

**Basic Disciplines for Believers – Discipline #2:
CONTINUAL PRAYER:
I am always talking to God.**

Col 4:2 Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving;
Eph 6:18 praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints
Phil 4:6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God;

What Does It Mean (& NOT Mean) To Pray?

Praying Is Talking to God

1 Tim 2:1 Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, *and* giving of thanks be made for all men,

Praising God (prayers)	Telling God that You Know Who He Is (holy, creator, savior, lord of the universe) Telling God that You Want What He Wants
Asking God	To meet your physical and spiritual needs (supplications) To meet the physical and spiritual needs of others (intercessions)
Thanking God (giving of thanks)	For What God Has Done For What God Has Not Done

What Does It NOT Mean?

- Praying is not repeating empty words. (Matthew 6:7)
- Praying is not telling God something He does not know. (Matthew 6:8)
- Praying is not getting God to do something that He would not otherwise do. We must ask according to His will. (Matt 6:9-10; John 14:13-14; James 4:3; 1 John 5:14)
- Praying is not a way to bypass obedience. (Matt 6:12-13; 1 John 3:22; James 5:16)
- Praying is not getting God to work against the choices that people make for themselves. He will help people, but He will not MAKE someone change his mind. (Rom 1; Col 3:1-4)
- Praying is not two-way communication. Through prayer we talk to God. God talks to us through His Word.

Why Pray?

If God knows everything, and knows our needs before we ask (Matthew 6:8), why should we pray at all?

*We pray because we **can**. | We pray because we **should**. |
We pray because others **prayed**. | We pray because of **good**.*

1. We Are to Be Praying Because We CAN (Privilege – It is a great privilege to pray to God.) – Eph 2:18
2. We Are to Be Praying Because We SHOULD (Command – We are commanded to pray to God.) – Luke 18:1
3. We Are to Be Praying Because OTHERS Prayed (Praying was characteristic of those that walked with God in the Bible.)
4. We Are to Be Praying Because of GOOD (Benefits – We ourselves receive many benefits as we pray to God.)

How To Be Praying

Pray secretly (pray to God and for God, not to be heard by people) Mt 6:5-6
Pray concisely (more words ≠ better praying) Matt 6:7-13
Pray continually (Luke 18:1; Eph 6:18a; 1 Thes 5:17)
Pray persistently (patiently keep asking) Luke 18:2-8
Pray evangelistically (for boldness / opportunity) Eph 6:19-20; Col 4:3-4)
Pray corporately (for others) Eph 6:18
Pray completely (all) Eph 6:18; Phil 4:6
Pray watchfully (alert /aware of what is going on) Eph 6:18; Col 4:2
Pray thankfully (Phil 4:6; Col 4:2; 1 Thes 5:18)
Pray proactively / confidently (pray first, not as a last resort – Phil 4:6)
Pray knowingly, seriously & soberly (1 Pet 4:7 But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers.)

What to Pray For: What Did Jesus Pray For? (John 17:14-21)

17:14-15 – Jesus prayed for our spiritual safety → PROTECTION – That We Each Would STAY PURE
 17:16-17 – Jesus prayed for our spiritual maturity → SANCTIFICATION – That We Each Would GROW UP
 17:20-21 – Jesus prayed for our spiritual unity → VALIDATION – That We Each Would WORK TOGETHER

Praying About Problems:

Should Our Prayers Be “Please Take Them Away” or Not?

We understand that

- (1) God knows everything;
- (2) God controls everything; and that
- (3) God loves us.

So,

- (1) God can answer prayer and change my circumstances; and
- (2) God could prevent bad circumstances from even happening, but He doesn't. Why doesn't He??

There Are At Least 5 Reasons For Our Hard & Hurtful Circumstances (Which Change the Way We Are Praying). We experience problems ...

1. ... because of SIN'S CURSE.
2. ... because of SIN'S CONSEQUENCES.
3. ... because of GOD'S DESIRE TO GROW & CHANGE US.
4. ... because of GOD'S DESIRE TO GROW & CHANGE OTHERS through us.
5. ... because of GOD'S DESIRE TO DRAW ATTENTION TO HIMSELF.

What to Pray for in the Midst of Hard and Hurtful Circumstances:

- Pray with an Understanding of Our Sinfulness
- Pray in Confession of Our Sin
- Pray in Submission to God's Will