

4Ws

Fit For Life:

New Habits to Change Your Life

DEVELOP THE HABIT OF PRAYER

JANUARY 9, 2022

WORSHIP

Praise Him Forever,
Unchanging God,
You Are God Alone

WELCOME

On the scale of 1 to 5,
1 as the lowest and 5 as
the highest, how would
you rate the vibrancy of
your prayer life?

WORD

LUKE 11:5-13

⁵ Then He said to them, "Suppose one of you has a friend, and goes to him at midnight and says to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves; ⁶ for a friend of mine has come to me from a journey, and I have nothing to set before him'; ⁷ and from inside he answers and says, 'Do not bother me; the door has already been shut and my children and I are in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything.' ⁸ I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will get up and give him as much as he needs. ⁹ "So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ¹⁰ For everyone who asks, receives; and he who seeks, finds; and to him who knocks, it will be opened. ¹¹ Now suppose one of you fathers is asked by his son for a fish; he will not give him a snake instead of a fish, will he? ¹² Or if he is asked for an egg, he will not give him a scorpion, will he? ¹³ If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?"

2021 has been a tough year for many of us, with the recent typhoons, destruction of properties, the surge of COVID19 cases, business setbacks and even death among our loved ones – it has not been easy. How do we face the New Year in this regard? Satan would like to keep reminding us of what went wrong last year, keeping us paralyzed in the past. But there's nothing we can do to change the past – failures, mistakes, hurts – we instead should face the future ahead with faith, hope, and amazing expectation. One of the things we can look forward to in the new year is GROWTH. May we all "**grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ**" (2 Peter 3:18). This has to do with Christlikeness. We can grow in good times and in bad times, as long as we are in Christ. Have we grown in Christlikeness?

We begin a new series: **FIT FOR LIFE – New Habits to Change Your Life.**

Craig Groeschel said, "**successful people do consistently what normal people do occasionally**". Winners and Losers have the same goals – but they end up with different results. Goals do not determine success. It is the process that determines whether one will be successful or not. To develop GOOD HABITS, we were taught the principle of **P.A.T.H.** – PRIORITY, ADMIT that we are limited and inadequate, TURN TO GOD for help, and HABITUALIZE and keep on practicing. The first habit we will focus on is PRAYER.

To **DEVELOP THE HABIT OF PRAYER**, we must understand its importance. It should become a **PRIORITY**, and must be done consistently. Similar to successful athletes, we must have **DISCIPLINE**. To be good at something, we pursue with great fervor and dedication habits that can deliver our goals. Jesus Christ had a similar system and discipline – His habit of praying was consistent (**Mark 1:35, Luke 6:12, Matthew 14:23**). The Apostle Paul also made prayer a habit (**Colossians 1:9, Ephesians 1:16, 1 Thessalonians 5:17**). In fact, the disciples of Jesus asked one thing-- for Jesus to teach them **HOW TO PRAY (Luke 11:1)**! Jesus modeled it for them, He was a man of prayer. As followers of Jesus, we too must become men and women of prayer. Martin Lloyd Jones said, "**Prayer is beyond any question the highest activity of the human soul. Man is at his greatest and highest when, upon his knees, he comes face to face with God**" – there is no shortcut to intimacy with God!

PERSISTENT PRAYER

Luke 11:5-13 gives us a picture of how persistent prayer is like, and how God responds to our prayers. The neighbor in the story will help the one in need just because he is a friend; he is going to help because the other man is **PERSISTENT** (Gk. ANAIDEA – boldness, shamelessness, tenacious, insistent). What is Jesus saying? Jesus explained in **v.9** this picture – we must **keep asking, keep seeking, and keep knocking**. Prayer is about a relationship with God – a relationship best exemplified by the relationship of

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a father and a son. Jesus explained that if men, who are naturally evil, will not withhold good things for their own children, how much more GOD (**Matthew 7:11**)? We have to come to the Lord as we come to our “**Good Father**”. Seeing God this way will impact our prayer life. We must begin to realize the heart of God as a Father – wanting the best for us. Therefore, we can have complete trust and freedom to approach Him anytime and anywhere. Warren Wiersbe wrote, “**Persistence in prayer is not an attempt to change God’s mind (“Thy will be done”) but to get ourselves to the place where He can trust us with the answer**”.

Many times, God does not answer our prayers immediately because He wants us to experience the blessing of persistent prayer – you are focused on God, you are reminded that He is in control, and as you wait, your faith grows, your character is changed, and your motive is purified and sanctified. **Hebrews 4:16** tells us to draw near with confidence to the throne of grace! To develop this habit, we must remember **P.A.T.H.** :

- **PRIORITY** – we must treat it as a very important element of our relationship with Him. It is a habit we must learn to prioritize because it is a great privilege given by God for us to enter into His presence.
- **ADMIT** – we must admit that we cannot develop this habit on our own. Our willpower is inadequate similar to the experience of the Apostle Paul (**Romans 7:15,18-19**). Desiring things or having a goal is not enough. God understands our limitation. What is the solution?
- **TURN TO JESUS** – As Paul pointed out in **Romans 7:24-15** – he did not say “**thanks be to my self-discipline**”. He points us back to the power of Jesus to transform lives (**2 Corinthians 5:17**). It all begins with Jesus Christ!
- **HABITUALIZE** – Paul said in **1 Corinthians 9:27** that he “**disciplined**” his body – there’s a system, a habit to continue practicing/doing these things (**Philippians 4:9**), until it becomes second nature to you! **Galatians 6:9** encourages us not to lose heart in doing these habits because it will eventually bear fruit! We were taught the principle of the “**Compounding Effect**” – **the small choices you make today, can lead to the successes and failures you experience tomorrow**. We must be able to develop good habits starting with our prayer life. PRAYER is very important. It must become a way of life. **Luke 11:13** promises us our Helper and Advocate, the HOLY SPIRIT, to empower us to continue building this God-glorifying habit. Similar to **John 1:12**, we must embrace this benefit that goes with being children of a loving and faithful God – through Christ Jesus our Lord!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

(Leaders: Please choose questions that are appropriate to the level of spiritual maturity of your members)

- 1. Self-Check.**
On the scale of 1 to 5, 1 as the lowest and 5 as the highest, how would you rate the consistency and quality of your prayer life?
- 2. Setting It Right.**
What steps would you take this year to cultivate the habit of prayer?
- 3. Living It Out.**
What are the things you’d like to lift to the Lord in prayer? End your discussion by praying with and for each other.

WORKS

PRAY CARE SHARE IN ACTION

Pray for people who find it intimidating to come to the Lord in prayer. Pray that they will develop their relationship with God and see Him as their Father who is not distant, but who cares for them deeply. Share Christ to them so that they will be able to confidently come to the Lord in prayer and present their requests to God, knowing that God will answer them in His infinite wisdom and love.

WEEKLY PRAYER POINTS

I. Thanksgiving

Worship God for who He is, what He has done, and what He will do in our lives

II. Country and the World

Upright and moral governance of Public Servants
A God-centered Philippines
Repentance and Salvation

III. Church

That CCF Members would honor and love God and make disciples
Elders, Pastors, Leaders, and Families
Ministries and Churches worldwide

IV. CCF Facilities

Worship and Training Center
Prayer Mountain

V. Personal Concerns

Deeper intimate relationship with God
Righteous living
Salvation of family and friends

MEMORY VERSE

Luke 11:13

If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?