

Christian Spiritual Disciplines



A man may study because his brain is hungry for knowledge, even Bible knowledge. But he prays because his soul is hungry for God

Leonard Ravenhill (British Evangelist 1907-1994)

The Genesis of Prayer

When Seth grew up, he had a son and named him Enosh. At that time people first began to worship the LORD by name. NLT Genesis 4:26

And to Seth, to him also a son was born; and he called his name Enosh. Then *men* began to call upon the name of the LORD. NAS Genesis 4:26

Seth also had a son, and he named him Enosh. At that time people began to call on the name of the LORD. NIV Genesis 4:26

- a. The Hebrew verb translated in these verses as *worship/call* out is the first indication of humanity's reaching out to God for communion. From Genesis 2 to the end of 4, there has been a progression of the relationship between God and those made in His image. It moves from intimacy to distant, thereby creating the need for the faithful to communicate through prayer.

The Genesis of Prayer

- b. The phrase *call upon the Name of the Lord* denotes prayer and sacrifice in the Book of Genesis (see 12:8; 13:4; 21:33; 26:25).
- c. The placement of this passage in Genesis reminds us of three critical truths:
 - 1. Sin - The relationship with God is broken
 - 2. Darkness – We now live in a fallen world
 - 3. Hope – God as the only redeemer and restorer



Dynamics of Prayer

- a. It can be taught and learned (Luke 11:1)
- b. It's as much a relational tool as it is a communication tool (Matt 6:5-15)
- c. It breeds humility in an age of entitlement (2 Chron. 7:14)
Am I building a monument to myself or an altar to God?
- d. It helps to gauge our focus, our priorities, and our motivation (Matt 6:9-13)
- e. Is assisted by the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:26-31; 1 Cor 2:10-11)
- f. There is no real prescription as it relates to the how, when, or where of prayer.
- g. Prayers are rarely answered in the way we expect them to be.
- h. Prayer, in its essence, is releasing control and giving it to God.

Model Prayers

- a. Solomon (1 Kings 8:23-53)
- b. Jehoshaphat (2 Chron 5-12)
- c. Nehemiah (Neh 1:5-11)
- d. Hezekiah (Isa 37:14-20)
- e. Daniel (Dan 9:4-19)
- f. Habakkuk (Hab 3:1-19)
- g. Jesus (Matt 6:9-13; Luke 11:2-4)
- h. Paul (Eph 1:16-23; 3:14-21)

The Tensions of Prayer

- a. Why pray?
- b. Can he versus will he?
- c. Being specific?
- d. Releasing the results to God? We do not control the outcome of our prayers, only their shape
- e. Praying without ceasing?
- f. The spiritual warfare dimension?
- g. Miracles and healing?
- h. Personal versus Kingdom?

Ultimate Result of Praying

6 Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done.

7 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. (Phi 4:6-7 NLT)

The LORD hears his people when they call to him for help. He rescues them from all their troubles. Psalm 34:17 (NLT)