

Intercessory Prayer Training



Intimacy With God



Twelve Biblical Steps to Intercession

This is a training course in intercessory prayer. It is a prayer strategy based on 12 Biblical Steps of Intercession. This intercessory prayer time is to be divided into two parts: INTIMACY and then INTERCESSION.

12 Step Prayer Guide

INTIMACY

Focus on God

1. Be Still
2. Be Thankful
3. Be Worshipful

Focus on You

4. Confession
5. Clothe Self in Armor
6. Cast your care

INTERCESSION

Focus on Others

7. Pray for Souls
8. Pray for Saints
9. Pray for Sickness

Focus on the World

10. Pray for Minister
11. Pray for Missionaries
12. Pray for Magistrates

INTIMACY WITH GOD

It begins with your relationship to God in “INTIMACY.” Daniel says, “*They who know their God will be strong and do exploits.*” (Daniel 11:32b) Daniel knew God because he spent many disciplined hours alone with him.

This intimacy begins with the simple discipline of “being still” and grows from there. We start with learning to be quiet in God’s presence and so, to hear His whispers. It is about intimacy, not getting things from God. It is about relationship, not about telling God all the world’s needs. Begin small by learning the first step. It will take you awhile. It took me a good year to learn to be still. I still struggle with it. We are not used to being still or listening to God’s whisper. It takes time. It takes patience, but you can learn it.

Begin with one step, the first step. Learn it well until you can discipline yourself to spend three minutes on it without distraction. A three-minute egg timer will become your best friend as you seek to discipline your mind and heart in prayer.

It is extremely important to spend adequate time in preparation for intercession since that is the discipline most often neglected or missing altogether in our times of intercession. It is important because God says it is.



Step 1 – BE STILL

Without a doubt the most difficult step in intercessory prayer is this one – keep silence, be still. Learn this step and you will transform your prayer life. Remember, your mind is like an undisciplined child running constantly and refusing to be dominated. It wants its own way. It is like a wild stallion that does not want to be tamed, bridled or ruled. It wanders wherever it wishes. It clamors for its own way. It speeds ahead to its own agenda. It refuses to be brought under control. But God says it must be bridled. Peter urges us to “*gird up the loins of your mind.*” (1 Peter 1:13) Paul says, “*Bring every thought into the captivity of Christ.*” (2 Corinthians 10:5)

A Secret

There is a secret that God reveals to his servants that is hidden from all other men. It is the secret of his presence. He delights to walk and talk with us but he will only do so in the “*Secret place of the Most High.*” Therefore David exalts the mystery of that secret retreat with God alone where God shadows over his own with his protective presence. Jesus said that the secret place for believers is the “*closet of prayer*” in Matthew 6:6. The Greek word translated in KJV is “*tameion*” which means a closet, secret or inner chamber, or a storehouse – thus “a closet.” He is very specific about it. “When you have entered into your “*tameion*” (secret chamber), shut the door...and pray in secret!” God longs to have that romantic secret chamber of interlude with each of us.

A Command (not a suggestion)

God has given his people express commands governing the turbulence of their own hearts and the peace that he offers and expects. None stands out so markedly as Isaiah 30:15 “*In quietness and confidence will be your strength and you would not...*” It declares that the Lord's purpose is for his people to return to Him to find quietness and confidence before Him. The indictment was that his people “WOULD NOT,” therefore they had no peace.

- Psalm 4:4 “*Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still.*”
- Psalm 46:10 “*Be still and know that I am thy God...*”
- Isaiah 30:15 “*In quietness and confidence will be your strength and you would not...*”
- Isaiah 32:17 “*The effect of righteousness is quietness and assurance forever.*”
- Isaiah 41:1 “*Keep silence before me, O islands; and let the people renew their strength: let them come near; then let them speak: let us come near together to judgment.*”
- I Kings 19:12 “*After the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice.*”
- Ecclesiastes 3:7 “*A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;*”
- Habakkuk 2:20 “*But the LORD is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him.*”
- Mark 4:39 “*And he arose and rebuked the wind and said unto the sea, Peace be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.*”
- Revelation 8:1 “*And there was silence in heaven for about the space of a half hour.*”

It is the mandate of God that we still ourselves before him in order to find his peace and hear his voice. So thus we have as the first and most important step in the believer's prayer life to still ourselves before the Lord.



Priority – “I set the Lord always before me...”

What is first in your life? David testified that he always, meaning every day, “*set the Lord before me.*” (Psalm 16:8) The word used here is the same used in Exodus 20:3 for the command “*to have (to place) no other Gods before Him.*” God is a jealous God and will not share his glory with another. (Exodus 34:14) There is room for only one on the Throne of Omnipotence. Either God, the Lord, is first and supreme and before all others or someone (maybe you?), or something else is first (your agenda, day-timer?) and on the throne. Jesus indicates the same priority theme in Matthew 6:33 when he commands that we “Seek first the kingdom of God and everything else will fall in place.”

Listen – Hear His Voice

We live in a busy, noisy, tumultuous society. There is noise and constant demands for our attention every waking hour. There may not be any quiet Judean hillsides for us to retreat to daily for prayer. Therefore we must find an inner solitude in the Lord's presence. Elijah, the mighty prevailing intercessor, learned this lesson when in weariness of the battle he fled into the wilderness. God sent first the wind and storm, then the earthquake and finally the fire. But God was not in them. After this there was “*a still small voice.*” God was found, not in the spectacular, but in the stillness.

Quiet Rest

Rest is important to God. The tireless Creator rested the seventh day from all his work. He commands us to do the same on the Lord's Day. He enforced the year of Jubilee for the land to rest. So too, he wants us to rest in Him. Get this message from Isaiah 40. “*The Creator of the ends of the earth, does not faint, neither is He weary...*” But they that wait on the Lord will renew their strength. God doesn't need to rest, we do!

Isaiah 40:28-31

Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, *that* the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? *there is* no searching of his understanding. 29 He giveth power to the faint; and to *them that have* no might he increaseth strength. 30 Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: 31 But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew *their* strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; *and* they shall walk, and not faint.

Wait on the Lord

In the age of cell phones, microwaves, satellite TVs, high speed computers, and nano-second processing, we don't like to wait. But waiting on God is an important biblical principle. Most of us are in a constant frenetic hurry. We don't like to wait. We don't have time to wait. Waiting is a waste of time. So we don't wait and we miss God's train of blessing. Waiting is part of the blessing of prayer. It requires that we put aside the rush of life and sit still and just wait. The point of prayer is not getting stuff from God. The point of prayer is getting God! Take skiing for example. The thrill of skiing is not in the arrival at the bottom of the hill, but in the joy of getting there – so it is with seeking God. The delight of prayer is not getting the answers, but being in the presence of the One who freely gives us all things.

- Psalms 27:14 Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the LORD.
- Psalms 37:7 Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him.
- Isaiah 30:18 And therefore will the LORD wait, that he may be gracious unto you, and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you: for the LORD *is* a God of judgment: blessed *are* all they that wait for him.

One Desire – To Behold His Beauty

David again is a wonderful example of one who learned about the secret place of stillness before God. He declares, “*One thing I have desired of the Lord, that will I seek after.*” What is that one thing that consumed his desire? It was to behold the beauty of the Lord, then secondly to inquire in his temple. Beholding God’s beauty begins in the quiet place of stillness. Then it blossoms into worship, the second step of our intercessory prayer strategy. One desire... what is yours?

Songs of Quietness:

- There is a Quiet Place: There is a quiet place, far from the noise and pace, where God can soothe the troubled heart. Sheltered by tree and flower, and in that quiet hour, we find a new, new day.
- In the Garden: I come to the garden alone, while the dew is still on the roses, and the voice I hear falling on my ear, the Son of God discloses. And he walks with me and he talks with me. And he tells me I am his own. And the joy we share as we tarry there, none other has ever known.
- Be Still My Soul: Be still my soul, the Lord is on thy side. Bear patiently thy cross of grief or pain. Leave to thy God to order and provide. In every change he faithful will remain.

Try singing these songs quietly, even mentally, to help quiet your heart and mind.

On no other step is it more important to begin and continue to use the 3-minute timer. It is the only way I know of to make myself be still before the throne.



The secret is in the discipline of laying aside everything else until your heart, mind and spirit are quiet before God. God says, “Be still!” The choice to obey him or not is up to you. Obedience begins here.

Even Heaven requires silence

*Revelation 8:1 And when he had opened the seventh seal,
there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.*

As you attempt to train yourself in these prayer disciplines remember that learning new habits takes time. Don't try to apply all of the steps at the same time. May I suggest that you discipline yourself in this step of silence only for at least 4 weeks, 10 minutes per day before going on to the next step.

Practical Disciplines

1. Enter into your secret chamber, your closet. Find a quiet undisturbed place. Once you are alone before God "*Shut the door.*" Block out all distractions but God Himself.
2. Kneel or lay prostrate in the Lord's presence. (Only under real medical prohibition should you do otherwise. Kneeling or prostrate are worship positions.) You need not be uncomfortable but neither should you be lazy in prayer. Philippians 2:10-11 "*every knee shall bow...confessing Jesus as Lord.*"
3. Make your mind a sanctuary. Make your mind stop its commotion and noise! Listen to the din of confused voices reminding you of duties, tasks and obligations. Then silence them! Your mind is not a noisy playground. It is a sanctuary. Your mind is yours. Make it obey you.
4. Slow down! Remember "relax" is the word for "be still" in Hebrew. Consciously loosen the tension of every muscle. It won't come naturally so work at learning to be quiet! 1 Thessalonians 4:11 "*Study (force yourself) to be quiet.*"
5. Set apart a significant amount of time to learn this slowing down process. Give yourself time to slow down. You cannot stop a train on a dime. It takes time to slow down to a stop. You cannot get still in 10 seconds and often it takes more than a 3-minute timer. 10 minutes is a good target, but it might not be long enough. Give God some room to work in you.
6. Fix your eyes on Jesus - behold the beauty of the Lord. Like the angels in heaven and all creatures before the throne present yourself to God in stillness. Imagine yourself prostrate at his feet before his throne.
7. Take a few deep breaths. At first take long slow deep breaths. Hold it a few seconds. Let it out slowly. Control it! You'll be amazed at how it begins to quiet your body, which in turn affects thoughts too. Remember, if you cannot control your body, you cannot expect to control your spirit either. 1 Corinthians 9:27 "*...I keep my body under, and bring it into subjection...*"
8. Refuse to go on to the next step until the body and mind have obeyed you. If they are not subject to your will, neither will be the rest of your thoughts in prayer. If you cannot bring your own body and mind into subjection how will you wrestle with spiritual forces and win? Proverbs 24:10 "*If you faint in the day of adversity, your strength is small.*"

*And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea,
Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. – Mark 4:39*

Step 2 – Worship

“The Father seeks such to worship him.”

“But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeks such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.” – John 4:23-24

To worship God is to seek his face, that is, to see the Lord in his beauty by meditating on Him and extolling (proclaiming) his worth. Isaiah saw the Lord high and lifted up and was forever changed (Is. 6:1-8). Jesus said that the Father is seeking worshippers who will worship him in spirit and in truth. God desires for us to seek after him in steadfast worship beholding his beauty.

- *The fear (reverence and awe) of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.* – Proverbs 9:10
 - *And the people that do know their God shall be strong and do exploits.* – Daniel 11:32
 - *Delight yourself also in the Lord; and He shall give you the desires of your heart.* – Psalm 37:4
 - *One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His temple.* – Psalm 27:4
 - *But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that you should show forth the praises of him who has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light: – 1 Peter 2:9*
 - *But you are holy, O thou that inhabits the praises of Israel.* – Psalms 22:3
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Behold His Beauty

The worship part of intercession is to behold the beauty of the Lord. That means to take time to muse, meditate, and focus on who God is in all His splendor and glory, until the truth of His greatness fills us with awe, adoration, love. True worship is to quietly, deliberately look into the kaleidoscope of God's character, and then stand in awe of His matchless beauty. Remember that Isaiah saw the Lord high and lifted up and was never the same. This was not a worship service in the Temple or Synagogue. It was private worship, “on-your-face-before-a-living-God” worship. It stirred the heart and cleansed the soul. David said his one overriding supreme desire was this. One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in his temple. – Psalms 27:4

In Spirit and In Truth

Jesus authenticated private worship experience when he clarified for the woman at the well in Samaria that worship had nothing to do with temples made with hands. (John 4:23-24) Solomon too revealed that when at the dedication of the Great Temple in Jerusalem he confessed... “*But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded?*” (I Kings 8:27 and Stephen quotes him in Acts 7:48 “*Howbeit the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet.*”)

Confined Worship

Too often we Christians make the mistake of confining our worship to the house of God. Worship is personal adoration expressed directly to God himself. It has little to do with formal services, and music. It has everything to do with loving God with all one's heart, mind, soul, strength and expressing that love emotionally and verbally. Jesus said, "*The Father seeks such to worship him.*" "Worship in spirit" is not referring to the Holy Spirit, but to the spirit of man – his emotions, his soul, his innermost being. Each day of our lives we as believers, the blood-bought redeemed ones, should seek to fervently worship God in our spirit.

Who Is He?

Would to God that we would learn the secret of His presence in learning to worship the Lord for who he is, not just for all the things He has done. I am afraid for all of us too often our praise is not real worship or adoration but fumbling attempts to "do praise" so that we can get on with the real business interest of our prayer – the asking. True worship has nothing to do with getting. True worship is worship in truth, that is, worshipping God for who he truly is. Who is God? What is He like? God has revealed himself in His word. Worship is reviewing who he is according to that revelation. To know the Lord is to hold him in highest "awe," and to stand amazed in his presence. True worship melts the heart before the heat of God's personal revelation. "No man can look on him and live."

Worship is Action – Exalt the Lord!

Worship is not a quiet thing. It demands expression both verbally and physically. Angels and cherubim do it constantly before the throne. Worship is our invitation to join them. Read the book of Revelation of Jesus Christ and you will find physical and verbal declarations of the worth and holiness of God. People fell down and worshiped. You cannot truly worship and be quiet or still. To exalt the Lord requires your personal investment. It involves all of you. Peter expresses the physical and dynamic declaration of God's worth when he says, "*But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that you should show forth the praises of him who has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.*" – 1 Peter 2:9 We are to SHOW FORTH his praises, not just say praises. The word "show forth" is one word in Greek, "exaggello" which literally is "to message forth" or to make known by praising, proclaiming, or celebration. "Aggelos" is angel or "messenger of God" who heralds God's glory. The Hebrew "Shofar," or trumpet, introduced worship with a loud, long blast, so too, we are to trumpet God's praises loudly, just as angels do before the throne. Psalm 66 verses 1-3 is worth our full attention as David instructs us in the art of worship. "Shout to God, Sing to God, Make his praise glorious, Say to God." Psalm 68:4 continues the instruction, "Sing to God, Sing praise to His name, extol Him who rides on the clouds, rejoice before Him."

To Know the Lord

Paul declared his goal in life was to "know the Lord in the power of his resurrection." Daniel similarly praises those who truly know the Lord as ones who will do exploits. (Daniel 11:32) He who knows God by showing forth his praises will do valiantly. He will be victorious.

Worship Verbs

1. Praise - (yadah) - to throw, shoot arrows, cast laud, praise
2. Give Glory - (yahab) - make shine, to give glory, to bring splendor, to ascribe worth,
3. Magnify - (gadal) - to cause to grow, to make great, powerful, to magnify
4. Worship - (shachah) - to bow down, prostrate oneself, to crouch before superior in homage
5. Exalt / Extol - (ruwm) - to raise, to heave high, to lift up lofty, to be exalted above
6. Sing - (zamar) - to make music, to sing with voice, to play a musical instrument
7. Ascribe - (nathan) - to give, bestow, grant, permit, ascribe, employ, devote
8. Bless - (barak) - to kneel, to salute, to congratulate
9. Declare - tell of - (caphar) - to count, recount, relate, to number, take account of, reckon
10. Shout - (ranan) - to cry out, a loud shout of joy, a ringing cry (in joy, exultation, praise)
11. Delight in - (anag) - to be happy about, take exquisite pleasure in, to make merry over
12. Honor - (tiph'arah) - to glory, of rank, renown, as attribute of God, make beautiful
13. Behold - (chazah) - (means to wash off one's face) to see, to perceive, to look at
14. Love - (racham) - have tender affection, deep love
15. Clap - (taqa) - to give a blast, give a blow, to strike or applaud
16. Lift up hands - (nasa') - to raise, raise up high, to bear, hold high
17. Bow down - (kara) - curve over, sink down to one's knees,

Worship With Scripture

Use the Scriptures to prime the pump of praise by reminding yourself of God's greatness.
Psalm 111, 112, 113, 117, 134, 144, 145, 147, 148, 149, 150

Exalt His Holy Name(s)

(There are over 600 descriptive names of God and Christ)

1. Jehovah-tsidkenu = The Lord our Righteousness
2. Jehovah-shalom = The Lord our Peace
3. Jehovah-shammah = The Lord our Who is There Ever Present
4. Jehovah-m'kaddesh = The Lord our Sanctifier
5. Jehovah-jireh = The Lord our Provider
6. Jehovah-rohi = The Lord our Shepherd
7. Jehovah-nissi = The Lord our Banner
8. Jehovah-rophe = The Lord our Healer
9. Jehovah-saboath = Lord of Hosts

Practical Worship Strategies

1. Read Scripture that exalts Who He is. (Prime the pump with Scripture)
2. Sing songs to the Lord. (Sing out loud!)
3. Exalt His Names. (Magnify his names)
4. Remember His mighty works. (Think on, Meditate on)
5. Tell of His excellent greatness. (Rehearse it to Him)
6. Acknowledge His Sovereignty, Power, Wisdom, Control. (Lord you are...")
7. Physically express your worship and adoration. (Lift hands, lay prostrate, kneel)

Alpha and Omega Praise

Praise His name through the alphabet. Lift up and exalt God's names beginning with A and end with Z. (Alpha and Omega - 26 Praises) Do it together in the congregation. Attempt to give 3-5 on each letter. It is a wonderful experience, especially when people read their praise of Him from the Word. There are more than 600 names of God and the Lord Jesus Christ in Scripture. To review and rejoice in his name is to truly know him and make his splendor known. Believe me, you won't run out of praises.

A = Ark, Alpha, Altogether lovely, Almighty God, Advocate, Author, Ancient of Days, Anchor
B = Bread, Balm of Gilead, Bright Morning Star, Breath, Beauty, Beginning, Best gift, Branch, Bride
C = Creator, Captain, Comforter, Counselor
D = Door, Defender, Deliverer, Daystar
E = Everlasting Father, Everything to me, Earnest of our inheritance
F = Faithful High Priest, Father, Friend of Sinners, Firstborn, Fairest of 10,000, First and Last
G = God of All Comfort, Great God, Good Shepherd, Giver, Gift, Guide, Glory and Lifter of my head
H = Healer, Helper, Health, Holy One, Heir of all, High Priest, Hope of the ages
I = Immanuel, Invisible, Immortal, I Am
J = Judge, Jehovah-*, Jesus,
K = King of Kings, King - *, Keeper
L = Lover of my soul, Lord strong and mighty, Lord *, Lamb, Light Life, Lilly of Valley
M = Maker, Master, Marvelous One, Mighty God, Mediator
N = Never-failing God, Name above all names, Nest, New and living way
O = Omnipotent, Omniscient, Omnipresent
P = Protector, Provider, Physician, Prince of Peace, my Peace, Passover, Priest forever, Promise
Q = Quickening One, Quickening Spirit, Quietness and my confidence
R = Resurrection, Redeemer, Rock, Refuge, Righteous One, My Righteousness
S = Savior, Sanctifier, Sun, Shield, Shade, Shepherd, Sure, Shelter, Source
T = Teacher, Tower, Transformer, Truth
U = Unmovable, Unspeakable Gift, Upholder of all things,
V = Victor, Vine, Vision
W = Water, Wonderful, Way, Wisdom, Worthy, Wing under which I trust
X = Xcellent, Xaminer or my heart, Xray of truth
Y = Yeshua, Yesterday, Today, Forever,
Z = Zeal of Lord,

Keeper, Shade Upon Right Hand, Shield, Defender, Refuge, Fortress, High Tower, Ancient of Days, Creator, Friend, Glory and Lifter of my head, King of Glory, Lord Strong and Mighty, Lord of Hosts, Very Present Help in Trouble, Well of Salvation, Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace, Altogether Lovely, Balm of Gilead, Branch, Lilly of the Valley, Chiefest Among Ten Thousand, Defense, Deliverer, Desire of all Nations, Despised by the People, Diadem of Beauty, Fountain of Life, Friend that Sticketh Closer than a Brother, Refiner, Guide Even Unto Death, Helper of the Fatherless, Hiding Place, One Who Inhabits Eternity, Refiner's Fire, Refuge, Refuge in Times of Trouble, Refuge for the Oppressed, Refuge from the Storm, Reproach of Men, Resting Place, Reward for the Righteous, Righteous Branch, River of Water in a Dry Place, Rock that is Higher than I, Rock of My Refuge, Rod, Rose of Sharon, Scepter of Israel, Star out of Jacob, My Stay, Stone which the Builders Refused, Strength of My Life, Strong Tower from the Enemy, Sun of Righteousness, and many more.

Answer Three Questions *Out Loud* As You Worship:

- Who Is He?
- How Great Is He?
- What Is His Wonderful Name?

Step 3 – Give Thanks

“Enter his gates with thanksgiving.”

Thanksgiving naturally follows confession and forgiveness! We did not put it in third place right next to worship lest we be tempted to think that worship and thanksgiving are the same thing. They are not. Thanksgiving is a distinct act of the will. It recognizes the hand of God and is thankful. It chooses to give God credit for what he has done, and what he has promised, while worship praises God for who He is.

In Everything Give Thanks

Thanks giving is to be as much a part of the believer's life as breathing. We are exhorted to live in thankfulness to God, and to exalt him with continual expressions of thanks regardless of our present circumstances. "In everything give thanks for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." (2 Thessalonians 5:18)

In prayer we are exhorted to give thanks profusely for the goodness of the Lord, for all his benefits, for his mercies, for his faithfulness, for his steadfast love, for loads of blessings. Psalm 100 is an excellent guide for entering the presence of God. "Enter his gates with thanksgiving and into his courts with praise: Be thankful unto him, and bless His name." Unthankfulness and silence curses God's name. It brings him shame.

Ingratitude

It was Israel's ingratitude of heart, the murmuring, the complaining, the grumbling, that brought on the wrath of God. It was not that God had not blessed. He had over and over again! It is that men soon forget the goodness of the Lord. We are quick to forget his answers to our prayers, His mercies in our troubles, His healings when we are sick, His forgiveness when we fail, His provisions in our need. Well did the psalmist groan in Psalm 107, *"O Give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good...Oh, that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!"*

The Psalms are filled with expressions of thanks to God on every side. Oh, may our lives, our lips, be continual psalms of thanksgiving! The apostle Paul commands the same principle in the New Testament, regardless of the circumstances we are to be thankful and think on the good things the Lord has done. "Be anxious for nothing but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God which passes all understanding shall keep you hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:6-7)

Good Mental Health

Good mental health begins with a thankful attitude of heart. *"A merry heart does good like medicine...He that has a merry heart has a continual feast."* (Proverbs 15:13 / 17:22) Depression and discouragement are the inability to see the goodness of God around you. David frequently expressed his depression, *"I had fainted unless I had believed to see the goodness of God in the land of the living."* (Psalm 27:13) The eyes of faith see the goodness of God even in the midst of adversity. God's purposes, plans, and provisions are always good! Remember, He is working it out. Be thankful while He works it out. (Romans 8:28 and Jeremiah 29:11)

Forget Not All His Benefits

Forgetfulness of God's multiplied blessings is sin. Forgetting or neglecting to give Him thanks is the sin of ingratitude - at least it is taking God for granted. D.L. Moody in commenting on Psalm 103 said, *"I can't remember all his benefits and blessings, but I dare not forget all of them either."* Thanksgiving is remembering God's good gifts and giving Him the credit due his name.

- Psalm 103:2-5 "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgives all your iniquities; who heals all your diseases; who redeems your life from destruction; who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies; who satisfies your mouth with good things; so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's."
- Psalm 68:19 "Blessed be the Lord, who daily loads us with benefits..."
- James 1:17 "Every good gift and every perfect gift comes down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."

Thanksgiving Is a Sacrifice to God

Hebrews 13:15 points out that thanksgiving is a sacrifice to God. A sacrifice of our lips, that is to be offered up to God continually. Thanksgiving is not easy. It is tough to be thankful and express thanks from the heart for everything. Wouldn't prayer be wonderfully transformed if we would offer 10 sacrifices of thanksgiving for every request we make of God?

Practical Disciplines

1. Thank God for His Creation, your own body (Psalm 139:14)
2. Thank God for His provisions. For everything you have. List each thing for which you are thankful.
3. Thank God for people He has put into your life. Name them by name and what you are thankful for.
4. Thank God for little things. Start with the smallest things you can think of for which you are thankful. From there work toward the bigger things he has done. Never start with the big lest you despise the small. Do not despise the day of small things. (Zech. 4:10)
5. Thank God for hard things. "In everything give thanks...for this is the will of God..." Thank God for the trials and adversities that come to make us strong. They are what make us lean on Him. So thank Him!
6. Thank God for everything. Keep a notebook handy in which you write down your thanksgiving list. It helps!

Use these Psalms to guide your thanksgiving. Pray the Psalms. Mark them as "Thanksgiving" in your Bible: Psalm 103; 104; 105; 107; 111; 118; 124; 126; 136; 139

Step 4 – Confession of Sin

"If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" 1 John 1:9

John, the beloved disciple, warns us against an attitude of innocence before a holy God. To say that we have nothing to confess to God is to call Him a liar, and to practice self-deception before our Maker. David says: *"Behold I was shaped in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me."* (Psalm 51:5) And Isaiah adds to his own unworthiness before a holy God when he says: *"All of our righteousnesses (that is, our best efforts) are as filthy rags."* (Isaiah 64:6) Most of us misread that passage and think that God means *"all of our unrighteousnesses."* But it is all our best effort at right living that are still as filthy rags. Even if we could keep all the law and stumble in only one small point we would be guilty of all.

Woe Is Me!

Isaiah, a man filled with the Spirit, a prophet of God, a man above reproach, is a good example of this truth. In Isaiah 6 he first sees the Lord in all his beauty, high and lifted up, and glorified. The sight was so awesome that the just and righteous Isaiah fell on His face before God with an acute awareness of his own sinful nature. He was not exaggerating. He was not bemoaning the sinfulness of other people. He saw himself in the light of God's holiness and cried *"Woe is me I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips."* (Isaiah 6:1-5)

We are not just to come into God's presence presumptuously, but humbly (2 Chronicles 7:14) contritely, with a sincere perspective on our own nature. We need a vision of ourselves, our true fallen nature, our minds which are unclean, and of which God knows every passing thought. (Psalm 139:1-5)

Bankruptcy

Until we recognize our own state of bankruptcy before a holy God we cannot truly lean upon His Righteousness, without which no man will see the Lord. (Hebrews 12:14) We would instead come into his presence as the Pharisee, proud, bragging of his kept laws, righteous deeds, his right to gain the Father's favor. We need to see ourselves as destitute, and totally depraved, without the righteousness of Christ. We have nothing of which to boast. We, are as the rich church of Laodicea in Revelation 3:14-22. We need to see ourselves as God sees us. *"Lukewarm...wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked."*

A.W. Tozer says:

"We need to admit...the shallowness of our inner experience, the hollowness of our worship, the worldliness of our lives, our fleshly fallen nature that lives on, yet unjudged within us, uncrucified and unrepudiated, and the hyphenated sins of the human spirit, self-righteousness, self-pity, self-confidence, self-sufficiency, self-admiration, self-love, self-indulgence, and a host of other self-sins. They are not something we do, they are something we are..."

The Pursuit of God

REGARDING INIQUITY IN MY HEART

"If I regard iniquity in my heart the Lord will not hear me." Psalm 66:18

To regard iniquity means to leave it alone, to tolerate it, to know it is there and do nothing about it. It is to hide it, to cover it by excuses, to consider it unimportant, to ignore its dangers.

God considers any iniquity to be an abomination. An abomination is a horrible disgusting thing. There are no "good guy" iniquities, no little white lies, no insignificant rebellions of the heart! God calls rebellion in any form "as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness as idolatry." (1 Samuel 15:23) God considers sin as sin and all equally appalling to His holiness. Sin in our heart is to the Lord as festering sores, and maggots in his holy offerings – slimy, crawling, slithering, disgusting, maggots defiling the whole! (Isaiah 1:6)

Daniel was conscious of the subtle ways in which sin surrounds us and creeps into our thoughts, actions, and in-actions. In his exemplary prayer in Daniel 9 he identifies nine faces of sin.

WE HAVE ...

- | | | |
|-----------------------|-------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Sinned | v 5 | Missed the mark, fallen short |
| 2. Committed iniquity | v 5 | Deliberate conscious sin |
| 3. Done wickedly | v 5 | Life-style habitual sin |
| 4. Rebelled | v 5/9 | Said no to God! |
| 5. Not hearkened | v 6 | Closed our ears, ignored |
| 6. Not obeyed voice | v 10 | Grieved the Holy Spirit |
| 7. Transgressed law | v 11 | Legal term, to know law and disobey |
| 8. Departed from God | v 11 | Backslidden, wandered away |
| 9. Made not prayer | v 13 | Sin of prayerlessness |

DEAL WITH SIN !

Jesus emphasized the need to deal with sin each time he spoke of prayer. In the Lord's prayer he deals heavily with the need to deal severely with sin. That is, in fact, the primary lesson of the Lord's Prayer. Immediately after citing it he pointed out the need to forgive as well as ask for forgiveness. In Matthew 5:23-26 Jesus further deals with sin in prayer by saying that when we come to God's altar with an offering we must first do something about broken relationships before we pray and offer praise!!! An attempt at reconciliation must be made before our prayers will be heard. I Peter 3:7 includes the marital relationship as being a hindering factor in prayer.

CONFESSION OF SIN

A man that truly enters into the presence of God cannot but help to see himself as unclean. Even the Scripture admits that *"all of our good deeds are as filthy rags."* So was the feeling of Isaiah before the throne in Isaiah 6, and of Daniel in chapter 9. The holiness of God cannot tolerate the presence of sin! We are exhorted to confess our sins to God (I John 1:8-9), and even admit our faults one to another (James 5:16) so as to pray effectively and fervently and be healed.

WHAT TO DO WITH YOUR SIN

Conviction is seeing sin as exceedingly sinful.

Repentance is "Agreeing with God about my sin," and turning from it.

Confession is exposing it to God & asking Him to forgive and cleanse.

We cannot do penance for our sins, it would do no good. We cannot pay the penalty of our sins. The penalty or "wage of sin is death." Therefore God has provided a better way. We lay our sins on Jesus.

Isaiah 53 is a magnificent passage that describes the atonement of Jesus Christ for sins. Jesus paid it all on the cross. That is why he could say, "It is finished." Verse five says, *"He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed."* Verse six goes on, *"All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned everyone to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquities of us all."* Verse twelve goes even further, *"He was numbered with the transgressors; and he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."*

There is nothing more for me to do but lay my sins on Jesus. That is why the thief on the cross could be saved. He could not do penance. He could not make restitution for what he had done. He could not even prove his sincerity. He simply laid his sin on Jesus and said, "Have mercy on me." That is what Jesus came to do. *"Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world."*

Lay your sins on Jesus - he is your sin-bearer. Then rejoice in what God says he has done with your sins. Confession is not commiserating or grieving over your fallen nature, your secret thoughts, or your sins of commission or omission, but asking and receiving forgiveness and the covering of the blood of Jesus. Do not leave the altar of confession without appropriating the provisions of the cross!. Be forgiven and give thanks.

what happens to confessed sins?

1. They were paid in full - Romans 5:11 / Isaiah 53:6
2. They were forgiven/pardoned – 1 John 1:9
3. They were laid on him – Isaiah 53:6
4. They were washed whiter than snow – Isaiah 1:18
5. They were covered – Psalm 32:1
6. They were cleansed by blood of Jesus – Hebrews 9:22/ 10:4
7. They were blotted out – Isaiah 44:22
8. They were removed as far as east from west – Psalm 103:12
9. They were cast in depths of sea – Micah 7:19
10. They were forever forgotten – Jeremiah 31:34

Read Psalm 51 and Psalm 139 as part of your confession of sin.

Song: It is Well.

My sin, O the bliss of this glorious thought
My sin, not in part but the whole,
Is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more,
Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord, O my soul.

Step 5 – Clothe Yourself In His Armor

What is the first thing you do after taking a bath? Get dressed! I am so glad provision has been made for our nakedness! God commands us to “Put on”, as elect of God. We are commanded to “put on the Lord Jesus,” “Put on the new man,” and to “Put on the whole armor of God.” So put it on! That means dress in it. Reckon it to be so before the throne. Stand in Him complete.

Abraham believed God and it was “imputed” to him as righteousness. That word imputed means it was credited to his account. Though he was bankrupt himself, God applied it to his account because of his faith. Believe God and apply His provision for your nakedness.

The Old Testament book of Zechariah, chapter three contains a wonderful example of the need to put on, or to reckon ourselves clothed in the righteousness of God, and in the armor of the Lord. Joshua, the high priest, was standing before the Lord and Satan was at his right hand accusing him before the throne of God. Everything Satan brought against him was true except for one thing - God said, “I forgave him. I clothed him. Leave him alone!” Therefore God commanded the angel of the Lord to take off Joshua’s dirty tattered garments and give him a robe of pure white, a turban on his head, and a scepter in his hand. Then God looks at him and says, “Is not this the brand plucked out of the fire?”

There Are Two Parts to Reckoning:

1. Principle of Position - seeing yourself in heavenly places as God sees you.
2. Principle of Practice - exercising authority in Christ in heavenly places

Principle of Position

There is a “Principle of Position” that we all need to learn. It is the principle that though we all fall far short of the glory of God, God himself has made provision for us. His provision is that we can put on Christ. We wear his righteousness, his white robe, his crown, his authority. As God sees us in heaven he sees us through his perfect sacrifice, Jesus Christ his Son. We are brands plucked out of the fire. Reckon it to be so! See yourself as God sees you... “*and you are complete in him.*”(Colossians 2:10)

“To Reckon” is to appropriate God’s invisible truth as our visible reality.

“To Believe” is to see the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

Faith applies to our hearts the heavenly realities that God already sees.

- Put on the Lord Jesus Christ
- Put on His Righteousness
- Put on the Whole Armor of God

Principle of Practice – Using Your Authority

How do we exercise our God-given authority in Christ? How do we address the devil in our prayers? (We certainly don't pray to him.)

Weapons

God has clearly given us "Weapons of our Warfare" for the pulling down of strongholds. Our weapons (the word literally is "strategies") *are mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds, casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself above the knowledge of God, and brings every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.*" (2 Corinthians 10:4-6)

Words

The sword of the Spirit, is the Word of God. God's word is that which we use as our offense. It cuts, penetrates, convicts, declares, exposes, and casts out the enemies of God. Jesus said, "*All authority is given unto me in heaven and in earth.*" That is why whatever we bind on earth will be bound in heaven. (Matt. 16:19, 18:18) That authority is in his word, his ultimate authoritative command. We simply wield the sword. Just point it in the right direction.

Prayers

"Be strong" or be bold, boldfaced, courageous, aggressive, un-intimidated - Eph 6:10

"A hand upon the throne" - Exodus 17:16

"A hedge of protection" - Ezekiel 22:30

"Boldly to the throne of grace" - Hebrews 4:16

SPIRITUAL WARFARE

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. <u>PUT ON THE ARMOR OF GOD</u> | Ephesians 6:11-18 |
| 2. <u>BE STRONG IN THE LORD!</u> | Ephesians 6:10 |
| 3. <u>BIND THE ENEMY</u> | Matthew 18:18-20 |
| 4. <u>RESIST THE DEVIL</u> | James 4:7 |
| 5. <u>CLAIM THE BLOOD</u> | Revelation 12:11 |
| 6. <u>LOOSE THE CAPTIVES</u> | Luke 4:18 |
| 7. <u>PULL DOWN STRONGHOLDS</u> | II Corinthians. 10:3-5 |
| 8. <u>PUT A HEDGE OF PROTECTION</u> | Ezekiel 22:30 |
| 9. <u>COMMAND HIM TO LEAVE</u> | Matthew 10:1 |
| 10. <u>REBUKE HIM IN JESUS</u> | Matthew 17:18 |

It is only when we stand in our own righteousness that we should be afraid to stand before the enemy, for our righteousnesses are as "filthy rags" but the righteousness of Christ is called the armor of God.

Who I am in Christ

Biblical Truths to “Practice Believing”

I AM GOD’S...

- possession
- child
- workmanship
- friend
- temple
- vessel
- co-laborer
- witness
- soldier
- ambassador
- building
- instrument
- chosen
- beloved
- precious jewel

I HAVE BEEN...

- redeemed by the blood
- set free from sin and condemnation
- set free from Satan’s control
- set free from Satan’s kingdom
- chosen before the foundation of the world
- predestined to be like Jesus
- forgiven of all my trespasses
- cleansed by the blood of the Lamb
- given a sound mind
- given the Holy Spirit
- adopted into God’s family
- justified freely by his grace
- given all things pertaining to life and godliness
- given great and precious promises
- authority over all the power of the enemy
- access to God
- been given wisdom

I AM...

- complete in him
- free forever from sin’s power
- sanctified and meet for the Master’s use
- loved eternally
- eternally kept in the palm of his hand
- kept by the power of God
- not condemned
- one with the Lord
- on my way to heaven
- alive, quickened by his mighty power
- seated with Christ in heavenly places
- the head and not the tail
- light in the darkness
- candle in a dark place
- city set on a hill

- salt of the earth
- his sheep
- a citizen of heaven
- hidden with Christ in God
- protected from the evil one
- kept by the power of God
- secure in Christ
- set on a Rock
- more-than-a-conqueror
- born again
- a victor
- healed by his stripes
- covered by the blood of Jesus
- sheltered under his wing
- hidden in the secret place of the Almighty

I HAVE...

- access to the Father
- a home in heaven waiting for me
- all things in Christ
- a living hope
- an anchor to my soul
- a hope that is steadfast and unmoveable
- authority to tread on serpents
- power to witness
- the tongue of the learned
- the mind of Christ
- boldness and access
- peace with God
- faith as a grain of mustardseed

I CAN...

- do all things through Christ who strengthens me
- find mercy and grace to help in needs
- come boldly to the throne of grace
- quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one
- tread on the serpent
- defeat the enemy
- declare God’s truth
- pray always and everywhere
- chase a thousand

I CANNOT...

- be separated from God’s love
- be lost
- be removed from His grasp
- taken out of the Father’s hand

Step 6 – Cast Your Burdens

Ps. 55:22 Cast your burden on the Lord...He shall sustain you.

Phil. 4:6 In everything...let your requests be made known unto God.

I Pet.5:7 Casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.

Job 1:5 Job rose up early in the morning and offered burnt offerings for all of them.

Unpacked Baggage

We cannot properly intercede for others until we have cleared away the baggage of personal concerns, needs, and cares. We must find a resting place where we can lay down our burdens, in order to bear other's burdens in prayer. Hearts that are "overloaded" with care will be distracted in prayer and made ineffective in their intercession.

In Luke 21:34, Jesus warned his disciples to beware of the danger of three distracting pitfalls:

1. Over-abundance (surfeiting, over-spending, over-charging, too many possessions)
2. Over-indulgence (drunkenness, lover of pleasures, over-eating, over-playing)
3. Over-load (cares, burdens, worries, fears of this life)

Take Your Burden To The Lord

The most deceptive and innocent looking is the "overload...with cares of this life." We cannot escape the cares of normal living, but we can UNLOAD the OVERLOAD. Jesus concludes the issue in verse 36 by saying, "Therefore watch and pray always..."

Leave It There!

The solution to overloaded cares is to pray. That means to bring those excess burdens, cares, concerns, problems, worries, fears, anxieties, and troubles TO THE LORD and leave them there! Too often we take these concerns to the Lord, and walk away just as burdened as before we prayed. There is no "leaving it there."

Cast, Roll, Dump It!

David used an interesting word for "leaving it there." "Cast thy burden on the Lord."

Psalm 55:22 The word "CAST" is the key. It literally means... ROLL... DUMP...

UNLOAD... as one who is carrying a backpack of heavy equipment allows it to slide from his shoulders to another who is stronger, more able to carry the load.

You cannot carry your own burdens and the burdens of others!

Burdens are lifted as we roll them onto the Lord

Practical Disciplines

Pray for yourself:

- Your troubles
- Your aches & pains
- Your faith & faithfulness
- Your courage to witness
- Your heart's secret goals
- Your needs, provisions
- Your finances, funds
- Your enemies

Pray for your Future

- Your plans
- Your goals
- Your ministries
- Your vision

Pray for your family

- Each member by name and need
- Salvation of children
- Spouse needs
- Spiritual growth & love of all in family
- Health and safety
- Protection from evil & temptation

Pray for your faults

- Your struggles
- Your worries
- Your temptations
- Your wants & wishes
- Your heartaches
- Your failures

SONGS:

Burdens Are Lifted At Calvary / Jesus Knows Just What I Need / No One Understands
Like Jesus / What a Friend We Have in Jesus / Take Your Burden to the Lord and Leave
It There / I Cast All My Cares Upon You.

Cast your burden on the Lord...He shall sustain you. – Ps. 55:22

Casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you. – 1 Pet.5:7

Learning The Discipline of Prayer

A Prayer Strategy



A Workbook

12 Biblical Steps of Intercession

by Rev. Richard W. LaFountain

Step 1 – BE STILL

On no other step is it more important to begin and continue to use the 3-minute timer. It is the only way I know of to make myself be still before the throne.



The secret is in the discipline of laying aside everything else until your heart, mind and spirit are quiet before God. God says, “Be still!” The choice to obey him or not is up to you. Obedience begins here.

Let go of “stuff”	Put off your hurry, your lists of things to do, or your anxiety over tomorrow. It is not time for those things. Put them off. Write them down if you must, but put them away. It is time to seek the Lord!
Present yourself	Once you have laid those things aside then you can surrender your empty hands and prepared mind for his use in prayer. Surrender yourself as a living sacrifice to God, holy and acceptable. Lay down on the floor if it helps you to surrender completely to him.
Wait ...	Now be still. Just wait. Listen for the sand falling in the hour glass. Can’t hear it can you? Shhh! Be still. Don’t speak. Don’t think words. Silence! Listen for the heartbeat of God.

Recognize at the start that until you have trained yourself in the discipline of stillness this will not be possible in three minutes. It is more likely to take 15 minutes for the first few weeks. For me as a hyperactive Type A personality, it took about 30 minutes per day during the first weeks. It is not a race. Don’t hurry in or out of the presence of God.

Remember God is waiting for you. God is more interested in this discipline than all the others combined. He wants time with you. This is the most important step. Learn it well. Learn it best. You’ll grow to love this time of stillness so much that you will long for it.

Rest in the Lord. Don’t go on to the next step until your heart is no longer hurried, you mind is quiet, and your will to do is broken, and you are basking in the sunshine of God’s presence. From there you will move naturally into the second step - worship.

Practical Disciplines

1. Make your mind a sanctuary. Make your mind stop its commotion and noise! Listen to the din of confused voices reminding you of duties, tasks and obligations. Then silence them! Your mind is not a noisy playground, it’s a sanctuary. Make it obey you.
2. Slow down! Remember “relax” is the word for “be still” in Hebrew. Consciously loosen the tension of every muscle. It won’t come naturally so work at learning to be quiet! 1 Thessalonians 4:11 “*Study (force yourself) to be quiet.*”
3. Fix your eyes on Jesus - behold the beauty of the Lord. Like the angels in heaven and all creatures before the throne present yourself to God in stillness. Imagine yourself prostrate at his feet before his throne.
4. Take a few deep breaths. At first take long slow deep breaths. Hold it a few seconds. Let it out slowly. Control it! You’ll be amazed at how it begins to quiet your body, which in turn affects thoughts too.

Step 2 – Worship

Alpha and Omega Praise

Praise His name through the alphabet. Lift up and exalt God's names beginning with A and end with Z. (Alpha and Omega - 26 Praises) Do it together in the congregation. Attempt to give 3-5 on each letter. There are more than 600 names of God and the Lord Jesus Christ in Scripture.

A = _____
B = _____
C = _____
D = _____
E = _____
F = _____
G = _____
H = _____
I = _____
J = _____
K = _____
L = _____
M = _____
N = _____
O = _____
P = _____
Q = _____
R = _____
S = _____
T = _____
U = _____
V = _____
W = _____
X = _____
Y = _____
Z = _____

Group Exercise (10 minutes max)

Simply writing down God's names may or may not be worship. Worship is exalting His Names together. So let's do it. In groups of 3 begin to worship the Lord by telling him of his excellent greatness. Exalt his name together.

Discipline

Do not allow yourself to drift into confession, or thanksgiving or petition. This is a time solely to "behold His beauty."

Step 3 – Give Thanks

“Enter his gates with thanksgiving.”

Thankful Exercises

Enter his gates with thanksgiving and into his courts with praise. Be thankful unto him and bless his holy name. (Psalm 100) Now it is time to celebrate His specific acts, mercies, faithfulness, kindness, benefits, blessings, answers to prayer, and goodness.

<u>General Thanks</u> for all His creation and blessings.	Psalm 139 is an excellent meditation to prime your thanksgiving pump.
<u>Specific Thanks</u> for blessings and benefits to you.	Psalm 103 is a good starting place.
<u>Tearful Thanks</u> for all things - the bad, the ugly, the unwanted.	Make a list of all the bad things you have been bemoaning. List them to God. Ask him to help you believe that he is using that for His glory and your good. Believe him! Read Romans 8:28 and put your heartache into the passage. Turn “all things” into, for example “My financial loss God is working together for good. Believe Jeremiah 29:11 Tell God you believe it! Rejoice in it! It is true!

Thank God for Past, Present, Future

Past Answered Prayers and Blessings

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Bad Things That Have Happened

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Present Circumstances & Blessings

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Promises of What Will Happen

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

*Faith is seeing what is not yet visible to the rest,
but what God has already promised.*

Step 4 – Confession of Sin

*"If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us
our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" 1 John 1:9*

CONFESSION CHECKLIST

(Check up on your own secret sins)

- | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Selfish desires | _____ James 4:3 |
| 2. Secret sins | _____ Psalm 66:18 |
| 3. Idle words | _____ Matthew 12:36 |
| 4. Lustful fantasies | _____ Matthew 5:28 |
| 5. Marriage conflicts | _____ I Peter 3:7b |
| 6. Ingratitude | _____ Philippians 4:4-8 |
| 7. Unforgiving Attitudes | _____ Mark 11:25-26 |
| 8. Unresolved conflicts | _____ Matthew 5:23 |
| 9. Doubt | _____ Hebrews 11:6a |
| 10. Prayerlessness | _____ Hebrews 11:6b / Jeremiah 2:32 |
| 11. Indecision & doubt | _____ James 1:6 |
| 12. Bitterness | _____ Hebrews 12:15 |
| 13. Rebellion of heart | _____ I Samuel 15:23 |
| 14. Known disobedience | _____ James 4:17 |
| 15. Temper | _____ Ephesians 4:26-27 |
| 16. Anger | _____ Ephesians 4:26, 31 |
| 17. Impatience with others | _____ Ephesians 4:32 |
| 18. Murmuring/complaining | _____ 1 Corinthians 10:10 |
| 19. Lying/saying half-truths | _____ Colossians 3:9 |
| 20. Strife in your heart | _____ James 3:14 |

There are sins that "*easily beset us*" that serve only to weigh us down and cause us shame and hinder our fellowship with God. (Hebrews 12:1) Each of us has our own set of reoccurring sins. Confession is laying it out before the Lord... for "*all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.*" (Hebrews 4:13)

MY BESETTING SINS

(Lord, these are areas I need cleansing and forgiveness!)

- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 6. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 7. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 8. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 9. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 10. _____ |

Step 5 – Clothe In His Armor

Believe God For Your Position In Christ

I Am...

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

I Have Been ...

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

I Can...

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

I Have...

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

I Cannot...

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

My Sins Have Been...

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

SPIRITUAL WARFARE CHECKLIST (DO IT ! Check when you have done it)

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. <u>PUT ON</u> THE ARMOR OF GOD | _____ Eph. 6:11-18 |
| 2. <u>BE STRONG</u> IN THE LORD! | _____ Eph. 6:10 |
| 3. <u>BIND</u> THE ENEMY | _____ Matt. 18:18-20 |
| 4. <u>RESIST</u> THE DEVIL | _____ James 4:7 |
| 5. <u>CLAIM</u> THE BLOOD | _____ Rev. 12:11 |
| 6. <u>LOOSE</u> THE CAPTIVES | _____ Luke 4:18 |
| 7. <u>PULL DOWN</u> STRONGHOLDS | _____ II Cor. 10:3-5 |
| 8. <u>PUT A HEDGE</u> OF PROTECTION | _____ Ezekiel 22:30 |
| 9. <u>COMMAND</u> HIM TO LEAVE | _____ Matt. 10:1 |
| 10. <u>REBUKE</u> HIM IN JESUS | _____ Matt. 17:18 |

IDENTIFY THE ENEMY'S STRONGHOLDS (Obstacles, hindrances, sicknesses, oppression, fears, torments, etc.)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Step 5 – Clothe Yourself In His Armor

OK, now it is time to dump your load. What is on your mind and heart? It is not about a prayer list but about your inner longings, your hurts, your pain, your worries, your fears, your anxieties, your family, your finances, your fun, your foolishness, your failures, etc.

Tell God all about it. Unload and leave it here at the foot of the cross. He cares about your worries, your fears, your troubles, your sicknesses, your temptations, your finances, your family, your children, your spouse, your marriage, your job, your tests, your trials, and your needs. There is nothing that you care about that God doesn't care about.

Family Frustrations	Begin with your spouse and your relationship. Are their frustrations? Is there anything that needs to change? Place each family member before the Lord. Name them by name. Tell God about their lives, needs, spiritual condition. Surrender each on to Him.
Fears, Finances	Tell God about your fears, worries, or anxieties. Tell God about your financial concerns, goals, aspirations.
Faults, Failures	Tell God about you. This is not confession, we have already done that. It is time to be naked and honest before the throne.

Exercise (10 minutes max)

Confession is already past but “to one another” is not. It is also time to “bear one another’s burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ.” No one can help you to bear a burden if they do not know what it is. Share your key burdens, worries and fears with your prayer partners as you are able.

Discipline

There will be no time after this point in your intercession to go back to self petitions. This is the time to lay them fully before God so as to NOT take them up again.

Dumping on God is one thing. It is quite another to dump in faith knowing that you are doing it at his invitation because “HE CARES FOR YOU.” So thank him for hearing, being touched with the feeling of your infirmities.”

Promises To Use In Prayer

PRAYER

Isaiah 65:24 ...before they call I will answer...
Psalm 37:4 ...delight in the Lord, he gives desires of your heart...
Psalm 37:5 ...commit your way to Lord, he will bring it to pass...
Jeremiah 33:3 ...call on me and I will show you great and mighty things
Jeremiah 32:17-18 ...you have made heaven...nothing is too hard for you...
Matthew 18:19 ...if any 2 agree...touch...ask, it will be done...

PEACE

Isaiah 26:3 ...keep you in perfect peace...
Isaiah 32:17 ...work of righteousness will be peace...
Jeremiah 29:11 ...the thoughts I think toward you are peace, not evil...
Psalm 37:37 ...the end of the upright man is peace...

PROTECTION

Psalm 91:3 ...he shall deliver from snare, pestilence, terror, arrow...
Isaiah 54:17 ...no weapon formed against you will prosper...
Isaiah 43:2 ...when pass through water it will not overflow you...
Jeremiah 15:20 ...I will make you a steel wall, they will not prevail..
Psalm 5:11-12 ...those who trust you, shout for joy, you defend them...

SUPPLY

Psalm 34:10 ...lions do hunger...but you shall not lack any good thing...
Psalm 37:25 ...I have not seen the righteous forsaken or begging...
Philippians 4:19 ...my God shall supply all your need...
II Corinthians 9:8 ...God is able to make all grace abound to you...

SUCCESS

Joshua 1:8 ...then you shall make way prosperous, and have success
Psalm 1:3 ...whatsoever he does it shall prosper...
Romans 8:28 ...all things work together for good to him...

STRENGTH

Isaiah 40:29 ...He gives power to the faint...
Isaiah 40:31 ...they that wait on the Lord renew their strength...
Isaiah 41:10 ...fear not for I am with you...I will help you
Isaiah 41:13 ...the Lord will hold your right hand...
II Corinthians 12:9 ...my grace is sufficient for you...

DELIVERANCE

Psalm 34:17,19 ...the righteous cry and the Lord hears and delivers from trouble
Psalm 34:7,8 ...angel encamps around those who fear Him...
Isaiah 59:19 ...when enemy comes like flood...Lord will stand against him

DIRECTION & LEADING

Proverbs 3:6 ...In all your ways acknowledge him and he will direct your paths...
Isaiah 30:21 ...you will hear a word behind you saying, 'this is the way, walk in it'
Proverbs 16:3,9 ...commit your way to the Lord ...and your thoughts will be established...
Psalm 37:23 ...good man's steps are ordered by the Lord
Isaiah 58:11 ...the Lord will guide you continually...
Psalm 32:8 ...I will instruct & teach you the way to go...

FEARS

II Timothy 1:7 ...God gave not the spirit of fear, but of sound mind..
Isaiah 41:10 ...fear not for I am with you, I will help you..
Isaiah 41:13 ...fear not I will help you...

Psalms 34:4 ...I sought...He delivered me from all my fears...

SOULS

Psalms 2:8 ...ask of me and I will give heathen for your inheritance...

Psalms 126:6 ...he who sows and weeps...shall bring sheaves with him...

II Peter 3:9 ...Lord is not slack...not willing any should perish...

YOUR CHILDREN

Isaiah 54:11-13 ...all your children will be taught of the Lord...

Psalms 127:3 ...children are a heritage of the Lord...your reward...

Isaiah 59:21 ...my words will not depart out of your seed's mouth...

Isaiah 44:3 ...I will pur out my Spirit on your seed and offspring...

Proverbs 22:6 ...train up a child...when old...he will not depart from it..

WISDOM

Isaiah 50:4 ...Lord gives me tongue of the learned to know how to speak..

Psalms 19:7 ...The law...is perfect...making wise the simple...

Proverbs 1:7 ...Fear of the Lord is beginning of knowledge...

James 1:5 ...lack wisdom? Ask of God that gives liberally to all men...

FORGIVENESS

Psalms 86:5 ...thou Lord art good...ready to forgive...

I John 1:9 ...If we confess our sins, He is faithful...to forgive...all..

Isaiah 1:18 ...though your sins be as scarlet they shall be white as snow

Isaiah 43:25 ...I am He that blots out transgressions...

ABILITY ABOVE IMPOSSIBILITY

Jeremiah 32:17,27 ... Ah Lord God... there is nothing too hard for you...

Philippians 1:6 ...he that began a good work in you will perform it 'til.

Acts 20:32 ...the word of His grace... is able to build you up...

Ephesians 3:20 ...able to exceedingly abundantly...by power in us...

Jude 24 ...able to keep you...present you faultless...

HEALING

Exodus 15:26 ...I am the Lord that healeth thee

Psalms 103:3-4 ...who forgiveth all...healeth all thy diseases...

James 5:15 ...the prayer of faith shall save the sick...

Matthew 8:17 ...He took our infirmities and carried our diseases...

SLEEP

Proverbs 3:24 ...you shall lie down and your sleep will be sweet...

Psalms 4:8 ...I will...sleep for you make me dwell in safety..

Psalms 127:2 ...for so he gives his beloved sleep...

WORD OF GOD

Isaiah 55:11 ...shall not return void...shall accomplish and prosper...

Jeremiah 23:29 ...Is not my word like a fire...like a hammer

Acts 20:32 ...which is able to build you up and give you inheritance

Hebrews 4:12 ...is quick, powerful, sharp, piercing, dividing, discerning..

2 Timothy 2:9 ...word of God is not bound...

2 Timothy 3:16 ...is profitable for doctrine, reproof, instruction...

Learning The Discipline of Prayer

A Prayer Strategy

Active Praying



God never intended for fellowship with Him to be boring. But we, by our traditions and our disobedience to the commands of Scripture, have made it one of the most disdained activities of the church. Prayer meetings are boring because we have made them boring. God didn't intend for it to be that way. Read on and learn!

Prayer Positions

Why is it important or even necessary to study positions of prayer? The Apostle Paul expressed it well in Hebrews saying that he had much to teach them but found that they were stunted in their spiritual walk because of a lack of exercise in the things they had already been taught.

"For every one that uses milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongs to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." (Hebrews 5:13-14)

There are many things we have never learned, never experienced, never exercised, or put into practice in our lives. There are many positions of prayer we have never practiced yet. Like the Hebrew Christians we have stunted our Christian experience through stagnation of one position. God's Word encourages us to be active in prayer varying our positions and our actions to keep prayer vibrant and fresh.

The following are some of the Biblical positions and actions of prayer referred to and commanded in the Bible. See how many you have or have not yet practiced in your prayer life. Then begin to vary your prayer experience by trying each of these.

1. Eyes open - John 11:41 / John 17:1
2. Tears shed - I Samuel 7-10/ Psalm 126:5-6
3. Shout/applaud/cheer - Ezra 3:11-14/ Ps 47:1
4. Sing - Psalm 100:4/ Ephesians 5:19
5. Loud voice - Acts 7:60
6. Unison - (Homo-thumadon) rush together making same noise - Acts 4:24
7. Speak to obstacle - Joshua 10:12 "Sun stand still"/ Mat. 21:21
8. Speak with no sound - I Samuel 1:7-10
9. Say "Amen" to others prayers - I Cor. 14:16
10. Fast - 2 Samuel 12:16/ Isaiah 58:6
11. Stand up - Nehemiah 9:3-5
12. Kneel - Eph. 3:14/ Philip.2:9-11
13. Lay down on bed - 2 Kings 20:2
14. Lay face on ground - 2 Chronicles 7:3
15. Walk (pace) - 2 Kings 4:33-35
16. Squat/bow down 2 Kings 18:42/ Ps. 95:6
17. Dance - 2 Samuel 6:14-16
18. Walk away, be restored - Mat. 5:23-24
19. Sackcloth & Ashes - 2 Kings 19:1
20. Sit - Mt. 26:36 / Mark 14:32,37-38
21. Bow head - Isaiah 58:5
22. Raise hands in praise - Psalm 134:2/ 143:6
23. Raise hands in authority - Exodus 17 8-15/Heb.12:11-12
24. Touch together the thing - Mat. 18:19 (sumphoneo)
25. Lift hand in blessing - Luke 24:50
26. Lay hands on (for commissioning) - Hebrews 6:2/ 1 Tim. 4:14
27. Anoint - Mark 6:13/ James 5:13-15
28. Spread it before the Lord - 2 Kings 19:14-15

Places of Prayer

*"He that dwells in the secret place of the most High
shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. " (Psalm 91:1)*

Places of prayer are important to God. The word "trysting place" is unfamiliar to most of us but a "tryst" means a secret lover's rendezvous. God challenges his people to meet him in the trysting place. In Psalm 91:1 He extends a promise:

Men of the Bible like Moses, Daniel and Jesus himself had special prayer retreats where they met alone with God. Jesus tells us to pray to the Father in "secret", and to enter into our "closet" of prayer.

"But you, when you pray, enter into your closet, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father which is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret shall reward you openly."
(Matthew 6:6)

The closet is the Secret Place of the Most High where you retreat often to seek the Lord as your refuge and strength. We need to grow in prayer by learning to get away alone with God.

OUTDOOR PLACES

Mountain top - Luke 9:28-29
Wilderness - Mark 1:35
Desert place - Mark 1:35
Riverside - Acts 16:13
Bedroom - Daniel 6:10
Garden - Mat 26:39-42
Hillside - Mat 14:23
On camping trip - Gen 32:24-30
Under a tree - 1 Kings 19:5
Beside a brook - 1 Kings 17:3-5
In a chariot - Acts 8:36-37
Up a tree - Luke 19:3
On the street - Acts 3:1-6
Street corners - Mt 6:5
Apart about a stone cast - Luke 22:41
By a brook - 1 Kings 17:3-5
On a walk - Neh 2:12 / Luke 24:32
In a cave - 1 Kings 19:9

PLACES OF TROUBLE

In a fiery furnace - Dan 3:25
On a boat - Jonah 1:6,14
Tossed at sea - Mark 4:8
Lion's den - Daniel 6:22
Bottom of a well - Jer 38:6
In a dungeon - Acts 16:24-25
Island of Patmos - Rev 1:1-2
Hanging on a cross - Luke 23:42
While being stoned - Acts 7:59-60
From belly of whale - Jonah 2:1

INDOOR PLACES

*Roof top - Acts 10:9
*In a home - Acts 12:12-13
*Upper room - Acts 1:13-14
*In synagogues - Mt 6:5
*In a closet - Mt 6:6
*At the table - Acts 27:35

Biblical Actions In Prayer

Often in our praying we often adopt certain ways and stick to that pattern the rest of our lives. In studying the Word of God we find that prayer was not the passive event that we so often experience. The prayers and the pray-ers of the Bible were active in prayer.

A wonderful way to rejuvenate your Prayer Life is to begin exercising yourself in prayer as God intended. Take the Word seriously, not just the commands but the examples as well. Here are a few activities to practice as you pray.

- Lay the thing before God
- Write your prayer
- Cry out loud
- Move lips but no voice
- Kneel, bow down
- Lift up hands
- Stand in His presence
- Lay prostrate before Him
- Lay hands on someone needy
- Touch things you mention to God
- Agree together with another
- Walk around
- Look up to heaven
- Talk out loud to God (not to others)
- Sing to the Lord
- Raise a rod of authority
- Put on a praise garment
- Anoint with oil
- Grab onto a promise (remind God)
- Lay down on back
- Curl up in fetal position on knees

HINTS FOR BETTER PRAYING

1. Don't be in a hurry - Waiting on God is just that, "waiting."
2. Drink deeply from the well of salvation - Read from a devotional guide.
3. Minister to the Lord - Sing a song to the Lord
4. Let God talk to you - Read the Word quietly
5. Wait on the Lord - Just be quiet.
6. Behold the Lord - Worship and praise the Lord
7. Believe God's promises - Arm yourself with God's might
8. Surrender yourself to Him - Give the Lord verbally all your body, hands, eyes, feet, lips, ears,
9. Order your thoughts - Make your requests to God in an orderly way, topic by topic. Limit the time you spend on one topic. Refuse to be scatter-brained.
10. Be thank-filled - Cultivate a thankful mind. Literally give God thanks for every thing.

Music In Prayer

1. Sing for joy to God our strength; shout aloud to the God of Jacob! 2. Begin the music, strike the tambourine, play the melodious harp and lyre. 3. Sound the ram's horn at the New Moon, and when the moon is full, on the day of our Feast; 4. this is a decree for Israel, an ordinance of the God of Jacob. 5. He established it as a statute for Joseph when he went out against Egypt, where we heard a language we did not understand. 6. He says, "I removed the burden from their shoulders; their hands were set free from the basket. 7. In your distress you called and I rescued you, I answered you out of a thundercloud; I tested you at the waters of Meribah. (Psalm 81)

We usually do not equate prayer with music, but the Jews do. Did you ever listen to a Jewish worship service? The priest intones his prayers in music. Music is a gift of God and in prayer is a gift to God. Both Old and New Testaments are full of examples and commands for individuals and groups to sing unto the Lord. The key here is not just sing, but to whom we sing - sing unto the Lord. It is the most intimate of fellowships with God.

Sing unto the Lord is a command of Scripture in both Old and New Testaments. It will be part of our joys in heaven. Let us rehearse for heaven's courts and learn to practice the truth of Psalm 100. *"Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands. Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing."*

David exhorted people everywhere to sing to the Lord... with psalms, with praises, with loud shouts, with dancing, with instruments, and much more. He made it a personal commitment stating "I will sing" again and again throughout the Psalms. He gives us his personal reasons for such singing too: "because it is good, pleasant, comely, and because He has... triumphed gloriously, dealt bountifully with me, redeemed my soul, done marvelous things, gotten the victory, done wondrous works, done excellent things, has great power, and He is a refuge in trouble. He also tells us how he does this singing ...with my whole heart, while I have my being, upon his bed, in the congregation, in the night seasons, daily performing his vows.

The New Testament is no less emphatic about singing to the Lord in prayer. In Revelation 15:3 it is the Song of Moses and the song of the Lamb. God reveals the victory that believers have over the powers of Satan, even after he is thrown down to earth with great wrath. The secret is in "the blood of the Lamb," but how often we forget the second part of that "the word of their testimony." That testimony is the song of the redeemed. Paul exhorts the church individually and corporately to sing unto the Lord. In Ephesians 5:19 he says, *"Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;"*

Then again in Colossians 3:16 he repeats: *"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."* Singing to the Lord is the badge of the believer. It is the "living water" flowing out of our bellies for "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks."

HINT: One of my favorite activities in a personal prayer retreat is to carry along a Walkman with earphones and tapes of accapella worship music. It is simple, unembellished, Christ-centered worship, and best of all I can sing along addressing each song from my heart to the Lord. You may choose to use music with instrumentation but be careful that it does not overpower, call attention to itself, or interrupt your communion with the Lord. If you play an instrument, harmonica, piano, flute, recorder, or even whistle use it to play skillfully to the Lord.

Use Songs In Intercession

Try singing through the Preparation for Intercessory Prayer Time. Each of the steps lend themselves easily to hymns and songs that are reverent, worshipful and expressive of what we are praying about. Remember, these are not hymns and choruses about God but songs addressed to Him. Try it. Remember too, there are many more choruses, hymns and spiritual songs than we can suggest here.

- ⇒ **Be Still** - Be Still My Soul; I Come to the Garden Alone; Open My Eyes Lord; I Want to See Jesus I Will Keep My Mind Stayed on You
- ⇒ **Be Worshipful** - As the Deer; I Love You Lord; In Moments Like These; Jesus; Name Above All Names His Name is Wonderful; Be Exalted; Father I Love You; Isn't He?
- ⇒ **Be Thankful** - Give Thanks; God Is So God; In His (Your) Time; Allelujah - Thank you Jesus; Thank You Lord for Saving My Soul
- ⇒ **Confession** - Cleanse My Heart O God; Create In Me A Clean Heart; Spirit of God Descend Upon My Heart; Hide Me In Your Holiness; According To Thy Loving Kindness Father
- ⇒ **Clothe in Armor** - A Shield About Me; Fill Me Now; I Surrender All; Spirit of the Living God Fall Fresh On Me; Mighty Warrior
- ⇒ **Cast Cares** - Burdens are Lifted At Calvary; I Cast My Every Care Upon You; / No One Understands Like Jesus / What a Friend We Have in Jesus / Take Your Burden to the Lord and Leave It There

There are many old and new choruses that lend themselves to ministering to the Lord in songs of worship and adoration. The criteria for a worship song is that it must be addressed to the Lord as a prayer of worship, not just about the Lord or one's personal experience. They should be of simple melodies easily sung without instrument, as opposed to songs of difficult and complex meters. Choruses these days are changing faster than one can keep track. Here are a few suggestions to get you started.

CHORUSES OF ADORATION

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| - Thou Art Worthy | - Learning To Lean |
| - He Is Lord | - My Jesus I Love Thee |
| - His Name Is Wonderful | - He Is Able |
| - I Love You Lord | - Open Our (My) Eyes Lord |
| - O Come Let Us Adore Him | - Spirit of Living God |
| - Jesus, Name Above All Names | - Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus |
| - There's Something About That Name | - More Precious Than Silver |
| - Alleluia, He's my Savior | - I Exalt Thee |
| - Jesus Is the Sweetest Name I Know | - As The Deer |

There are many more choruses and hymns that help you to worship. Choose those that are best suited to bring you into God's presence. They should be songs to the Lord, not about the Lord.