

BWC UPPER ROOM PRAYER MINISTRY TRAINING
LESSON 2: PERSONAL PRAYER TIME

Prayer is the foundation of our relationship with the Lord. This course will show you not only the importance of building a close relationship with the Lord through prayer, but also how to pray in power to be effective in your prayer life.

INTRODUCTION

Personal prayer time is priority number with God because He is an individual God. YOU are His top priority! There is nothing more important to God than the personal intimate fellowship time you spend with Him! That is what this lesson is all about. In this lesson we are going to learn how to develop your personal prayer time and hopefully avoid some of the pitfalls that can distract us from this walk! Let's get started!

I. WHAT IS GOD'S DEFINITION OF PERSONAL PRAYER TIME?

God's definition of personal prayer time is having a conversation with Him one on one. Personal prayer time is not intercessory prayer or spiritual warfare. These types of prayer are "Kingdom business" prayer times. God wants an individual relationship with each one of us. He wants an intimate relationship that communicates every single day. God's definition of personal prayer time is to come to Him every day at a set time like He did with Adam in the Garden...in the cool of the day they fellowshiped together.

What does the Word say about personal prayer time?

- Colossians 4:2 *"Be earnest and unwearied and steadfast in your prayer life, being both alert and intent in your praying with thanksgiving."*
- Psalm 145:18-19 *"The Lord is near to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him sincerely and in truth. He will fulfill the desires of those who reverently and worshipfully fear Him; He also will hear their cry and will save them."*
- Jeremiah 29:11-12 *"For I know the thoughts and plans I have for you, says the Lord, thoughts and plans for welfare and peace and not for evil, to give you hope in your final outcome. Then you will call upon Me, and you will come and pray to Me, and I will hear and heed you."*
- Genesis 3:8 *"And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden."*

II. THE INTIMATE RELATIONSHIP: SOLID GROUND OR SHIFTING SAND?

Is your relationship with God built on a solid concrete foundation or is it

shifting sand that moves with your emotional state? This is a hard question.

Think about an intimate relationship with another person such as a spouse. For example, a couple who lives in the same house but don't talk intimately or don't do things together or share any common interests, are not going to stay together

forever. Why? Because every human being craves intimacy on some level. On the other hand, the couple who talk every day, say “I love you” every day or regularly, who spend time together visiting and doing things together are going to have a close, strong and loving relationship. It is the same way with the intimate relationship with God. Time spent with Him in fellowship or asking for help with personal problems or just venting to Him. All these things are what build an intimate relationship.

The more time you spend with God, the more you are going to trust Him. And the more you trust Him, the more confident you are going to be in believing Him for really impossible situations! It is in the intimate relationship where trust is born and established. It results in the immovable belief that God is a good God and the devil is a bad devil! When this foundation is built, your faith cannot be moved by anything the enemy throws at you—and that makes YOU very dangerous to him.

Psalm 63:1-3 “O God, You are my God, earnestly will I seek You; my inner self thirsts for You, my flesh longs and is faint for You, in a dry and weary land where no water is. So I have look upon You in the sanctuary to see Your power and Your glory.”

James 4:8 “Come close to God and He will come close to you. [Recognize that you are] sinners, get your soiled hands clean; [realize that you have been disloyal] wavering individuals with divided interests, and purify your hearts [of your spiritual adultery].”

Isaiah 65:24 “And it shall be that before they call I will answer; and while they are yet speaking I will hear.”

Philippians 3:10 ““[For my determined purpose is] that I may know Him [that I may progressively become more deeply and intimately acquainted with him, perceiving and recognizing and understanding the wonders of His Person more strongly and more clearly], and that I may in that same way come to know the power out flowing from His resurrection [which it exerts over believers], and that I may so share His sufferings as to be continually transformed [in spirit into His likeness even] to His

death, [in the hope] that if possible [spiritual and moral] resurrection [that lifts me] out from among the dead [even while in the body.]”

III. THERE IS NO SUBSTITUTE: GOOD WORKS ARE NOT A SUBSTITUTE FOR PERSONAL PRAYER TIME!

All too often believers (myself included) have fallen into the trap of substituting “good works” or “Martha” activities for real personal time with the Lord.

Let’s look at Mary and Martha to see this principle in action and what Jesus had to say about it.

“Now while they were on their way, it occurred that Jesus entered a certain village, and a woman named Martha received and welcomed Him into her house. And she had a sister named Mary, who seated herself at the Lord’s feet and was listening to His teaching. But Martha [overly occupied and too busy] was distracted with much serving; and she came up to Him and said, Lord, is it nothing to You that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me [to lend a hand and do her part along with me]! But the Lord replied to her by saying, Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things; There is need of only one or but a few things. Mary has chosen the good portion [that which is to her advantage], which shall not be taken away from her.” (Luke 10:38-42)

This doesn't mean we don't do things for the kingdom. Martha’s work was important. But she could have done it AFTER participating in the teachings of the Lord. Where there is a will there is a way to make it happen.

It’s important to participate in the ministries at church, BUT this participation does NOT replace personal intimate time with the Lord! We all still must have that one on one time alone with Him as the foundation of our Christian walk. Without this foundation, our works are dead anyway. Futile and useless.

Good works are the RESULT of a strong personal prayer time. How is this so? It is in the personal prayer time where the Lord gives instructions. These instructions will be used to help others—these are the “good works” that will bring people into the Kingdom. A strong personal and intimate relationship with the Lord will cause you to develop the fruit of the Spirit, which the Word of God says in Ephesians 5:9 *“for the fruit (the effect, the product) of the Light or the Spirit consists in every form of*

kindly goodness, uprightness of heart, and trueness of life.” Also in Galatians 5:22 ***“But the fruit of the Holy Spirit [the work which His presence within accomplishes] is LOVE, JOY (gladness), PEACE, PATIENCE, (an even temper, forbearance), KINDNESS, GOODNESS (benevolence) FAITHFULNESS, GENTLENESS (meekness, humility), SELF-CONTROL (self-restraint, continence). Against such things there is no law that can bring a charge.”***

Basically, what I’m saying is to get your priorities straight. Always, always, always put your personal time and relationship with Jesus first. You can’t go wrong if you put Him first. Yes, the Kingdom needs lots of workers. Yes, the church needs your talents. Yes, there will always be things for the children of God to do for Him. However, this will NEVER replace in His heart the place of intimacy with you! And it should never replace it in YOUR heart either.

What does the Word say about this?

James 2:18 “But someone will say [to you then], You [say you] have faith, and I have good works. Now you show me your [alleged] faith apart from any [good] works [if you can], and I by [good] works [of obedience] will show you my faith.”

James 2:22 “You see that his faith was cooperating with his works, and his faith was completed and reached its supreme expression [when he implemented] it by good works.”

Matthew 13:45-46 “Again the kingdom of heaven is like a man who is a dealer in search of fine and precious pearls. Who, on finding a single pearl of great price, went and sold all he had and bought it.”

Revelation 3:20 “Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears and listens to and heeds My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will eat with him, and he will eat with Me.”

IV. HOW MUCH TIME ARE WE TALKING ABOUT?

How much time are we supposed to spend building our personal relationship with the Lord? Well, that depends on variables in your life.

† What is your schedule? Are you retired or do you work 5 plus days a week? If you work, do you work days or nights?

† Do you have children to care for? Do you have a marriage to work on? Are you the primary care giver of your parents or siblings?

These are all considerations that will determine how much time you can spend with the Lord to start with. But be warned, the more time you spend in His presence, the more you will want to spend and you will find the time somewhere to spend with Him. For example, if you work a regular job and commute an hour each way, which is a 10-hour work day. After a day like that, it's hard to do anything other than collapse on the couch and stare into space! So how can I make time to spend personal time with Jesus with a schedule like this? If I'm a morning person, I can get up an hour early (which is what I do) and spend time with Him. I call it "Coffee with Jesus" time. It's just thanking and praising Him and sitting in His presence. If I'm a night owl, I would get everything done for the evening and then spend time with Him before I go to bed. These are just examples of how we can make time in the real world.

This personal prayer time is totally between YOU and GOD. God is an INDIVIDUAL God. He loves us all equally and individually. He is fully aware of every detail of your life and He has a plan in place for YOU to develop and grow

your personal relationship with Him! How much time are we talking about? Some people have an hour, others have a half hour and still others only have fifteen minutes. It is not the amount of time spent, it is the faith and passion on your part for Him. Fifteen minutes in the presence of God can change a life forever! The important thing is to make the decision and then decide when to meet with Him—then do it!

Matthew 6:33 “But seek (aim at and strive after) first of all His kingdom and His righteousness (His way of doing and being right), and then all these things taken together will be given you besides.”

John 15:4-7 “Dwell in Me, and I will dwell in you. Live in Me and I will live in you. Just as no branch can bear fruit of itself without abiding in (being vitally united to) the vine, neither can you bear fruit unless you abide in Me. I am the Vine; you are the branches. Whoever lives in Me and I in him bears much fruit. However, apart from Me you can do nothing.”

V. PENCIL IT IN! MAKING PERSONAL PRAYER TIME A PRIORITY

This brings us to actually including it in our daily schedule. It's one thing to say “yes, I'll do it” and quite another thing to pencil it in to the daily schedule.

Remember this: Satan will resist you at every opportunity to distract you from meeting with Jesus! Let's be honest, some days are so crazy, it's time to fall into bed before you know it! When days like that happen to me, I spend the last twenty minutes visiting with Him...that will work too! Remember, HE LOVES YOU!

Christianity is a relationship—not a religion and because of the relationship between you and God, there is a lot of flexibility. God is not waiting to beat you over the head for not making it to visit with Him at the appointed time. The important thing is what is the desire of your HEART? Is your heart full of passion for Him? He looks on the heart. Yes, it is important to make time for the personal relationship, but the personal

relationship is NOT a religious activity...it is a relationship building activity. Just like a marriage. It has to be worked on to be successful.

VI. IT'S NOT A RELIGION, IT'S A RELATIONSHIP

Let's look at the differences between a RELIGION and a RELATIONSHIP.

- † Religion is stiff and unyielding while a relationship is pliable and flexible.
- † Religion has no power or life while a relationship is full of life and life is power.
- † Religion is cold and dead while a relationship is full of hope and purpose.

Jesus was always at odds with the religious leaders of His day—because their hearts were cold towards God. Religion leads to death. Relationship leads to life!

What does the Word say?

Mark 7:3 “For the Pharisees and all of the Jews do not eat unless [merely for ceremonial reason] they wash their hands [diligently up to the elbow] with clenched fist, adhering carefully and faithfully to the tradition of [practices and customs handed down to them by] their forefathers [to be observed].”

Matthew 23:23 “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, pretenders (hypocrites)! For you give a tenth of your mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected and omitted the weightier matters of the Law—right and justice and mercy and fidelity. These you ought [particularly] to have done, without neglecting the others.”

Romans 14:17 “[After all] the kingdom of God is not a matter of getting the food and drink one likes, but instead it is righteousness (that state which makes a person acceptable to God) and [heart] peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.”

John 14:1-2 “Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in and adhere to and trust in God; believe in and adhere to and trust also in Me. In My Father's house there are many dwelling places (homes). If it were not so, I would have told you; for I am going away to prepare a place for you.”

VII. DEEPER AND DEEPER

Here is what happens when you start the journey of the intimate relationship through personal prayer time: Once you experience the first encounter of His awesome presence, you will want to go back again and again. He is totally irresistible. You

will begin to re-evaluate your schedule and make arrangements to spend more and more time with Him. Your life will begin to blossom in ways that are amazing—not material things—rather the spiritual things that are so valuable like peace and purpose. He does bless materially though! I can testify to that! You will notice that your lifestyle will begin to change. The closer you get to Him, the more He is going to change you into His image!

For me, He moved my television time to a really back burner! I pretty much gave up TV and let Him have the living room! The deeper you go, the narrower the path gets, but the more fun you have with Him. He starts cleaning you up—I mean really getting to the root of what makes you tick! Then He will begin to form you more and more into what He wants—His original plan for you. For me, my flesh is being broken by fasting. This is the year of the fast He said. Who knows where this will take me?

VIII. FALLING IN LOVE WITH JESUS CHRIST

The personal prayer time leads to an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ and this leads to falling completely head over heels in love with Him. Sooner or later, as you continue to pursue Him in the personal relationship, He will literally become your all in all. He will be the first thing you think of when you wake up and the last thing before you go to sleep. Your decisions will be based on His will for your life, not your own. He literally becomes the center of your world. Yes, people will think you are strange, but you know what? The Bible says we are a “peculiar” people! The people who love Jesus are indeed peculiar!

IX. THE POWER OF ONE

God has the ability to use one person to do amazing things! A person who is fully committed to Him can literally turn the world upside down for Him. Has this ever happened? You bet it has! Let's look at some folks in the Bible where God used the "power of one" to change the world!

THE POWER OF ONE: JESUS CHRIST

Jesus Christ changed the entire world—He is still changing the world over two thousand years later! What made Jesus such a game changer for God? THE PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP with the Father! As we saw last week, Jesus spent hours with the Father. He didn't care about eating or sleeping. All He cared about was spending time with His Father! This made Him the most dangerous foe Satan had—that He still has!

I Corinthians 2:8 says *"None of the rulers of this age or world perceived and recognized and understood this, for if they had, they would never have crucified the Lord of glory."*

THE POWER OF ONE: ABRAHAM

Abraham is called by God Himself as His FRIEND. This ONE man has blessed the whole world. This childless old man became the Father of many nations. To this day millions of people: Arab and Jew both call Abraham their father. And He is their mutual ancestor. Abraham had something that others did not: he had a personal relationship with God: Elohim. This relationship blossomed into an incredible friendship where Jesus said "Shall I keep this thing from my friend Abraham?" Because of this friendship, Abraham

was able to intercede for entire cities to be spared God's justified judgment. (See Genesis 18:1-33)

THE POWER OF ONE: ENOCH

Enoch's personal relationship became so intimate that He was translated in a physical body to heaven to be with God! Enoch's heart was so passionate about God that He and God just kept on walking together all the way to heaven. Enoch developed his relationship over several hundred years. He was over three hundred years old when he went home. Can you imagine how close He was to God after three hundred years of seeking Him? Enoch's life inspired Noah who also walked with God. Enoch's prophecies of the end times are yet to be fulfilled and are quoted in the book of Jude. One man's personal relationship...think about it.

Genesis 5:22-24 says "Enoch walked in habitual fellowship with God after the birth of Methuselah 300 years and had other sons and daughters. So all the days of Enoch were 365 years, and Enoch walked in habitual fellowship with God; and he was not, for God took him home with Him."

THE POWER OF ONE: ELIJAH

Elijah was one powerful prophet. He knew God. What is more He BELIEVED God implicitly. He had no doubt at all. Why? Because He knew God Jehovah and he loved Him. Elijah spoke words that stood the test of time. It didn't rain until he said it could. The widow's flour and oil didn't run out until he was finished at her house. Elijah called down literal fire from heaven to burn a bull on a water soaked altar in front of all Israel and prophets of Baal. The fire consumed it and the water too! How was Elijah able to do these things? He knew God in a personal relationship.

THE POWER OF ONE: MOSES

Moses the beloved Servant of God. The man who saw God face to face. Whose face was radiating so much light the people cowered in fear before him. He spent a total of 80 days on a mountain with the Creator of the Universe writing the Law for the people

to follow. The Law that led to Jesus the Messiah. He was in His very presence and His glory covered Moses. When he came down from that mountain, the people freaked out at his face! Moses spent so much time with God; it was incredible the things God used him to do for forty years! His life was amazing...and God loved him so much!

THE POWER OF ONE: YOU

What can God do with YOUR life when you make the decision to enter an intimate relationship through the personal prayer time? God has so many wonderful things for each one of us! He has put talents in us that are as yet undeveloped. It is in the personal prayer time, the intimate relationship where they are uncovered and developed. Whoever says that God is boring just doesn't have a clue! There is absolutely NOTHING boring about God! It is literally a new world every day for the child of God who is pursuing Him in an intimate relationship! Start today...start now