

Optional Review: Prayer Practice 8—Creating Prayer Cards

If you practiced using prayer cards this week, what did you learn about your prayer life through this practice? (If you practiced a different prayer discipline, then feel free to share about it.)

Romans 8:28 And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. 29 For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren;

1. **How can we trust that God is working through both the good and the challenging things in life to accomplish His purposes and conform us to the image of His Son?**

Romans 5:8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

2. **Why is it important for our confidence to rest in God's grace rather than in our performance or ability to understand our circumstances?**

Psalms 63:1 O God, You are my God; I shall seek You earnestly;
My soul thirsts for You, my flesh yearns for You,
In a dry and weary land where there is no water.

3. **How can difficult seasons deepen our longing for the Lord Himself?**

Colossians 4:2 Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving;

4. **How does practicing prayer help us remain devoted to prayer, alert to what God is doing, and thankful?**

Lesson 9 Question to Answer: What should I do when God doesn't seem to answer my prayer?

Lesson 9 Summary Statement: We look to the love God has demonstrated in Christ, continue asking boldly, and surrender completely as we trust our Father's story. (Chapters 19-21 from A Praying Life by Paul E. Miller) **Pick and choose what you use!**

Section 1: Trusting Our Father's Story

A. "God wants to do something bigger than simply answer my prayers. The act of praying draws God into my life and begins to change me, the pray-er, in subtle ways." p. 150

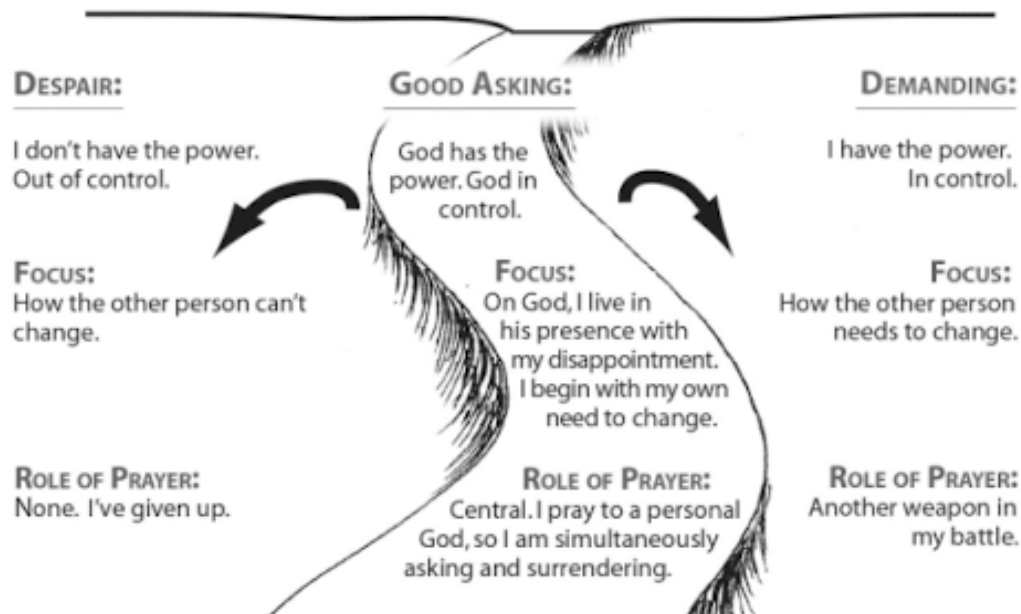
B. “Our prayers don’t exist in a world of their own. We are in dialogue with a personal, divine Spirit who wants to shape us as much as he wants to hear from us.” p. 152

C. “Most of us isolate prayer from the rest of what God is doing in our lives, but God doesn’t work that way. Prayer doesn’t exist in some rarified spiritual world; it is part of the warp and woof of our lives. Prayer itself becomes a story.” p. 152

D. “We forget that God is not a genie but a person who wants to shape us in the image of His Son as much as he wants to answer our prayers.” p. 153

5. What is “something bigger” that God wants to do in our lives? Are you willing to let God shape your life, even when that involves difficulty? Why or why not?

E. “The following chart summarizes the two attitudes that keep us from entering into the story that God is weaving in their lives of our children (or any person). Often we begin by being demanding, and then as we encounter human self-will, we drift into despair.” p. 153 (Another chart on “Good Asking” was on page 118.)



6. Do your prayers flow out of seeing God’s overarching story for your life and the lives of those around you?

7. Do you tend more towards despair or being demanding?

F. “I, completely undeserving, received the greatest gift of all, eternal life, because of God’s love and his grace upon me.” p. 160

8. Do you spend time in prayer meditating on God’s boundless love and amazing grace? If so, how is this helpful? Does it help you trust the good He is working toward in your life?

Section 2: Trusting God in the Desert

G. "The hardest part of being in the desert is that there is no way out. You don't know when it will end. There is no relief in sight. A desert can be almost anything. It can be a child who has gone astray, a difficult boss, or even your own sin or foolishness. Maybe you married your desert. God customizes deserts for each of us." p. 167

H. "Suffering burns away the false selves created by cynicism or pride or lust. You stop caring about what people think of you. The desert is God's best hope for the creation of an authentic self." p. 168

I. "Desert life sanctifies you. You have no idea you are changing. You simply notice after you've been in the desert awhile that you are different. Things that used to be important no longer matter." p. 169

J. "The desert becomes a window to the heart of God. He finally gets your attention because he's the only game in town." p. 169

K. "Without realizing it, you have learned to pray continuously. The clear, fresh water of God's presence that you discover in the desert becomes a well inside your own heart." p. 169

L. "Thanksgiving helps us to be grace-centered, seeing all of life as a gift. It looks at how God's past blessings impact our lives. Watchfulness alerts us to the unfolding drama in the present. It looks for God's present working as it unfolds into future grace. Watch for the story God is weaving in your life." p. 171

9. Why does God take those He loves through a desert?

10. What is/was your desert?

11. Have you seen fruit from your desert? How?

Section 3: Prayer Practice 9—Watching for God's Story

In your day to day life this week, bring one ongoing prayer request to your Father. Ask boldly for what you desire, then surrender the outcome to Him. Slow down to remember His demonstrated love in Christ, and watch for His work in your life. Close by thanking Him for His goodness, even as you wait for an answer.