





## What's Next?

- Repeat this prayer study as often as you like or as you feel the need.
- Be open to other prayer opportunities or practices that are available.
- Talk with a trusted friend or family member about prayer and see what happens!
- Keep praying....

### *A home study for busy disciples*

#### **Part of the Kairos Awakening Discipleship Study Series**

*The Bible speaks bluntly about the dangers of drifting away from your faith. Much of the New Testament book of Hebrews focuses on the intentional will it has taken people throughout the ages to stay close to God and remain active in the faith. Just as it takes time, energy and commitment to retain a close connection with a good friend, the same goes true for staying close to God.*

*James 4:8 tells us “draw near to God, and he will draw near to you” NRSV. The contemporary language translation, THE MESSAGE, states it this way – “So let God work his will in you. Yell a loud no to the Devil and watch him scamper. Say a quiet yes to God he’ll be there in no time. Quit dabbling in sin. Purify your inner life. Get down on your knees before the Master; it’s the only way you’ll get on your feet.”*

This study on personal prayer takes a close look at how to draw closer to God through an active and meaningful prayer life. When we set aside time to talk with God our life is purified and just as we instantly feel uplifted when a good friend connects with us, so we feel instantly uplifted when we take time out of our busy lives to connect with God. We experience tremendous growth in faith, love and the energy to do the will of God and we discover new ways to live generous, joy filled, Christ centered lives.



## **WEEK 4: PRAYER THEME: *Supplication***

***Prayer is Relationship*** – It is a personal relationship in which you and God move from a hello of politeness to an embrace of love. As we come to know God in Jesus and in our relationship with God, we can experience the ever-loving God as our most intimate friend. Prayer then becomes the sorting out of our feelings as we bring them to God who cares and understands. It is the clarifying of our wishes and our needs and getting perspective in light of God’s love and will. It is the ultimate “letting go and letting God”.

### **BIBLE REFLECTION: Philippians 4 “Pray About Everything!”**

*“Celebrate God all day, every day. I mean, revel in him! Don’t fret or worry. Instead of worrying, pray. Let petitions and praises shape your worries into prayers, letting God know your concerns. Before you know it, a sense of God’s wholeness, everything coming together for good, will come and settle you down. It’s wonderful what happens when Christ displaces worry at the center of your life.”*

*“Summing it all up, friends, I’d say you’ll do best by filling your minds and meditating on things true, noble, reputable, authentic, compelling, gracious – the best, not the worst; the beautiful, not the ugly; the things to praise, not things to curse. Put into practice what you learned from me, what you heard and saw and realized. Do that, and God, who makes everything work together, will work you into his most excellent harmonies.”*

## **Our Guide**

**To guide us, we will follow the long-used acronym “ACTS” which stands for Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving and Supplication. These theologically based “church” words will take on new meaning as we focus on how everyday people leading busy lives can become intimate conversationalists with God.**

### **Kairos Awakening Discipleship Study Series**

**All Bible passages are quoted from *The Message* – a contemporary rendering of the Bible from original languages, crafted to present its tone, rhythm, events and ideas in everyday language. If you want to read further, you’ll find *The Message* (Eugene H. Peterson / NAVPRESS) in bookstores or online.**

**Be prepared to read the Bible passage of the week on a daily basis. Focusing on one passage for the week is deliberate, allowing repetition to sink the words into your heart and soul. This repeated reflection will also help you thoroughly develop the week’s theme through building blocks of activity on a daily basis.**



**WEEK 3: PRAYER THEME: *Thanksgiving***

***Prayer is a Privilege, Not a Duty*** – Like love, friendship, music, books, art, laughter, and play – prayer is a privilege, a great gifted opportunity to be claimed. As a privilege, the discipline of praying becomes a creative freedom, not a burden of duty. The privilege is open to all of us. The privilege is communion with God, feeling God’s presence, being aware of God’s guidance.

Now that we have praised and honored God and talked freely about where we fall short of living a life of grace by doing wrong, we come to the third prayer petition of Thanksgiving. This is a more upbeat topic that most people worshipping in the pews of any church in this nation should find much to list.

**BIBLE REFLECTION: 1 Thessalonians 5  
Psalm 29 –  
“The Way He Wants You to Live”**

*“Be cheerful no matter what; pray all the time; thank God no matter what happens. This is the way God wants you who belong to Christ Jesus to live.*

*May God himself, the God who makes everything holy and whole, make you holy and whole, put you together – spirit, soul, and body – and keep you fit for the coming of our Master, Jesus Christ. The One who called you is completely dependable. If he said it, he’ll do it! Friends, keep your prayers.*

*Blessed be God – he heard me praying. He proved he’s on my side; I’ve thrown my lot in with him. Now I’m jumping for joy, and shouting and singing my thanks to him.”*

We begin our personal prayer journey by honoring God as a God of Glory. The Bible acknowledges the supremacy of God, the claiming of us to live a life that is abundantly free in God’s goodness and love. All that we are and all that we have are a loving and gracious gift from God designed for us for glorious living. This letting go and turning to God is often hard for people in our society to accomplish. We are told to be "take charge" people. There are hundreds of “do-it-yourself” or “self-help” books that are marketed to make you able to “be all you can be”. Turn off all the rhetoric and quietly but intentionally focus on the greatness of God who has claimed you even before you were born to live a life of good works.

**DAILY THIS WEEK**

Pray for five minutes each morning or evening praising and honoring the God of Glory as the ultimate power and provider. Be lavish and bold in your praise.

Each day write a few sentences that could be used to introduce God to a group of people of your own imagination. Some ideas are; (1) introduce God as a kind, benevolent and loving parent who has only your best interests at heart, (2) or as the most admired and revered person you can imagine, (3) or as a person of great accomplishment who focuses on helping the people of the world that need help the most desperately. God is all these things and more – divinely much more. Use your own imagination and as in your prayers, be bold and lavish in your praise. Continue to expand upon your praise of God each day of this week. At the conclusion, share your thoughts with others in your study group or with family or friends.

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**WEEK 2: PRAYER THEME: *Confession***

Last week we indicated that prayer was a gift from God to bring us closer to the mysteries of the Spirit. It is given so it can become a part of our natural human response. This week we are acknowledging that although prayer is given so it will become a part of our natural human response, it still isn't easy! There is a difference between the tendency to pray and the practice of prayer. To pray consistently is not easy. It requires commitment and discipline.

Part of the difficulty, I believe, is that many people have the perception that you need some sort of special credentials to pray the "right" way, especially in public. The truth is that prayer does not have to be clean, polished or pretty – it can be squeezed out of frustration, shame, ugliness or desperation. It is the opportunity to have the ultimate conversation with the ultimate listener. The ultimate openness with the ultimate understander.

We are all sinners and have failed to live the glorious life God had planned for us. That is why, at the beginning of worship, we pray, "Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid." **No secrets are hid.** Wow, talk about exposing yourself to scrutiny! Prayer is the only conversation where complete open freedom coincides with complete grace. Prayer is the place to confess your sins and receive the healing connectedness of forgiveness.

**BIBLE REFLECTION: I John 1 – "Walk in the Light"**

*"This, in essence, is the message we heard from Christ and are passing on to you: God is light, pure light; there's not a trace of darkness in him."*

*"If we claim that we experience a shared life with him and continue to stumble around in the dark, we're obviously lying through our teeth – we're not living what we claim. But if we walk in the light, God himself being the light, we also experience a shared life with one another, as the sacrificed blood of Jesus, God's Son, purges all our sin".*

*"If we claim that we're free of sin, we're only fooling ourselves. A claim like that is errant nonsense. On the other hand, if we admit our sins – make a clean breast of them – he won't let us down; he'll be true to himself. He'll forgive our sins and purge us of all wrongdoing. If we claim that we've never sinned, we out and out contradict God – make a liar out of him. A claim like that only shows off our ignorance of God".*

The worst personal consequence of sin is that it separates us from God. Just as the young man in the parable of the Prodigal Son, our stubbornness and wrongdoing causes us to become estranged from our loving parent. But if we admit our sins, God is eager to forgive us and also to clean our heart and mind so the sin can be forgotten and life can move forward in harmony and connectedness.

**DAILY THIS WEEK**

Pray for five minutes each morning or evening concentrating on the wrongful thoughts and deeds of your soul, heart, mind or hands that are causing separation between you and God.

God's word says that just as he forgives us, we should be eager to forgive those who wrong us. Create a list of times when you felt distanced from a parent, partner, child, friend, etc. What happened to bridge that distance? If there are still unresolved issues, what can you do to seek forgiveness or grant forgiveness? Build upon your list each day of this week and be prepared to share with your study group or family or friends, how this exercise has cleansed your soul and made your journey lighter.

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