

Maple Springs Baptist Church

Series: Life Hacks for Tough Times & Rough Relationships

Week 8: Prayer

The book of James addresses many different subjects, but if you put the topics together, they relate to prayer. Many people lack excitement when it comes to prayer or feel guilty for not praying enough. Some are not sure that God exists, and others cannot see God for who He is because of their earthly father's behavior.

All through the Bible we see people praying. Jesus drew apart from his disciples to talk to the Father and the disciples eagerly asked Him to teach them about prayer. They surely heard Jesus talking intimately with the Father, praying unlike anyone else they had ever heard before. Jesus had a need and a passion for conversation with God.

It's hard to pray if we do not understand that God is a perfect Father who is present with us and wants to spend time with us. Jesus said, "Pray like this: Our Father, who art in heaven..." In other words, your prayer life is deeply connected to who you believe God is. Louis Giglio says that God is not a reflection of your earthly father. He's the perfection of all that we long for in a Dad. He is never too busy and never has mood swings. (**James 1:17**)

One Thing To Know: **Prayer is keeping company with God.**

2 Things to DO:

Talk with God Every Day because He Enjoys your company. God enjoys your company. You don't bore Him. You're not a bother to Him. God enjoys your company. He desires your company. When we know the Father approves of us, and we know the Father loves us, we know the Father blesses us, it brings joy to our hearts. We weren't made to live without the Father's approval. You have a perfect heavenly Father, and He approves of you not because of what you've done, but because of what Christ has done for you on the cross. That's where your righteousness comes from. And the Father loves you as He loves Son, which means this: there is nobody that God loves more than you.

Talk with God about Everything, because He Cares about You. Martin Lloyd Jones wrote, "It is not in His character to be unconcerned for you. The One who paid the greatest price for you cares for every little detail of your life." Let me whittle that down into a sentence. If it matters to you, it matters to God.

Everything that matters to you matters to God. There is no detail that is too small. I'm not saying that it matters to God as much as it matters to you. It matters to you. It matters to God. But listen, if you'll trust God with the things that matter to you, He'll trust you with the things that matter to Him.

In prayer you get perspective in life. Prayer can change our perspective on our circumstances, and we look less at ourselves and more to God. Life is less like a roller coaster and more like a railroad track—good and bad things are happening in our lives at the same time. When we pray in bad circumstances, God changes our perspective to be hopeful. As we pray in good circumstances, we become more humble. If we fail to pray under bad circumstances, it makes us have self-pity. And failure to pray in good times makes us prideful & selfish. Prayer helps us focus on God, not on the good or bad. You can focus on your problems, or you can focus on your pleasures. But the way to find your purpose is to focus on God in prayer.

Three Life Hacks: **James 5:13-18**

1. **Power Down to Power Up**— (Verse 13) It can be helpful to write out your prayers, and it is important to create a time and a place for praying. Start with 10 things you are thankful for. The length of the prayer is less important than the act of the praying itself. Don't forget to listen; learn to know God's voice. At night, pray with your spouse before you go to sleep. If this is a new thing, don't take shame for what you haven't done, just begin to do it.
2. **Get the Right Focus** (Invite In) — (verses 14, 15) If you are sick, ask for godly people to pray for you. Having them around can bring a sense of God's presence. It takes courage to ask for help. ... Job 42:10 says that when Job prayed for his friends, his life situation turned. Often in the process of enduring, our focus is wholly self-centered. We fixate on our needs, our problems, our prayers, our wants. Sometimes the best thing to do is to shift your attention off yourself and fix it on someone else. You have needs in your own life, but when you focus on the needs of others, everything changes. What you keep in your own hands shrinks, but what you put in God's hand multiplies.
3. **Connect to the Right Power Supply**— (verse 16) The Right Energy source for a believer is the Holy Spirit. The first church understood it. Acts 1:8. The Holy Spirit gave the first church meaning by empowering them to fulfill God's purpose. It is impossible to function without the Holy Spirit's power. When Paul and Silas sang in prison, doors were opened, chains were loosened, and prisoners were set free. Plug into the Power Source. The power of the Holy Spirit is available to you, but you must be plugged in.

Prayer is like learning chess—it takes time. In chess, if you lose the king, you lose the game. In a famous painting called "Checkmate." Whatever occurrence happens in our life, The King always has one more move. There is always hope! He reveals these things to us in prayer, and He deeply enjoys our time.