



Review meditation... any thoughts on what you tried out this week?

- 20 minutes of focused meditation?
- Palms up, palms down?

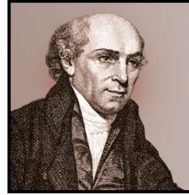
If you were going to give yourself a 1-5 star rating on your prayer life, what would you say... hold up fingers if you're not too embarrassed...



"I have so much business I cannot get on without spending three hours daily in prayer."



"God does nothing but in answer to prayer."



"Prayer—secret, fervent, believing prayer—lies at the root of all personal godliness."



"The one concern of the Devil is to keep the saints from praying. He fears nothing from prayer-less studies, prayer-less work, prayer-less religion. He laughs at our toil, mocks at our wisdom, but trembles when we pray."

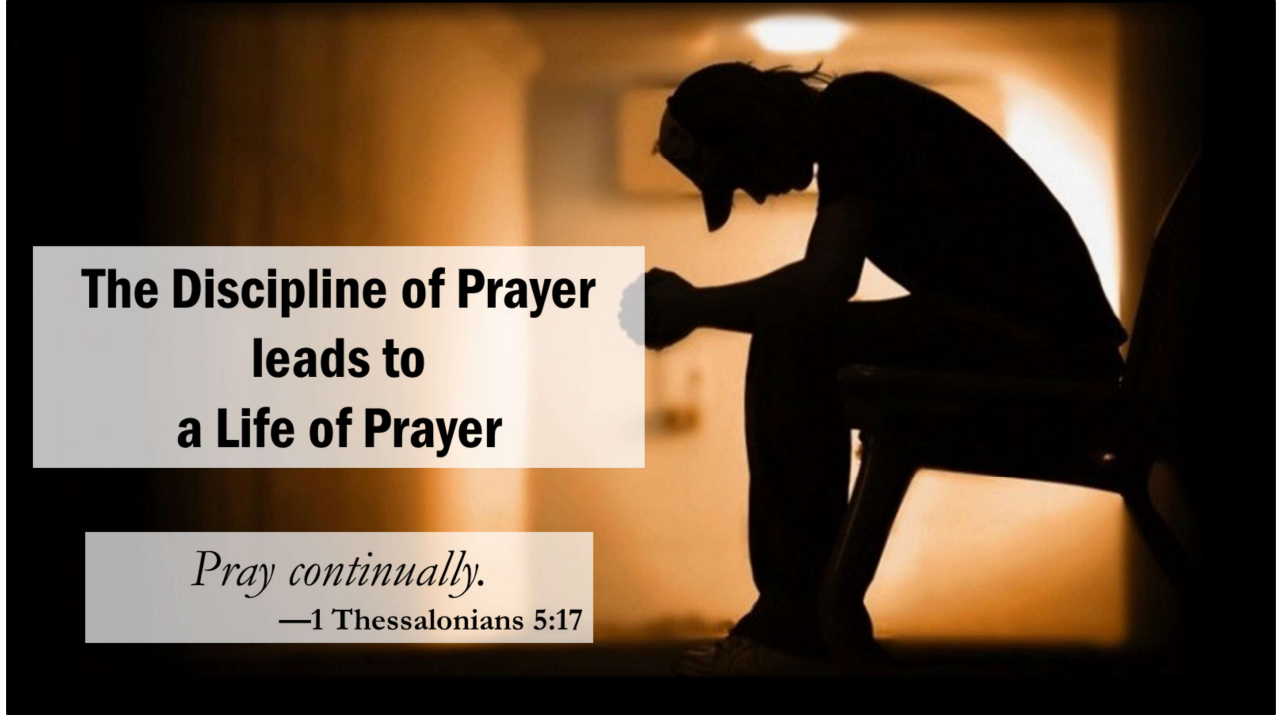
Martin Luther: "I have so much business I cannot get on without spending three hours daily in prayer."

John Wesley: "God does nothing but in answer to prayer." And he believed it: 2 hours daily prayer

William Carey – the father of the Baptist missions movement – said: "Prayer—secret, fervent, believing prayer—lies at the root of all personal godliness."

Samuel Chadwick: "The one concern of the Devil is to keep the saints from praying. He fears nothing from prayer-less studies, prayer-less work, prayer-less religion. He laughs at our toil, mocks at our wisdom, but trembles when we pray"

Could go on... but what effect does it have on you? For me, it seems to discourage me rather than inspire me. I think a common source of guilt that sincere Christians carry around is the weakness of our prayer life... A lot of us sense something is missing... Don't really know how to pray...



**The Discipline of Prayer  
leads to  
a Life of Prayer**

*Pray continually.*  
—1 Thessalonians 5:17

Discipline of prayer

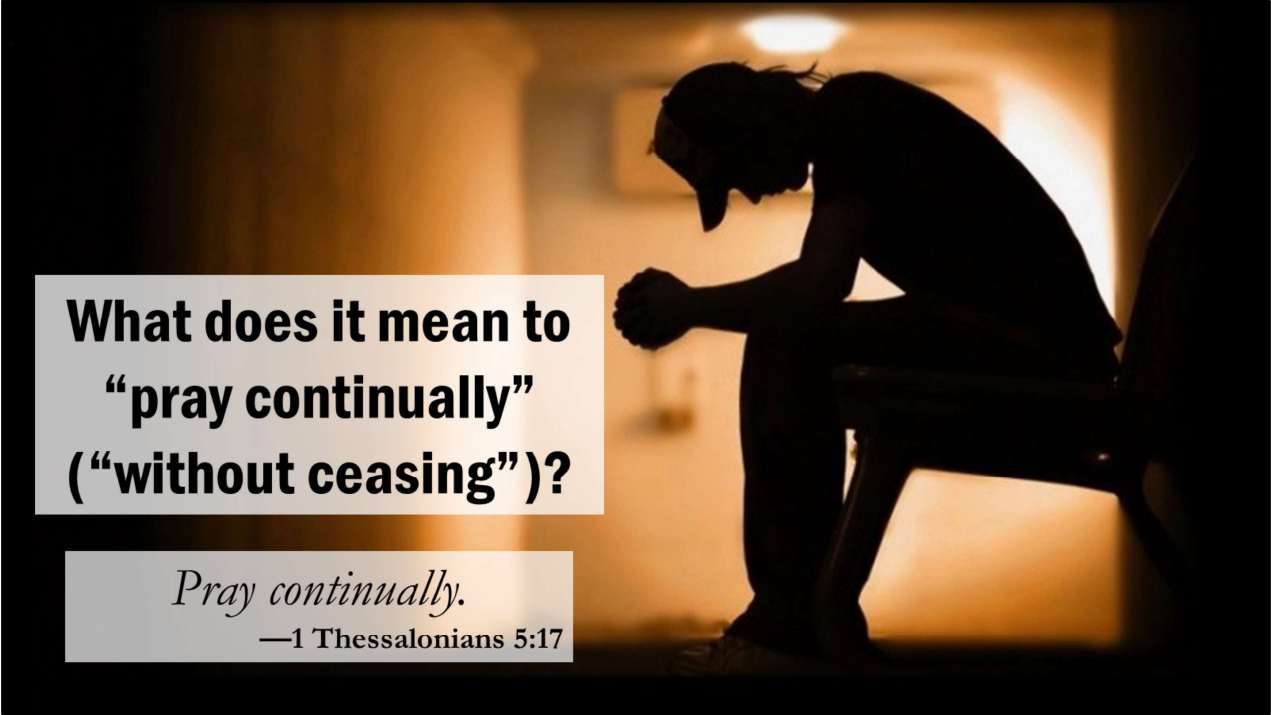
Unlike some other disciplines, prayer is an end unto itself...

Study → be wise; fast → self-control; pray → pray!

For the great spiritual giants, praying has been as natural as breathing... not always a “discipline”

Discipline of prayer → life of prayer

1 Thess. 5:17 is one of those verses people isolate and run with...



**What does it mean to  
“pray continually”  
 (“without ceasing”)?**

*Pray continually.*  
—1 Thessalonians 5:17

What most of us think of as prayer can't possibly be done “without ceasing” all day long... muttering...

People turn it into a mystical thing... hard to define

Not interested in that... we want to look at what the language really means and in context of all Scripture, and that will help us understand the discipline of prayer as we pursue a LIFE of prayer...

So what does it really mean to “pray continually”?



This idea matches up closely with the parables Jesus told about prayer. In fact, Luke introduces one of Jesus' parables this way: "Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up." (Luke 18:1)  
Sometimes people will say that praying over and over for the same thing doesn't make sense...

God already knows...

Doesn't it show lack of faith?

But Jesus' parables teach persistence in prayer...

***Why do you think that part of Jesus' teaching about prayer is to insist that we ask and keep asking?***

Our asking shows that we trust Him to answer with good gifts.



*Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. He said: “In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared about men. And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, ‘Grant me justice against my adversary.’ “For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, ‘Even though I don’t fear God or care about men, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won’t eventually wear me out with her coming!’ ” And the Lord said, “Listen to what the unjust judge says. And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?”*

—Luke 18:1-8

Let’s look at the parable: Luke 18:1-8—“read”

***What’s the “punch line” of this parable?***

*“However, when the Son of Man comes,  
will he find faith on the earth?”*

—Luke 18:1-8



**PERSISTENCE IN  
PRAYER IS  
EVIDENCE OF OUR  
FAITH.**

What’s the “punch line” of this parable?

Jesus equates faith (in verse 8) with persistence in prayer (in verse 7)!

So **persistence** in prayer is evidence of our **faith**. Why?

The judge was the widow’s only hope for justice. Our persistence in prayer **demonstrates** faith and **trains** us to look to God as our source for what we need and want.

So then prayer is both a response to need and a discipline.

*Why do we give up so easily?*

**GIVE  
YOURSELF  
PERMISSION  
TO LEARN TO  
PRAY**



But we shouldn't beat ourselves up about our shortcomings... God meets us where we are and moves us to deeper things

Give ourselves permission to **learn** to pray...

We hear praying is simple... a child can do it...

Move on to deeper things... more powerful prayer

Experiment... ask questions... permission to fail

Read the Bible to see how they prayed... how we are taught to pray

Key is to not give up... take it on as a discipline... leads us to next idea...

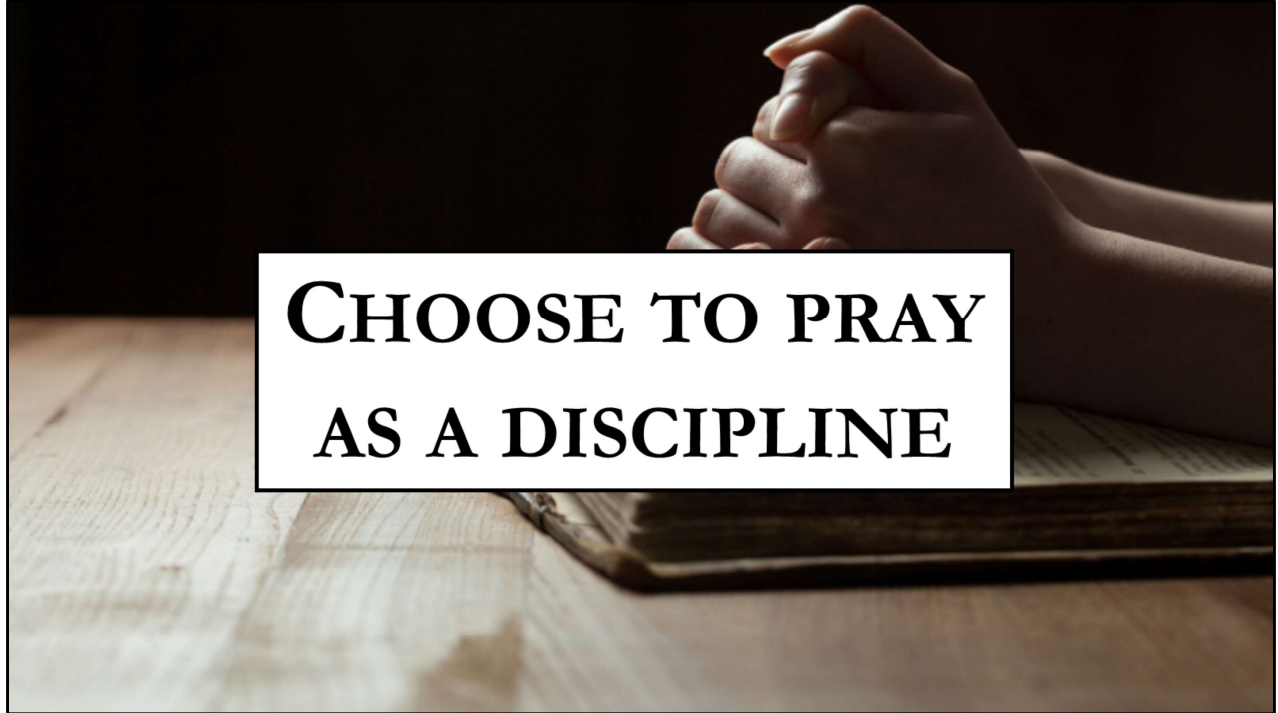




The Greek word here for continually is ἀδιαλείπτως, which is the base word “λείπω” with the suffix “ἀδια,” which means “without.”

Λείπω is a word that can have several meanings, but the first is to “leave behind” or “forsake.”

The second meaning of the Greek word λείπω is “to be wanting or absent, to fail.”



The way we “pray without fail” is to choose to pray as a discipline.

We see this truth in Jesus’ example...

Story from Mark 1... Jesus taught in the synagogue... drove out demons... becoming a sensation... after a late night, went to bed...

Mark 1:35-36—“Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed. Simon and his companions went to look for him, and when they found him, they exclaimed: ‘Everyone is looking for you!’”

On a day like that, prayer had to be a choice...

And on days like that is when we most desperately need to pray...



The discipline to pray also means getting out of our ingrained patterns of prayer and choosing to pray biblically—according to the commands to pray given in the New Testament.

***What happens when we choose to pray biblically?***

Eph 6:18 – alert to, aligned with, purposes of God

Heb. 3:18 – increased love and empathy for leaders... strengthen those who lead

2 Thess 3:1 – heart for God’s mission

**\*\*aligned with God’s heart\*\***

Matt. 5:44 – love for people, chance for end to conflict

1 Tim. 2:8 – unity in prayer; conflict resolved

**\*\*live at peace with others\*\***

Jude 20 – built up in faith

Mark 14:38 – live by spirit, not flesh

**\*\*strengthened for obedience\*\***



If you turn on an appliance and it doesn't work, what's the first thing you check?

- Plugged in?
- Good outlet?

Similar concept in prayer: we need to make sure the connection is good... accomplished through the prayer of consecration...



# Consecration: Bringing Things Under the Rule of Jesus

Consecration is the act of bringing things under the rule of Jesus...

Important aspect of the discipline of prayer → daily consecration...

What does that mean?

3 aspects: aligning, enforcing, and proclaiming...

# Aligning

*“In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness.”*

**- Romans 6:11-13**

Aligning

“pledging your allegiance” → “Thy kingdom come, thy will be done”

Offering yourself, inviting the Spirit’s control... Romans 6:11-13...

Proclaim that these things are no longer plugged into wickedness → they are dead to it...

Offer them to the Lord for his use...

Do this every day... doesn’t take long... offer the parts of your body by name... offer the parts of your self by name... offer every area of your life by name...

# Enforcing

*“We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.”*

**- 2 Corinthians 10:5**

Enforcing

Prayer that enforces the declaration you made in alignment

“Take captive” your thoughts: 2 Cor. 10:5...

When “parts of your body” stray, offer them back to God...

# Proclaiming

*“Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.”*

**- Romans 8:1-4**

## Proclaiming

We speak truth over ourselves and others, speaking the truth of God’s word over our lives...

Romans 8:1-4...

This consecrated life—life lived by the Spirit—is what brings about the fullest meaning of “pray continually”:





So we don't give up... we keep praying... we choose to pray and discipline ourselves to pray for this purpose: to live in communion with the Holy Spirit.

And that's really the goal of the discipline to pray: to hear from God and establish a conversation with the Holy Spirit through which He guides you in life...



One secret that separates someone with a powerful prayer life and someone who doesn't is found in Ecclesiastes 5

vv. 1-2—“Guard your steps when you go to the house of God. Go near to listen rather than to offer the sacrifice of fools, who do not know that they do wrong. Do not be quick with your mouth, do not be hasty in your heart to utter anything before God. God is in heaven and you are on earth, so let your words be few.”

“Sacrifice of fools”: we talk too much...

Last week: “impression management”

Jesus put it this way: Matt. 6:7—“And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words.”

We have to learn to listen when we pray... as I've studied and practiced and learned about prayer, I think this is the most #1 key to a powerful prayer life. Starts with discipline of meditation



**Expand** your prayer life... throughout your day...

“**Flash** prayers” – ask Jesus to speak his love to teach person... to see someone is to pray for them.

Blessing **children**... through touch...

Inviting Jesus into your tasks...




Being in love... all day conversation... except this is real: God *actually* present, *actually* speaking...

All of this makes us able to take on anything—*more than conquerors*, the Scripture says. But we miss it because we are simply not disciplined to pray... we give up... we fail to pray consistently... we fail to pray biblically...

Prayer is **work**

Often you don't feel like working, but once you get going you get into it...  
We must discipline ourselves to initiate prayer every day.

## Challenge for This Week

- 
- Pray daily
  - Consecrate yourself through prayer each morning.
  - Un-give up on a particular prayer
  - Expand your prayers into your day. Listen.

Richard Foster writes, “If we are unwilling to change, we will abandon prayer as a noticeable characteristic of our lives.”

Weekly challenge:

- Take time to pray every day
- Intentionally consecrate yourself each morning.
- Begin praying for something you'd given up about
- Expand your prayers into your day.