

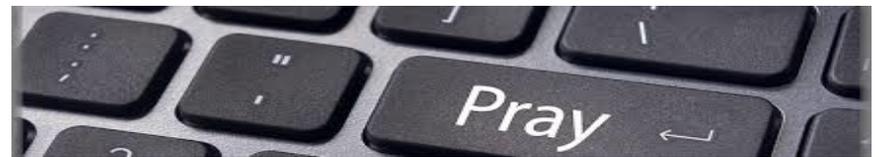
Here is a layout for a daily prayer journal. Using the ACTS acronym as the outline for prayer. Filling out each part is a helpful way to make sure you are incorporating it into your prayer time.

Adoration

Confession

Thanksgiving

Supplication



FACE TIME WITH GOD 3 OF 5

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The translation quoted here is the New International Version (NIV)

What you will need to complete this lesson:

- * A Bible (A New International Version is a good choice if you need to get a Bible) These are also available online if you do not have one.
- * Paper with pen or pencil to write your answers
- * A quiet place to work where you are not distracted.

“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.

“Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him! So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.. Matthew 7.7-11

PART ONE GOD RESPONDS TO OUR PRAYERS

Even as we are promised answers to our prayers we need to remember that God is the one who makes the final choice. He answers in four clear possible ways. Each of these different answers are God’s answer and we should accept and respond appropriately. Bill Hybels outlines these in his book “Too Busy NOT To Pray.”¹ (For additional help see chapter 8 The Hurt of Unanswered Prayer.)

God may say NO: The request we are making is wrong or is not within His Kingdom plans. When God says no it is not because he does not love us, it is exactly the opposite. God knows what is best and we must accept his choices.

Read Acts 12.1-2 There is no mention of prayer but I guarantee when James was arrested they started praying. Why would God allow this to happen to any of his followers?

Answer:

God may say SLOW: The request we are making may not be at the right time or we may not be ready to accept God's answer. We need to pray until we get the answer from God.

Read Matthew 26.39-42 Why does Jesus have to pray about the matter more than once? What does he do when the answer goes from SLOW to NO?

Answer:

God may say GROW: There may be something wrong in your life or in your request you are making.

Read Mark 10.35.45 Did they use the right format to make the Request? (explain) Why was their request not answered as they wanted? How did Jesus answer them?

How can you plan for disruptions and keep them from slowing or stopping your prayer time?

Answer:

- ♦ **SEDUCTION:** Success can be your enemy. If you see yourself as having arrived you will think you can quit.

What might cause a person to slow down or grow cold in their prayer time after a long period of time? What should a person do to avoid this from happening? Hint: How can you keep your time with God fresh and alive?

Answer:

If it were easy everyone would be doing it. You have to weigh how much you want to be with God and how much you are willing to pay to get to the goal of a daily prayer habit. Any habit requires a determined commitment and a daily resolve to see both the short-term benefits and the long-term success. A daily prayer habit is not the exception.

¹Bill Hybels, *Too Busy Not To Pray*, Intervarsity Press 1988, 1998, 2008

²<http://www.forbes.com/sites/jasonselk/2013/04/15/habit-formation-the-21-day-myth/> Accessed May 20, 2014 Jason Selk wrote an article about forming a habit entitled 'Habit Formation: The 21-Day Myth.' He lists three phases of habit formation: These are adapted and used here discussing a prayer habit.

ONE YEAR?

TWO YEARS?

FIVE YEARS?

Phase 3: Second Nature

When you spend enough time praying you will discover spending time with Jesus is what you look forward to. He was clear that his "yoke is easy and my burden is light." What is difficult can become easy and even what you do naturally if you do it often enough. Spending time in prayer with Jesus may start out as a discipline you need to work on but it can become a key and enjoyable part of everyday. Still you need to avoid the three success killers to break into your life.

- ◆ **DISCOURAGEMENT:** Don't let small setbacks or in this case unanswered prayers stop you from praying. Remember God answers in four ways, No, Slow, Grow, Go. God chooses the answer, learn to trust his choice.

How should you respond to each type of answer God gives when you pray?

NO:

SLOW:

GROW:

GO:

;

- ◆ **DISRUPTIONS:** e. g., Vacations, sickness, emergencies will mess with your schedule. You will need to get back on track as quickly as possible to keep from quitting.

Answer:

God may say GO: If everything is as it should be God may just say yes.

Read Daniel 9.23 How did God respond to Daniel when everything was in place? How does this help us in our personal prayer life?

Answer:

PART TWO

ELEVEN HINDERANCES TO ANSWERED PRAYER

There are some very definable reasons that may cause God to say NO, or SLOW or GROW. These are personal matters that hinder God from answering our prayers. When we pray we are not telling God what to do. We are asking him to answer our request.

There are eleven reasons God may not be able to give us a yes answer even when He wants to. Read the scripture and decide what can hinder your prayers and then give a solution to removing this from your life. At the end of section two I have listed the basic eleven reasons as a way of checking your work. Peek if you want, this is not a test.

1. Read James 4.3 What is the hindrance and what is the solution

Hindrance:

Solution:

2. Read Proverbs 28.9 What is the hindrance and what is the solution.

Hindrance:

Solution:

3. Read Mark 11.25; Matthew 5.23-24; Matthew 6.12, 14-15 What is the hindrance and what is the solution.

Hindrance:

Solution:

4. Read 1 Peter 3.7 What is the hindrance and what is the solution.

Hindrance:

Solution:

5. Read Psalm 66.18; 1 John 3.22; James 5.16 What is the hindrance and what is the solution.

Hindrance:

Solution:

What type of small victories in prayer should you watch for and expect? Make sure you write down each time you accomplish one of these goals.

Small Goals:

Daily:

Weekly:

Monthly:

- ◆ QUESTION: You need both positive and negative questions if you are going to succeed.

Positive: How will accomplishing this make me feel in the end? Negative: How will I feel if I don't do this and go back to where I was?

- ◆ PROJECT: Look to the future and picture how your life will improve or be better if you stick with this and accomplish your daily and long-term goals. You might even want to get a picture you can look at that represents your long-term goal. Look a one, two or even five years into the future and see yourself. How will an active prayer life help me in the long term?

Time I plan to Pray:

Place I plan to Pray:

How will I keep it a place of solitude during the time of prayer?

What distractions do I need to deal with so my prayer time will not be interrupted?

What supplies do I need?

Bible Paper Pen or Pencil _____
 _____ _____ _____

Phase 2: The Fight Thru

It does not matter if it is day two or day twenty-two there will always come the day when you will have to determine if you are going on or quitting. Most people quit because they don't see the final goal every happening so they just stop and allow defeat to become the winner in their life. This is where you have to "Take my yoke upon you and learn from Jesus." This is about discovering the benefits of a long-term relationship with Jesus helping each step of the way. Prayer is about you and Jesus together solving your life problems and setting life goals.

- ◆ **RECOGNIZE:** See the need to win a few small battles or to accomplish some small goals along the way. This is called the '*Fight Thru.*' You will need several of these before you can move to phase three. Each time you '*Fight Thru*' it becomes easier the next time to be a winner and '*Fight Thru.*'

6. Read James 1.5-7 What is the hindrance and what is the solution.

Hindrance:

Solution:

7. Read 1 Thessalonians 5.18 What is the hindrance and what is the solution.

Hindrance:

Solution:

8. Read James 4.2 What is the hindrance and what is the solution.

Hindrance:

Solution:

9. Read Matthew 18.19; Luke 6.38 What is the hindrance and what is the solution.

Hindrance:

Solution:

10. Read Ezekiel 14.3, 7 What is the hindrance and what is the solution.

Hindrance:

Solution:

11. Read Proverbs 21.13 What is the hindrance and what is the solution.

Hindrance:

Solution:

Eleven Hindrances: Answers

Eleven Hindrances answers: 1. Selfish motives 2. Ignoring scripture 3. Unforgiving attitude 4. Marriage discord 5. Unconfessed sin 6. Prevailing Doubt 7. Unthankfulness 8. Failure to ask 9. Failure to share prayer together 10. Idols 1. Selfishness

PART THREE FORMING A HABIT OF PRAYER THAT LAST²

Having a life of prayer is not as simple or difficult as it may see. Bill Hybes is right when he writes "Prayer is an unnatural activity." It goes against our nature. So prayer is not easy. Prayer is also something we seek after. We need God and will either find him or will find something to replace him. Prayer is not as hard as some want to make it. We need God, hence we need to learn how to pray.

This can be seen in a teaching of Jesus. "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." Matthew 11.28-30

The REASON: There is always a reason, a need, or something you want to achieve when you look at forming a new habit. Jesus spoke to those who were "weary and

burdened." Exercise, learning to play an instrument, learning a language, dieting, writing a book, whatever it may be, we usually want to do it to improve our life and to have a new outlook. Each goal is to overcome a deficiency

What would you like to see change or happen as you form a better disciplined prayer time with God?

Answer:

Phase 1: The place to start is at the BEGINNING

Everything we set as a goal is ultimately for our benefit. Jesus promised 'rest' for those who would come to him and discover a life with Him. Everything is easy at the beginning. Part of the reason is you are doing something new and exciting and part is you don't know how much you will have to do to accomplish your goal. Most projects are started with the ultimate goal in sight without really planning on how to accomplish that goal. If a person wants to have a fruitful and powerful prayer life they need to know it will 'not' happen by sheer will power but by practice and patience.

You need to plan to succeed in anything and that includes prayer. As covered in lesson two you need a time to pray, a place to pray, you need solitude to pray, you need to plan to eliminated the distractions and you need your supplies in place.