

## **Christian Life Foundation Course**

### **Week 2 – Growing in Our Relationship with God**

Growth is one of the classic characteristics of biological life.

Same is true in our spiritual lives.

As with our human relationships, the key to growth in our relationship with God is communication.

#### **How do we communicate with God?**

We don't see Him or hear Him, yet we believe He is present with us always.

How do we express ourselves to God, and how does God make Himself known to us?

#### **Prayer – Expressing ourselves to God.**

But wait – doesn't God already know the depths of our hearts?

So what purpose then does our prayer serve?

God's Word is full of examples of godly men's prayers

2 Chronicles 6 – Solomon's dedication of the temple

Psalm 51 – David's prayer of confession

Jesus Himself prayed continually and fervently

John 17 – Jesus' so-called High Priestly Prayer at Gethsemane

Clearly God the Father and God the Spirit knew Jesus heart completely

Yet Jesus prayed to His Father continually

Why?

God desires to communicate with His children

Luke 18:1-8 – Parable of the persistent widow

Luke 21:36 – Pray for escape from the tribulation (Holy week)

Colossians 4:2 – Continue steadfastly in prayer...

James 4:8 – Draw near to God (theme verse for this week)

Psalm 73:25-28 – Whom have I in heaven but...

Individual

Matthew 6:5-8 – Introduction to LORD's Prayer – pray in secret

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Corporate – James 5:14-16

Laying on of hands

Prayer for each other and for absent brethren

Beware of falling into gossip, advise giving, or preaching

Habitual

Seeking God when we first awaken and before we rest keeps Him on our minds

Continual

1 Thessalonians 5:16-19 – pray without ceasing

Intercessory

Bible is full of examples – Moses for the people Exodus 32 (golden calf)

God cannot and does not change His mind. Why intercessory prayer?

Honesty with God

Check ourselves – are we speaking to God, or to ourselves or others?

We need God's help even to know our own hearts

Jeremiah 17:9-10 – desperately wicked

Psalms 139:23-24 – Search me O God, and know my heart...

Jesus' model prayer

Matthew 6:5-15

God concerned with attitude in prayer more than form

model prayer gives framework for marshalling our intentions in prayer

### **Fasting**

Jesus clearly taught and practiced fasting – Luke 4

Matthew 6:17-18

Should turn focus to God – away from fleshly desires

Form of devotion – helps us marshal our devotion

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### How Does God Communicate with Us?

By His Spirit to those He chooses

Numerous examples in God's Word – "the Word of the LORD came to..."

1 Corinthians 12:4-11

Beware of false prophets – Does the "word from God" align with scripture?

False prophets are self-serving, self-enriching, and self-glorifying

True prophets are God-serving, kingdom-enriching, God-glorifying

Don't FEAR false prophets – God's got this – Philippians 1:15-18

By His Word – mostly how God speaks to us. See **Bible Study** below.

Word not subject to discernment challenges like words of prophecy – God's Word is ALWAYS true and sufficient for us.

Subject to abuse by false teachers, but God NEVER lies in His Word.

Be patient – God's not usually about instant feedback

Psalm 25:1-5

### Bible Study

Spirit-led

Seek God's illumination – understanding God's Word is impossible for our flesh

Habitual – What you feed leads. – Philippians 4:8

God has given us built-in discernment (our conscience) – C.S. Lewis cites

Memorization – Psalm 119:10-12

Meditation on God's Word

How can I apply the scripture I have read to my life today?

What is God's intended lesson for me in the scripture I have read?

Hebrews 4:12

How does the study passage relate to the Gospel – ALL scripture is about Jesus

Beware of false teachers – 2 Timothy 3:1-7

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Seek godly teaching

Does teaching align with scripture? – be a Berean

Does teaching include the hard parts of scripture?

Beware eisegesis – seek exegesis

Verse-by-verse, book-by-book provides a guard

Discern the spirits – 1 John 4:1-3

Our enemy knows and (mis)uses scripture (Luke 4)

So do his demonic and human minions

Context, context, context

Coherency of the full counsel of God's Word

Danger of eisegesis

### **Worship**

Individual

Corporate

### **Ordained Sacraments**

Communion

Do this in remembrance of me

Baptism

Public affirmation of faith – no turning back

Questions and Discussion

Memory verses

Psalm 119:11

Jeremiah 29:11-13

Matthew 6:9-13