

Week 38: "Praying in The Spirit"

Day One: "In the Spirit"

Read: Ephesians 6:18

Reflect: From your own experience, what do you think it means to "pray in the Spirit"?

Dig: How many times does the word "all" or "always" occur?

Look up Paul's prayer in Ephesians 3:14-21 and answer these questions:

-How does Paul begin this prayer? How is it like the beginning of the Lord's Prayer?

-What does he ask God for?

-How does the prayer conclude?

Read Philippians 4:6-7 and answer these questions:

-When we ask God for something, what are we supposed to combine those requests with?

-What promise are we given about our anxious thoughts?

-Are we supposed to guard our own hearts? Who (what) does guard them?

Apply: Read Psalm 138 quietly to yourself, noting how living out this prayer will increase your freedom from fear and guilt and anger. Then pray it again out loud as a statement of faith and praise to the God who controls all things. Now live in the confidence of your faith this day.

Week Thirty-Eight: "Praying in the Spirit"

Day Two: "Praying in the Spirit"

Read: Ephesians 6:18, Jude 20

Reflect: In your experience, what does "praying in the Spirit" mean to you? Do you often pray with the Holy Spirit in mind? Why or why not?

Dig: What does the opening to this letter to Jude (verse 3) tell you about the purpose of this book?

How does it fit with verse 20?

Notice the thoughts surrounding the phrase "and pray in the Holy Spirit." What clues does the

context give you to understanding this phrase?

Look up Romans 8:26-27. What does this tell you about "praying in the Holy Spirit"? Could speaking in tongues be in mind here? Does it necessarily have speaking in tongues in mind?

According to the Bible, which two members of the Trinity are constantly praying on our behalf?

Apply: How does this lesson bring more freedom to your prayer life? Choose an issue or concern in your life and ask the Holy Spirit to take your groans and incomplete prayers to God the Father on your behalf. Take a moment to list (in the space below) those things in your life that are only groans or about which you don't know how to pray...then trust that God will hear these groans and incomplete prayers:

Week Thirty-Eight: "Praying in The Spirit"

Day Three: "All Kinds of Prayer"

Read: Ephesians 6:18, Psalm 95

Reflect: How often do you pray so as to listen and hear God? What have you heard?

Dig: What "postures of worship" do you see described in Psalm 95? How do they compare to our usual postures of worship?

Considering verse 8 of this Psalm, read Exodus 17:1-7. Why might the Psalmist choose to remind his readers of this event?

Do you find the three levels of prayer (petition, dialogue, intercession) in this Psalm? Where exactly are they found in Psalm 95? At what level do you find most of your prayers?

Apply: Make a short list of people you could pray for. Now intercede for them as you begin the day, asking God to meet their needs and then watching how God answers such prayer.

Week Thirty-Eight: "Praying in The Spirit"

Day Four: "Effective Prayer"

Read: Ephesians 6:18, 1 Samuel 12:16-24

Reflect: How often do you turn to God in prayer? Who really manages your life, you or God?

Dig: Why did God answer Samuel's prayers so dramatically and immediately?

See Psalm 66:18 for part of the biblical answer in this regard.

See also James 4:2-3 for more truth about effective prayer.

What does verse 23 (of 1 Samuel 12) teach you about your own prayer life?

Apply: Ask God to give you a more effective prayer life by making you more righteous. Now, who should you pray for today?

Week Thirty-Eight: "Praying in the Spirit"

Day Five: "Lectio Divina"

Read: Ephesians 6:18

¹⁸And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

Lectio divina (a Latin expression, which means sacred reading) is done in three stages:

Reading: you read the passage slowly and reverentially, allowing the words to sink into your consciousness; after you have memorized the text, write down one word which strikes you and draws your attention and note why you chose that word.

Meditation: you allow the passage to stir up memories within you, so that you recognize in it your own experience or that of people who have touched your life: write down memories of events or conversations or other Scripture passages.

Prayer: you allow the meditation to lead you to prayer-- thanksgiving, humility and petition. Write out a prayer based on the passage.