

DISCIPLESHIP LESSON 31

1	PRAYER
----------	--------

Pray for God's guidance through his Spirit, for awareness of his presence and for listening to his voice. Dedicate this lesson about disciple making to the Lord.

2	WORSHIP (20 minutes) [CHARACTERISTIC OF GOD] GOD IS THE DELIVERER
----------	---

Meditation

Worship is to adore or praise God.

Theme: The God of the Bible is the Deliverer.

Read 2 Chronicles 20:1-23.

Read or explain the following in your own words.

1. How the LORD delivered his people in the past history.

Explain shortly how the LORD delivered his people from the attack of a large enemy.

Emphasise three things.

- When attacked, come together to seek the help from the LORD (verse 4).
- Acknowledge to the LORD and to one another that you have no power to face the attackers (verse 12).
- Do not fight against your attackers in your own power and do not be afraid or discouraged. Believe that the LORD will fight the battle in your place and that you will be delivered (verse 15-17,20).

2. How the LORD delivers today.

Let the people shortly share how the LORD has delivered them from an attack in the past.

Worship

Take turns to worship God as the Deliverer. Worship in small groups of three people each.

3	SHARING (20 minutes) [QUIET TIMES] EXODUS 7:14 – 10:29
----------	--

Take turns and **share (or read)** from your notes) in short what you have learned from one of your quiet times out of the assigned Bible passages (Exodus 7:14 – 10:29).

Listen to the person sharing, take him serious and accept him. Do not discuss what he shares.

4	TEACHING (70 minutes) [PRAYER] USING GOD'S WORDS IN THE BIBLE TO PRAY
----------	---

Teach. Reading or hearing the words in the Bible is the way you hear God speaking to you. And praying is the way God hears you speaking to him. Learn to use your Bible during your prayers. It also contains prayers you can pray to God.

A. MOTIVATION: WHY USE THE BIBLE WORDS IN YOUR PRAYERS

1. Through the words in the Bible you will know what to pray for.

Especially when you have just become a Christian, you are not sure what to pray for. In the Bible you can find many prayers you could use in your own praying to God. You can for example use the prayers in the Psalms and the Prophets or the prayers of Jesus and the apostles. They have formulated your thoughts, feelings and struggles in different prayers. And they have formulated your questions to God.

In Acts 4:18-31 we read how people in the New Testament times used words of the Bible in their prayers. They quoted verses from Psalm 2 that also described their struggle. In the same way we may use the words in the Bible in our prayers, because they contain the experiences of believers that are similar to our experiences.

The apostles noticed how the Jewish authorities tried to stop Jesus doing his God-given task. They planned a complot against him (Luke 22:47-71). They saw how the Roman authorities raged against Jesus Christ (God's Anointed) and crucified him (Luke 23:1-56). They witnessed how the Jewish king Herod and the Roman governor Pontius Pilate became friends through their mutual enmity against Christ (Luke 23:12). The apostles had healed a paralyzed man and

this caused many Jews to believe in Jesus Christ (Acts 3:1-26). The Jewish authorities arrested the apostles, threw them into jail and in a mock trial forbade them to preach and teach Jesus Christ to people (Acts 4:1-22). The purpose of these threats was to silence the Christians. But precisely these threats caused Christians to pray and speak with greater confidence! They asked God to give them even greater boldness in proclaiming the gospel. In their prayers they used the words of Psalm 2:1-2.

2. With the words in the Bible you will pray boldly.

Read 1 John 5:14.

Besides the prayers recorded in the Bible, God also reveals his will with respect to many areas of life in the Bible. He gives instructions, wisdom and promises. If you use these Bible verses about promises, wisdom and instructions in your prayers, you would more often pray about things that are pleasing to God. You would easier and with greater boldness ask for things that are in agreement with his revealed will. This makes you surer that God really hears your prayers and gives you a growing expectation that that many of your prayers would be answered!

B. METHOD: HOW TO USE THE BIBLE WORDS IN YOUR PRAYERS

Teach. There are four very practical ways to use the words in the Bible during your prayers.

1. Use the words in the Bible during your prayer in your quiet time with God.

Read a Bible passage, choose a favourite truth from this passage and meditate on this truth. Finally, use your thoughts about these truths to pray to God. Pray your thoughts about this truth *as a response back to God*. Pray this truth for yourself, for someone in your family, for someone nearby and for someone far away. When you pray together with a friend, then you could also pray this truth for your friend.

2. Use the words in the Bible during your prayer in your Bible study.

Study a passage in the Bible. At the end, pray the important truths God has taught you in the Bible that day *as a response back to God*. Pray especially about how God wants you to apply one of the truths of this Bible passage to your life.

3. Use the words in the Bible during your personal prayer time.

Read a Bible passage and try to understand the truths. Finally pray the truths from each verse, verse by verse, *as a response back to God*. Use the thoughts, feelings, questions and requests of the Bible writer to express your own thoughts, feelings, questions and requests to God.

4. Use the words in the Bible during your prayer time with others.

Read a Bible passage together with a group of Christians and try to understand the truths. Divide the group into small groups of two to three people each. Every group prays the truths of the Bible passage, verse by verse, as a response back to God. Take turns to pray about the truths of one verse at a time. For example, the first person prays shortly about the truths in verse 1 and thereafter the second person prays shortly about the truths of verse 2, etc. This method is good, because all the new Christians know what to pray for (namely what is written in the Bible verses) and everybody in the group gets several chances to pray. Usually it is easier to pray with one other person than to pray in a large group.

C. EXAMPLES OF USING THE WORDS IN THE BIBLE IN YOUR PRAYERS

The Book of the Psalms is a book containing many prayers. The prayers could be divided mainly into three groups.

- prayers to God with respect to meeting your personal needs.
- prayers to God with respect to restoring or deepening your relationship to God.
- prayers to God with respect to meeting the needs of other people.

1. Prayers with respect to meeting your personal needs.

The writers of the Bible were ordinary people like you and me. Sometimes they felt very far away from God and at other times they felt close to God. Sometimes they mourned about their sins and at other times rejoiced in what God has done for them. Sometimes they suffered under oppression and persecution of evil people and sometimes they were indignant about what their enemies were doing. Sometimes they prayed that God would guide them and at other times they prayed that God would transform their lives.

Write the titles and Bible references of the following 6 prayers on the white board. Explain each prayer shortly. Divide the group into twos or threes and pray Psalm 15:1-5 verse by verse with one another.

(1) A prayer when you feel forsaken. Psalm 13:1-4; Psalm 77:6-9.

When you feel forsaken by God, pray a prayer of the forsaken. Use this prayer in the Bible to express your *anguish of feeling forsaken and rejected*. In the right time God will again come very close to you.

(2) A prayer when you are suffering under oppression or persecution. Psalm 31:2-4,9-20.

When you face enemies (or are confronted by some form of evil) that oppress or persecute you or difficult situations, pray this prayer and *express your anxieties and feelings of pain*. Do not forget that also your circumstances are in the hands of God. Also you will later say with the writer, “How great is your goodness, which you have stored up for those who fear you, which you bestow ... on those who take refuge in you. In the shelter of your presence you hide them from the intrigues of men; in your dwelling you keep them safe from accusing tongues” (verse 19-20).

(3) A prayer of self-examination. Psalm 139:1-7,23-24.

When you know or feel that your life is not right in God’s eyes, pray a prayer of self-examination to *search out your hidden motives and dark actions*. Ask God to uncover *your fears, your hurts and your offensive behaviour*. God already knows what is hidden in your mind and heart, but he wants you to bring them into the light. Jesus said, “You will know the truth and the truth will set you free” (John 8:32). Even the truth about the darkest side of your nature can set you free!

(4) A prayer of surrender. Psalm 25:4-5,7-15.

When you are tired of going *your own rebellious way*, pray a prayer of surrender. Use this prayer in the Bible to surrender yourself to God’s perfect way for you. Then you too will experience what the writer experienced in verse 12 and 14, namely, “the Lord will instruct you in the way chosen for you” and “The Lord confides in those who fear him”. And you too will pray with conviction the words of verse 15, “My eyes are ever on the Lord, for only he will release my feet from the snare.” When you surrender yourself to God, you will experience God’s mercy, love and faithfulness!

(5) A prayer of change. Psalm 15:1-5.

When you desire to change and become blameless, pray a prayer of change. Use this prayer in the Bible to express *your desire to live a blameless life in God’s presence*. Dedicate yourself to speak the truth in love; to do what is right and to hate corruption. Maybe there are other areas in which you would like to change. Then pray these to God (Philippians 4:6-7 desires). Ask God to change you and he will change you! The angel, who stands in the presence of God said, “Nothing is impossible with God!” (Luke 1:37).

(6) A prayer of guidance. Psalm 143:8-10.

When you need guidance for *the direction of your life* or what to do in difficult times, pray a prayer of guidance. Use this prayer in the Bible to express your desire to know what God wants you to do. Then you too will experience what God said in Psalm 32:8, “I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and watch over you.”

2. Prayers with respect to restoring or deepening your relationship to God.

The writers in the Bible were also people who grew in their personal relationship to God. Sometimes they struggled in their relationship to God. Sometimes they felt guilty or ashamed because of sin in their lives. Then they confessed their sins to God. Sometimes they doubted whether God existed or did not experience his presence and nearness. Then they ardently sought God’s face. At other times they wanted to thank God for what he had done. Then they praised God and dedicated themselves to God. Use these prayers in the Bible to restore or to deepen your relationship to God. Read the Bible verses that belong to these prayers.

Write the titles and the Bible references of the following 5 prayers on a white board. **Explain** each prayer very shortly. **Divide** the group into small groups of 2 or 3 people each and pray Psalm 103:1-14 together.

(1) A prayer of confession of sin. Psalm 51:1-16.

When you know that you have sinned against God or against other people or against yourself, or when *your sins overwhelm you*, pray a prayer of confession. Use this prayer in the Bible to express your guilt and shame, to ask for forgiveness and to plead for cleansing and renewal. Nothing can cause you to feel more guilty or ashamed than *sin*. Nothing can make you feel more hopelessly forsaken by God as *sin*. Nothing can destroy you more than *sin* (missing God’s goal for your life)! Therefore, never delay the confession of your sins. Pray this prayer of confession and beg for restoration. Then you too will experience the truth of verse 17, “God will not despise a broken and contrite heart.”

(2) A prayer of practising the presence of God. Psalm 16:2,8-11; Psalm 73:23-26.

When you do not experience the nearness of God, pray a prayer of practising the presence of God. Use these prayers in the Bible to meditate on the truth that apart from God you have no good thing (Psalm 16:2). Practise to set the Lord before you in everything you do and to deliberately enter into the presence of God. Realise that God is at your right hand to keep you from stumbling. Because we human beings are by nature unspiritual, we need to practise again and again to consciously enter into God’s presence and nearness. Memorise Psalm 16:2,8 and Psalm 73:23-26. Pray them every time you feel you have lost contact with God. Then you too will experience complete joy in his presence (verse 11)!

(3) A prayer of praise. Psalm 103:1-14.

When you remember all the good things that God has done for you and think about all the characteristics of God, pray a prayer of praise. Use this prayer in the Bible to praise God’s character (attributes) and God’s wonderful deeds for you. Also express your adoration for God in prayer or in song.

Tell other people who God is and the good things he does to those who fear him. The more you read your Bible, the better you will know God. The better you know God, the more you will praise him!

(4) A prayer of thanksgiving. Psalm 107:4-8.

When you want to say “thank you” to all God’s mercies and kindnesses to you, you could pray a prayer of thanksgiving. Use this prayer in the Bible to help you to thank God. You could add all the things you want to especially thank God for.

(5) A prayer of dedication. Psalm 101:1-4.

When you want to dedicate yourself or a particular area to God, pray a prayer of dedication. Use this prayer in the Bible to express your commitment to a blameless and pure life. You could also pray verse 3 and 4 and say to God, “I will not look at any evil thing” and “I will have nothing to do with evil”.

3. Prayers with respect to meeting the needs of other people.

The writers of the Bible sometimes prayed a blessing for other people. In the Old Testament people sometimes called down God’s judgement on their enemies. Also the New Testament has wonderful prayers you could use to intercede for others. Let us consider some prayers you could use when you pray for others.

Write only the titles and Bible references of the following 3 prayers on the whiteboard: **Explain** each prayer very shortly. **Divide** the group into small groups of 2 or 3 people each and pray Psalm 20:1-5 together.

(1) A prayer of blessing. Psalm 20:1-9.

When you want to bless somebody else, you could pray a prayer of blessing. Use prayers in the Bible to bless others. These blessings, of course, are for people who believe in the God of the Bible and put their trust in him. “Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God” (verse 7).

(2) A prayer about justice. Psalm 10:1-15; Psalm 94:1-11 Psalm 55:9; Psalm 109:8; Luke 6:27-28.

When you see the gross injustice done to the weak and oppressed, you could use prayers in the Bible to express your indignation at the injustice of the wicked people, the immorality of the perverse people and the oppression of people in authority. When you see, hear or read about injustice, you could pray against it by using some words from these prayers. Christians believe that the God of the Bible is all-powerful and the only Ruler of this world. Justice is very important for God and injustice will be punished. God is indignant about all evil and hates all who do wrong and love violence (Psalm 5:5-6; Psalm 11:5). Not only God’s merciful salvation, but also his righteous judgment is important in this world!

BUT: The New Testament commands Christians to do what was still unknown during the Old Testament period: Christians may not call down a curse or judgment upon people (Matthew 7:1)! Christians may never take revenge! Christians are commanded to pray for evil people, that they would repent and turn to the God of the Bible and receive God’s mercy and grace.

But when these people do not repent, but continue their evil, then Christians may pray that God acts against them. Then Christians ought to pray that God “confuse the wicked” and “confound their speech” (Psalm 55:9) and that “another take their place of leadership” (Psalm 109:8)! Christians should not judge those outside the Church, but judge members of the Church who behave as non-Christians by doing aggravating sins (1 Corinthians 5:11-13). Christians may not take revenge (Romans 12:17-21), let alone become terrorists. Christians must remember that “mercy triumphs over judgement” (James 2:13)!

(3) A prayer of intercession. Colossians 1:9-12.

When you pray for other Christians, you could use this prayer in the Bible to make specific requests to God for them. Pray that “God would fill them with the knowledge of his will, through all spiritual wisdom and understanding”. Or pray that “they would live lives worthy of the Lord”. Or pray that “they would please the Lord in every way”. Or pray that “they would bear fruit in every good work”. Or pray that “they would grow in knowing God himself better and better”. Or pray that “God would strengthen them with his power”. Or pray that “they would have endurance or patience”. Or pray that “they would joyfully give thanks to God in all circumstances”.

Summarise. Use the prayers in the Bible in your own prayers to God. Use the prayers in the Book of the Psalms and the prayers of the Prophets in the Old Testament, as well as the prayers of Jesus and the prayers of the apostles in the New Testament to express your own thoughts and feelings. Make their prayers your prayers.

D. USE THE TEACHINGS IN THE BIBLE IN YOUR PRAYERS

Besides the prayers in the Bible, you could also use the teachings, promises and wisdom in the Bible in your prayers. Of course, you must interpret the Bible correctly, not only before you teach the Bible, but also before you use the words of the Bible in your prayers.

If you gather with a group of people for Bible Study or prayer, read a Bible passage, explain the difficult words and answer the questions of the group before you use it in prayer. Understand a Bible Passage well before you use it in

prayer. Divide the group into small groups of two to four people and pray the whole Bible passage verse by verse (see B, method 4).

1. Use the teachings about God's character and deeds in your prayers.

Use the instructions, knowledge, wisdom and promises in the Bible about who God is, about his character traits and about what God has done for you in the past, is doing in the present and will do in the future in your prayers. The following are two examples of God's care and God's salvation.

(1) A prayer about God's care. Psalm 23:1-6.

This Psalm speaks of how God cares for you, just like a shepherd cares for his sheep. Use this Psalm to pray to God. Ask God to care for you so that you will not lack anything you really need. Ask him to care for your food, clothing and shelter. Ask him to guide you in the right path. Ask him to protect you when you travel and to help you in difficult circumstances. Ask him to vindicate you in the face of the false accusations of your enemies. Above all, dedicate yourself to live in God's presence all the days of your life.

(2) A prayer about God's deliverance. Psalm 34:1-22.

This Psalm speaks of God's deliverance. Use this Psalm to pray to God. Ask God to deliver you from all your fears, guilt, shame and troubles. Ask him to be close to you when you are broken-hearted and to save you when you are crushed in spirit (Psalm 34:18).

2. Use the teachings about the Christian life in your prayers.

Use the instructions, knowledge, wisdom and promises in the Bible about how you should live as a Christian.

(1) A prayer about relationships. Romans 12:9-21.

This Bible passage teaches us how Christians should relate to one another. Use these instructions in your prayer. Ask God to give you sincere love for your neighbour. Ask God to have a heart that is focused on what is good, that genuinely cares for the needs of others, that is hospitable, sympathetic, agreeable and modest.

(2) A prayer about caring for the needs of the members in the congregation. 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12.

This teaching speaks about how the leaders of the congregation should care for the members of the congregation. Use this teaching in your prayer. Ask God that you too may have the courage to preach the gospel in spite of strong opposition and that you will not look for the praise of men. Ask God that you may be gentle like a mother and encouraging like a father when you deal with the members of the congregation.

(3) A prayer about exhorting the members in the congregation to change. Titus 2:1-10.

This teaching speaks about how the leaders of the congregation should exhort the members of the congregation. Use this teaching in your prayer. Ask God that you may teach only what is in accord with sound doctrine. Ask God that the older Christians will set a good example for the younger Christians and teach them how to live godly lives.

Summarise. Use the teachings in the Bible in your own prayers. In a group prayer meeting, first read through a Bible passage. Try to understand the passage before you pray the passage. Ask the group if there were any questions they would like to ask about the passage. Then, divide the group into small groups of two people each. Let each group of two pray through the Bible passage, verse by verse, and let them take turns to pray one verse at a time.

5	PRAYER (8 minutes)	<i>[BIBLE PRAYER]</i> USING THE BIBLE TO PRAY
----------	--------------------	--

Read Romans 12:9-21. Then explain the passage. Finally divide the group into twos and take turns to pray verse by verse through the Romans 12:9-21 (see B method 4).

6	PREPARATION (2 minutes)	<i>[ASSIGNMENT]</i> FOR NEXT LESSON
----------	-------------------------	--

(Group leader. Give the group members this preparation for at home in writing or let them copy it down).

1. **Commitment.** Be committed to make disciples.
Preach, teach or study the teaching of "Using the words of the Bible in your prayers" together with another person or group of people.
2. **Personal time with God.** Have a quiet time from half a chapter of Exodus 11:1 – 14:31 each day.
Make use of the questions method. Make notes.
3. **Bible study.** Prepare the next Bible study at home. (4) Ephesians 4:1-16. Theme: The goals of the Church.
Make use of the five steps method of Bible study. Make notes.
4. **Prayer.** Pray for someone or something specific this week and see what God is doing (Psalm 5:3).
5. **Update your notebook** on making disciples. Include the worship notes and teaching notes and this preparation.