

LIFE ESSENTIALS

Spiritual Growth

Additional Study - Milestone 5



DR. TONY EVANS



MILESTONE **FIVE**

PRAYER: THE ACCESS TO
SPIRITUAL GROWTH

If you ask any counselor, what is the number one priority in any relationship, the overwhelming response will be “Communication.” Relationships don’t grow without consistent and meaningful communication. Such is the case in our relationship with the Lord. How would you evaluate your prayer life? Why do Christians so under-utilize prayer?

Establishing and maintaining close and relational communication with God is essential for spiritual growth. At this milestone in our journey, we will discover the importance of prayer in the life of a Christian.

KEY VERSES

"Since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

- Hebrews 4:14-16

BIBLE REFERENCES

Matthew 6:5-7

Romans 8:26-27

1 John 5:14-15

John 14:13-14

James 5:16

1 Thessalonians 5:17



1. Read chapter 9 of Life Essentials.
2. Read the Key Verses Hebrews 4:14-16.

Hebrews 4:14-16

"¹⁴ Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. ¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶ Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

How does Life Essentials define prayer?

Identify at least two common misconceptions or misuses of prayer.

How have you misused prayer in the past?





DAY TWO



1. Begin to memorize the Key Verses Hebrews 4:14-16.
2. Read Matthew 6:5-7.

Matthew 6:5-7

⁵ "When you pray, you are not to be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners [a]so that they may be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. ⁶ But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, close your door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you. ⁷ And when you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words."

In this passage Jesus warns us about some wrong ways to approach prayer. Describe these wrong approaches. Have you ever been guilty of praying this way?

What is the right approach to prayer?

What does Life Essentials say about praying in public?

Use the information in chapter 9 of Life Essentials to help you answer the next three questions.



Why do we need to pray?

What are some reasons Christians find it difficult to pray regularly?

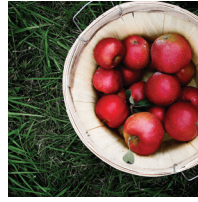
What happens when we communicate with our Father on a regular basis?

What prevents you from praying more than you do?





DAY THREE



1. Practice writing the Key Verses Hebrews 4:14-16 to assist in memorization.

In your own words explain the relationship between prayer and Spiritual Growth.

Read Romans 8:26-27.

Romans 8:26-27

"²⁶ In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words; ²⁷ and He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the [a]saints according to the will of God."

How does the Holy Spirit intercede for believers?

Why does the Holy Spirit intercede for believers?

Can you intercede in prayer for someone else without specifically knowing his or her problems?

Take a moment right now and pray a prayer of intercession for someone in need.





DAY FOUR



1. Practice writing the Key Verses Hebrews 4:14-16 to assist in memorization.
2. Read 1 John 5:14-15.

1 John 5:14-15

"¹⁴ This is the confidence which we have [a]before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. ¹⁵ And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him."

How are we able to have confidence in our prayers?

What is our confidence in?

Does this passage mean we can ask God for anything and expect to receive it? Explain your answer.



Read John 14:13-14.

John 14:13-14

"¹³ Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴ If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it."

When we pray a prayer in Jesus's name, what does that mean?

What are the ways in which God can respond to our requests?

What can we learn from each of His responses?

Does persistent prayer demonstrate faith or lack of faith? Explain your answer.

Have you continued to pray for something that as of yet has not come to pass? Why do you continue to pray for it?



DAY FIVE



1. Practice reciting the Key Verses Hebrews 4:14-16 to commit them to memory.

Why is it important to know that we have a High Priest who can sympathize with our weakness?

What are some of the benefits that Christians can experience through prayer?

Read James 5:16.

James 5:16

“Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective [a]prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.”

In this verse we read that “the effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.” Explain this passage in your own words.

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:17.

1 Thessalonians 5:17

“pray without ceasing;”

What do you think it means to “pray without ceasing”?



REFLECTIONS ON THE JOURNEY

1. Recite or write the Key Verses Hebrews 4:14-16 from memory.

What did this portion of the journey reinforce about prayer?

Briefly describe your present prayer life.

In evaluating your prayer life, what, if any, changes would you like to make?

Having gone through several weeks of this course, you should have a weekly log of prayer requests from your group. Have you been able to see or experience how God answers prayer in your life or the life of others?



List at least 2 new principles concerning prayer that you learned during this week's journey.



What, if any, concerns did this week's journey present?

TAKEAWAYS

- Prayer is relational communication with God the Father.
- Prayer gives us access to heaven.
- God is approachable

