

Great Prayers of the Bible

Participant Guide Handout Sheets

If you're working with a class or small group, feel free to duplicate the following handouts in this appendix at no additional charge. If you'd like to print 8-1/2" x 11" sheets, you can download the free Participant Guide handout sheets at:

www.jesuswalk.com/greatprayers/greatprayers-lesson-handouts.pdf

Discussion Questions

You'll find 4 to 5 questions for each lesson. Lesson 11 is a double lesson with 9 questions. Each question may include several sub-questions. These are designed to get group members engaged in discussion of the key points of the passage. If you're running short of time, feel free to skip questions or portions of questions.

1. The Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:5-15)
2. Moses' Prayer for Israel in the Wilderness (Exodus 32:9-14)
3. Abraham's Prayer for Sodom (Genesis 18:16-33)
4. David's Prayer for Pardon and Confession of Sin (Psalm 51)
5. David's Prayer at the End of Life (1 Chronicles 29:9-20)
6. Hezekiah's Petitions for Deliverance and Healing (2 Kings 19:14-19; 20:1-7)
7. David's Psalm of Surrender (Psalm 139)
8. Daniel's Confession on Behalf of His People (Daniel 9:1-19)
9. Nehemiah's Prayer for Success (Nehemiah 1:1-2:9)
10. Jesus' Prayer of Submission at Gethsemane (Luke 22:39-46)
11. Paul's Prayers for the Ephesian Believers (Ephesians 1:15-23; 3:14-21)

1. The Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:5-15)

Q1. What about our lives and words "hallows" the name of our Father? What desecrates and besmirches it? How should we "hallow" the Father when we begin to pray?

Q2. In what sense are we asking that the Father's kingdom should come? Why are we asking for the Father's will to be done here on earth? How should this prayer affect our living?

Q3. Why do we seek to be independent of asking *anyone* for help? Why do we seek to be independent of God? Why should we ask God to "give" us daily bread so long as we can earn a living for ourselves?

Q4. Why should we continually ask forgiveness? How can unforgiveness on our part block God's blessing? How can unforgiveness block God's forgiveness?

2. Moses' Intercession for Israel (Exodus 32:9-14)

Q1. Read Exodus 32:1-14. What had the people done that was so bad? How can a loving God be angry? Is God's sentence to destroy Israel and raise up a new nation through Moses justified?

Q2. What aspects of Moses' prayer of intercession should we emulate in our own prayers? Upon what logical grounds does Moses offer this bold appeal to God? What do you think it means to "pray the promises of God"? How does knowing the Bible help you get your prayers answered? How does this help our prayers be within God's will?

Q3. How can a wrong understanding of determinism and predestination keep us from the kind of gutsy prayer that Moses prayed? What do you call a belief that our prayers make no difference to God's response?

Q4. How can prayer change God's mind without conflicting with the doctrine of the Immutability of God? Can God answer a prayer for something outside of the scope of his will?

3. Abraham's Prayer for Sodom (Genesis 18:16-33)

Q1. What is the basis of Abraham's argument that God should spare Sodom? How does it relate to God's character?

Q2. How did Abraham demonstrate his humility before God? Why must boldness be tempered with humility?

Q3. Do you think Abraham's boldness pleased God? Why or why not? What might cause God to take delight in your prayers to him?

Q4. In what way does Abraham show persistence? Why is persistence necessary in prayer? Have you ever experienced "praying through"? What was it like?

4. David's Prayer for Pardon and Confession of Sin (Psalm 51)

Q1. In what way does a prayer for pardon require faith? What is that faith based on? How does a person gain the faith to pray this prayer in confidence?

Q2. In his prayer does David seek to minimize his sins? To maximize them? Why does an authentic prayer for pardon require clear, unvarnished acknowledgement of sin to be effective?

Q3. Is it possible to have a pure heart? How does God bring about a pure heart? What is our part in this?

Q4. What does it mean to have a broken heart and spirit? Why is this essential in the prayer for pardon? In what sense is this a "sacrifice"? Why do we tend to resist a "broken and contrite heart" in ourselves?

5. David's Prayer of Praise at the End of Life (1 Chronicles 29:9-20)

Q1. In what way do our prayers of praise “bless” God? What do we mere humans have that God desires in a blessing? What are prayers like, that *don't* include blessing God?

Q2. In what way does praise exalt God? Why should we exalt God? What does this exaltation do in us? What does it say about us?

Q3. Verses 11 and 12 both attribute various characteristics to God, such as glory, honor, and might. How might you begin to mention God's greatness in your own prayers? Where is this kind of praise found by example in the Lord's Prayer? What are your favorite songs that point to God's greatness?

Q4. Why is a person's attitude with regard to giving related to that person's attitude towards praise? Why does an attitude of possessiveness with regards to giving get in the way of worship? In what sense do all your possessions belong to God? What then should be your relationship to your possessions? How will these truths re-energize your giving? Your praise?

6. David's Psalm of Surrender to the Searcher (Psalm 139)

Q1. (139:7) Why do people sometimes want to flee from God? Why do people imagine that God doesn't know what they do? Have you ever felt this way?

Q2. (139:5, 10). In verses 5 and 10, how does God's hand touch the psalmist? Have you ever felt God's hand on you in a special way? Was it for your good? What was it like?

"Woven together" (NIV), "intricately woven" (NRSV), and "curiously wrought" (KJV) is *rāqam*, "variegate, weave with variegated threads, also with threads of gold and silver," "suggesting the complex patterns and colors of the weaver or embroiderer."

Q3. (139:13-16) How does an awareness of God's involvement in your prenatal development meant to encourage you? What might this mean to a young woman carrying a child? A young father-to-be? Why is such knowledge overwhelming to us?

Q4. (139:23-24) Why is this prayer of surrender to God so difficult to pray? When was the first time you prayed this kind of prayer to God? What was the result? Can a person be a genuine disciple without praying this kind of prayer?

7. Hezekiah's Petitions for Deliverance and Healing (2 Kg 19:14-19; 20:1-7)

Chronology of the Hezekiah's Life

- 722 BC. Fall of Samaria, end of Northern Kingdom
- 716 BC. Hezekiah begins sole reign
- 701 BC. Sennacherib invades Palestine, threatens Jerusalem
- 700 BC. Hezekiah's sickness
- 687 BC. Hezekiah dies

Q1. (19:14) What is the significance of Hezekiah spreading out the enemy's message before the Lord? What is the underlying principle illustrated here? How can we apply this principle to our own lives? What happens when we don't apply this principle?

Q2. (19:15) How do the first two sentences of Hezekiah's prayer (verse 15) correspond to the first sentence of the Lord's Prayer? How are they important to faith? How are they important to God answering the prayer?

Q3. Why is Hezekiah's healing important for his nation? How did it relate to God's promises to David?

Q4. (20:3) What is the basis on which Hezekiah asks for healing? Why is personal righteousness and holiness important in getting your prayers answered? How can unrighteousness prevent answered prayer if all gifts from God are by grace anyway?

8. Daniel's Confession on Behalf of His People (Daniel :1-19)

Daniel's Life Chronology

605 BC. Daniel Exiled to Babylon

602 BC. Entered service of Nebuchadnezzar (605-562)

553 BC. Belshazzar serves as co-regent with his father (553-539)

539 BC. Cyrus II ("the Great," 559-530 BC) of Persia captures Babylon,
Darius set over Babylon

539 BC. Daniel thrown into the Lion's Den for prayer

539 BC. Daniel prays Prayer of Confession for Israel

Q1. (9:1-3) What encourages Daniel to seek God for the forgiveness and restoration of Israel to its homeland? What trait on Daniel's part brings this encouragement to pass?

Q2. (9:3-4a) What is Daniel's demeanor as he prays? How does he prepare? Why is this so important in this case? In what ways might you and I prepare for intercession?

Q3. (9:5) Since Daniel is such a righteous man in his generation, why does he identify himself with the sins of his people? He didn't commit them. How does this compare to how Jesus sought forgiveness for his people?

Q4. (9:15-19) What was Daniel's essential prayer? On what basis does Daniel make his request? How did God answer the prayer?

9. Nehemiah's Prayer for Success (Nehemiah 1:1-2:9)

Chronology of Post-Exilic Period

- 605 BC Daniel deported to Babylon
- 597 BC Jerusalem sacked, first deportation
- 587 BC Jerusalem destroyed, second deportation
- 582 BC Third and final deportation (Jeremiah 52:28-30)
- 539 BC Fall of Babylon to Persians, Cyrus' Edit
- 538 BC First return to Jerusalem
- 536/37 BC Temple construction begins
- 520 BC Temple construction resumed
- 516 BC Temple completed
- 458 BC Ezra goes to Jerusalem
- 445 BC Nehemiah goes to Jerusalem to repair the walls and gates
- 420 BC Malachi prophesies, end of the Old Testament



Q1. (1:1-6) Why does Nehemiah pray day and night for four months? Why does he fast and weep? Isn't that excessive?

Q2. (1:7-11) What is the basis of Nehemiah's appeal? How does he argue his case before God? What do we learn from this about intercession?

Q3. (1:11) Does God place his people in strategic positions today in the community, in business, in the military, in government? If so, do we have responsibilities to God that can cause danger to our positions and our lives? Has this ever happened to you? How do you pray in situations like that?

Q4. (2:4) What danger is Nehemiah in? Why does he pray quickly and silently before he answers the king? How does this quick "arrow prayer" relate to the four months of prayer he has just finished?

10. Jesus' Prayer of Submission at Gethsemane (Luke 22:39-46)

Q1. (22:40-41) Why did he ask his disciples to pray? What was the content of their prayer to be? Did they actually pray this prayer diligently? How does the Lord's Prayer word this kind of prayer? Why do you think Jesus wanted to be alone during his own prayer?

Parts of Jesus' Prayer

1. **A**_____. "Father"
2. **C**_____. "... if you are willing..."
3. **P**_____. "Take this cup from me..."
4. **S**_____. "... yet not my will, but yours be done."

Q2. (22:42) Why did Jesus pray that the Father take the cup from him? According to Mark and Matthew, Jesus repeated this prayer three times. Why was he so intense about it? What did this mean? Why was Jesus resisting the Father's will? Or was he?

Q3. (22:42) When Jesus prayed "not my will, but yours be done," was the Father pleased? Why is the Father not pleased when we are passive and uncaring and dispassionate in our prayers that his will be done? What is required for us to pray the prayer of submission with authenticity?

Q4. (22:43) Did Jesus get "special treatment" because he was the Son of God to have angels help and strengthen him in his spiritual struggle? Do we get that help, too?

Answers: 1. Address, 2. Condition, 3. Petition, 4. Submission.

11. Paul’s Prayers for the Ephesian Believers (Ephesians 1:15-20; 3:14-21)

Petition		Purpose
Part 1 (1:17-19)		
1. May he may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation (1:17a)	→	so that (<i>en</i>) you may know him better. (1:17b)
2. May you may receive insight (1:18a)	→	so that (<i>eis</i>) you will comprehend and appreciate your hope, your inheritance, and God’s power (1:18b-19)
Part 2 (3:16-21)		
3. May he strengthen your inner person by his Spirit (3:16) that is, may Christ dwell in your hearts through faith. (3:17a)	X	so that (<i>hina</i>) you can comprehend and experience Christ’s love. (3:18-19a)
4. May you yourself be anchored in love (3:17b)		and so that (<i>hina</i>) you may be filled with God’s fullness. (3:19b)
Doxology	→	That (dative) God may receive glory (3:20-21)

Q1. (1:17-18). What do you learn from Paul's manner of prayer for the Ephesian believers? If Christians stopped praying for people to receive a revelation of God, would people come to know God on their own? Would God work in them at all? How important is this kind of prayer?

Q2. (1:18) How has your Christian "hope" changed your way of living? What is the result of Christians with only a meager or minute hope? How would you pray for hope to be borne in others?

Q3. (1:18) What is the result in prayer and faith if believers think that God is poverty-stricken? How does knowledge of a "glorious inheritance" motivate our lives? Our prayers? How can you pray for others to glimpse this inheritance?

Q4. (1:18) Why is a revelation of "his incomparably great power for us who believe" essential to a vital faith? How do you develop this faith in yourself? How do you pray for it for others?

Q5 (3:16-17) Why does Paul pray for strengthening of the inner man? How would we pray this prayer today? Why does he pray that Christ dwell in the believers' hearts? Isn't this already an established fact?

Q6. (3:17-19) Why does Paul pray that the believers grasp the fullest extent of Christ's love for them? How does comprehending this love change a person's spiritual life? Is there any end to Christ's love for a person?

Q7. (3:19) Have you ever prayed for a fellow believer that he or she might be "filled with all the fullness of God"? What would you be praying for with that kind of prayer? How does this prayer relate to Ephesians 5:27 and Colossians 1:28?

Q8. (3:20) How should verse 3:20 of the doxology energize your prayers? What happens when we limit God by our own ability to comprehend? How can we get past this failing?

Q9. (3:21) How can God receive more glory in your local congregation? How can you help this happen?