

Welcome to **Discipleship training On The Air**. In this teaching series you may learn to become a disciple of Jesus Christ. A teacher will teach from the Bible that a disciple of Jesus prays. As you listen to this programme, make notes in a notebook or record the programme.

Jesus says, "Ask and it will be given to you" (Matthew 7:7). Paul says, "Pray continually" (1 Thessalonians 5:17). And James says, "The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective" (James 5:16). The Bible teaches much about prayer. The second series of 6 teachings is about "The focus of prayer". There are prayers that focus on God, prayers that focus on your own needs and prayers that focus on the needs of other people. Every topic will be in two parts.

Today we will learn about "A DISCIPLE PRAYS FOR HIS OWN NEEDS - PART 1". Although all prayers are directed to God, in these prayers, you ask things for yourself. The prayers that focus on your own needs can be divided into four kinds: prayers for your human needs, prayers for your spiritual needs, prayers for your ministry needs and prayers for your family needs". In part 1 we will study only prayers for your human needs.

POINT 1. A DISCIPLE PRAYS FOR HIS HUMAN NEEDS

God created your body and your spirit. He is much more concerned with your well-being than you are yourself! God actually teaches us to pray for every need we feel. In Philippians 4:6-7 he says, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer, ... present your requests to God." Christians are humans too and have human needs, like physical needs, intellectual needs, social needs, emotional needs and daily life needs. Let us consider what the Bible teaches about prayer in these different areas of human needs.

First. Pray for your physical needs

The first physical need is food. Pray for your food.

Let us read Matthew 6:25,32-33, "Do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink: or about your body, what you will wear. Your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness and all these things will be given to you as well." God knows that when a Christian takes an active part in the glorifying of God's name, the coming of God's kingdom and the doing of God's will, then he needs bread. Therefore, Jesus teaches us that we may depend on God to supply our daily needs. This prayer is an expression of our total dependence on God for living and an expression of our trust that he will provide.

The "daily bread" is strictly speaking only food. It does not refer to luxury food, but to the staple food of the country. Moreover, the "daily bread" is only the portion of food that is needed for one day. Thus, Jesus teaches us to be moderate in our request for our daily needs. We should pray for bread and not for luxuries. Note the prayer of Agur in Proverbs 30:8, "Give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread. Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you and say, 'Who is the Lord?' Or I may become poor and steal, and so dishonour the name of my God." Jesus and the apostle Paul teach that a very important Christian virtue is "contentment". Paul says, "If we have food and clothing, we will be content with that" (1 Timothy 6:8).

The second physical need is safety. Pray for your safety.

Let us read Genesis 32:12, "Save me, I pray, from the hand of my brother Esau, for I am afraid that he will come and attack me, and also the mothers with their children." In this case, Jacob's brother, Esau, was very angry with him and wanted to have revenge. Jacob prayed for protection and God gave him that protection. Likewise, you may pray for protection from evil people in your own family or outside your family.

The third physical need is healing. Pray for physical healing.

Let us read Psalm 30:2-3, "O Lord my God, I called to you for help and you healed me. ... You brought me up from the grave." In this case, God saved king David from a very serious sickness in which he almost died. God literally saved him from dying! Most Christians get sick and sometimes a person can be very very sick. The Bible says that we may make use of doctors and medicines and healing practices. However, we must never forget that *all healing is divine healing!* No doctor can heal you without God's permission. No medicines can heal you without God's permission. No

healing practices can heal you without God's permission. I say it again: All healing is divine healing! Because God created you, only God can heal you from sickness! If God does not give his permission, then no doctor, no medicines and no healing practices can heal you! Therefore, Christians should always pray when they are sick. Because of your prayer, God can give his permission for your healing.

The fourth physical need is blessing. Pray for physical blessings.

Let us read 1 Chronicles 4:10, "Jabez cried to the God of Israel, 'Oh, that you would bless me and enlarge my territory! Let your hand be with me, and keep me from harm so that I will be free from pain.' And God granted his request." "Jabez" sounds like the Hebrew word for "pain". Because his mother had given birth to him in pain, she gave him the name "pain". When Jabez later understood the meaning of his name, he prayed the above prayer. He asked God to keep him free from all harm that could cause pain. And God heard his prayer. Jabez also prayed for material blessing. Because you may make all your requests known to God, you may surely pray for any kind of blessing from God. You may pray that God bless you with material blessings, like enlarging your territory. You may pray that God bless you with freedom from pain. However, like in this example of Jabez, God does not make any promise to you that he will grant your request. God may have a much better plan for your life than simply riches and health!

Second. Pray for your intellectual needs

The first intellectual need is understanding. Pray for understanding.

Let us read Psalm 119:18 and 73, "Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law. Give me understanding to learn your commands." Before you read or study the Bible, pray for understanding the Bible. There are wonderful truths in the Bible, but God must open your spiritual eyes to see these truths!

The second intellectual need is wisdom. Pray for wisdom.

Let us read James 1:5, "If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him." Wisdom is the ability to use the best means for the highest goals at all times. It is the ability to say the right words at the right time. It is to know how to put knowledge into practice in the best way. All Christians need wisdom. Without it we will say and do foolish things. But wisdom is not a natural virtue with most people in the world. Therefore, you must pray for wisdom.

Third. Pray for your social needs

Pray for love in all your relationships.

Let us read 1 Thessalonians 3:12, "May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else." Without love, nobody can have a good relationship with another person. People today follow courses to develop social skills, like "how to make friends", "how to give a good speech", "how to be assertive", "how to relax at work", etc. But all these courses are manipulating you and your money. They teach outward techniques that look successful, because most people only look at outward things. However, on the long run, everybody who depends on these outward skills and manipulation will be exposed for what they really are on the inside and they will become disillusioned! The only social graces that will stand every test in human society are the graces that God gives to you. Only God can give you love, because God is love. Only God can give you wisdom, because God is the only wise God. Only God can give you words to speak, because God is the creator of speech. Only God can give you a healthy self-esteem. Therefore, Christians should pray for more and more love for the people that they meet every day.

Fourth. Pray for your emotional needs

The first emotional need is freedom from anxiety. Pray for freedom from anxiety.

Let us read 1 Peter 5:7, "Cast all your anxiety on God, for he cares for you." Anxiety is something every human being knows by experience. You can be anxious about making a living, about health and about safety. You can be anxious about what you have to study, about keeping your job and about your future. You can be anxious about what your children are doing, about the political development in the world and about the economic situation in your town. You can be anxious about death, about evil spirits that attack you and about persecution from enemies. Every human being knows anxiety. Anxiety causes you to be sleepless, causes you to nervously worry all day and causes stomach ulcers. How can we be free from this anxiety? The Bible says, "Pray and cast all your anxieties on God, because God really

cares about all the things you worry about.” And Philippians 4:7 promises that the peace of God that transcends all understanding will guard your heart and mind in Christ Jesus!

The second emotional need is healing from emotional hurts. Pray for healing from emotional hurts.

Let us read Psalm 62:8, “Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge.” Who has not yet been hurt by what other people have done to you? Sometimes a person *said* something to you that hurt you very much. Maybe it was not true. Maybe it made you “loose face” with people (they shamed you in front of other people). Maybe it was said in hatred. Sometimes a person *did* things to you that hurt you. For example, he used wicked ways to push you out of a job or position. Or he cheated you. Or he persecuted you for your faith in Christ. No matter what caused your hurts, you feel the pain of these unrighteous actions for a very long time in your heart. If emotional hurts are not healed, they can turn you into an unforgiving and revengeful person. Therefore, you should pray and pour all the unrighteousness of others and all your hurts out to God. God can listen very patiently and can really heal the wounds of your heart.

Fifth. Pray for your practical needs

Pray for guidance how to live.

Let us read Psalm 143:8,10. “Let the morning bring me word of your unfailing love. ... Show me the way I should go. ... Teach me to do your will. ... May your good Spirit lead me on level ground.” Every day we have to make many decisions, like which clothes to wear, what food to eat, which things to buy, whom to meet and what to do with our time. King David had the habit of reading God’s Word and to pray for guidance in the morning. He asked God to show him the way God wanted him to go and to teach him to do God’s will that day! Listener, why don’t you also follow David’s example and read the Bible in the morning to know God’s will and to pray in order to discover what God wants you to do that day? Let us read Proverbs 16:3, “Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and your plans will succeed.” Talk to God about the things you will be doing each day. Ask him to show you what you should cancel and what you definitely should not neglect to do. Pray about every normal activity and event of every day. Pray before you talk. Pray before you decide or choose. Pray before you act. Commit to the Lord whatever you do. And God promises that he will give you success!

However, here I want to give a warning about making requests to God.

Let us read James 4:2-3. “You want something but don’t get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.” James does not say that God does not “hear” our prayers, but that we do not “receive” what we prayed for. *God always hears the prayers of his children. There is no such thing as an “unheard” or “unanswered” prayer for his children.* But God’s answer to our prayers is many times “no” or “not yet”, because we are incapable of receiving the heavenly gift. Our prayer requests are not granted, because we have a “*self-centred heart*”, which need to be cleansed first. That is what James is writing about in the next few verses. He says, “Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded” (James 4:8). When you have confessed your sins and received Christ’s cleansing, you may pray with confidence and you will receive!

I also want to give a warning about not making any requests to God.

We often do not receive God’s gifts and blessings, because we do not pray. When we do not pray, then we have an “*independent heart*” that needs surrendering. “You do not have, because you do not ask God.” That is why James says, “Submit yourselves to God, ... come near to God and he will come near to you. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up” (James 4:7,8,10). When you have confessed your absolute dependence on God for every good gift, then you may pray with confidence and you will receive! James also says, “Ask God ... and it will be given to him” (James 1:5). And he also says, “The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective” (James 5:16).

Conclusion. You should pray for your physical, intellectual, social and emotional needs and your daily activities.

ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK

First. Pray every day for your physical needs: for your daily food, health and protection. Pray every day for your other needs like wisdom, love, freedom from anxiety and for guidance how to live.

Second. See the workbooks “Go and make disciples” and Internet on www.dota.net

Third. Listen on short wave radio every SATURDAY to WEDNESDAY to “Discipleship training on the air”.