for other people, are you normally expecting it to make any difference? Share if you have prayed for someone and God has acted in response to your prayer.

In this study, we will begin by thinking about **how we pray for other believers.**



Before we go on, look at the person sitting on your left if you're in a group. If you're doing this on your own, think of someone you sat next to at church on a recent Sunday. Take a moment to pray silently and thank God for how he has worked in their life—whether they're a mature Christian or a baby believer (or even a not-yet-believer!).

Read or listen to Philippians 1:9-11.

5. Think about the things you usually pray for each other in your Bible study group. How much do they reflect Paul's priorities when he prays for other believers? (Think of what we looked at in study 2 as well.) Write down and/or discuss how you can be more gospel-focused in your prayer times for each other.

Let's now look at some passages relating to **how we pray for the world.**



Read or listen to Romans 10:12-15.

6. From this, what is the *most* important thing we can pray for our society and for the world?

7. Does your heart share Paul's grief and concern for people who have not called on Jesus and are heading for destruction? Pray silently about this.

Read or listen to Ephesians 6:10-13.

8. When we pray for our society, what should we remember is going on behind the scenes? How should that affect the way you pray?

Read or listen to Ephesians 6:18-20.

9. What do verses 19-20 teach us about Paul as an evangelist? Do you find that encouraging? (Hint: What word does he repeat?)

Read or listen to 1 Peter 3:13-16.

10. Do you feel “prepared to give an answer” to everyone who asks you about your hope in Jesus? If not, what is the first step?

To finish, spend time praying as a group for our community and our world. Here are some things you may like to talk to God about:

- » Missionaries who you or your church support
- » That the gospel would reach all peoples and nations
- » The people and groups in your own community who are far from Jesus
- » Being prepared to answer others and speak about our hope in Jesus

When you pray aloud, your words should be simple and from the heart, but try to reflect the words and thoughts we have seen from Scripture.

### **Feedback on this resource**

We really appreciate getting feedback about our resources—not just suggestions for how to improve them, but also positive feedback and ways they can be used. We especially love to hear that the resources may have helped someone in their Christian growth.

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