

“Develop a Personal Prayer Life,” *Matthew 6:5-15*, page 936

Introduction:

1. Every spoken word begins with a thought.
2. Where are thoughts created?
 - A. Do I create my own thoughts out of empty space?
 - B. Can a thought be comprehended before it becomes a part of my conscious awareness?
 - C. These questions give rise to additional questions:
 - a. Can I control my thoughts? If yes,
 - b. How do I control my thoughts?
 - c. How much does God control my thoughts?
 - d. How much does Satan control my thoughts?
 - D. *Philippians 4:8: “Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.”*
 - E. How do I develop my personal prayer life?

I. Prayer begins with our personal thoughts.

- A. Personal thoughts are greatly influenced by what we see, feel, hear, experience. For example, while preparing this message:
 1. I looked out the window; a man was ice fishing on the harbor. (I had several thoughts.)
 2. A man walked in wearing a red plaid wool coat. (I had several thoughts.)
 3. A song on the radio, “It’s Five O’clock Somewhere.” (I had several thoughts.)
 4. I drove into the church parking lot and looked at the G.F.C. (I had several thoughts.)
- B. All these sights and experiences generate a person’s thoughts that often would be put into words that become conversation.
- C. I believe it is safe to say that what we see, feel, hear, and experience will trigger our thoughts.
 1. Thoughts are expressed in spoken words.
 2. Spoken words become conversation.
 3. Two-way conversation generates new thoughts and additional spoken words.
- D. All conversation (including prayer) is personal thoughts put into words.

II. Our life style greatly influences our thoughts, and as a result, our prayer life.

- A. Our life style will become the primary influencer of our thoughts.
 1. If I hang out with deer hunters and watch the outdoor hunting channel on T.V., I will think about hunting.
 2. If I spend time with negative people who are dissatisfied with life, I will think life is not good.
 3. If I spend the majority of my time with people who have little, if any, belief in God, that will hinder my faith.
 4. If, however, I spend the majority of my time with fellow believers, that will strengthen my faith and thoughts.
- B. *1 Thessalonians 4:17: “Pray without ceasing.”*
 1. If prayer becomes a basic life style, it will encompass what I see, feel, hear, and experience each day.
 2. Prayer is thoughts developed by my daily living experiences that are shared with God.

- C. I can greatly influence my thoughts by:
 - 1. Spending time in quality conversation with people.
 - 2. Listening to inspiring Christian music.
 - 3. Regularly attending our church services.
 - 4. Reading the Bible and devotional materials.
 - 5. Attending a weekday Bible study.
 - 6. Becoming aware of the needs of others.
 - 7. Keeping up on world events.
 - 8. Experiencing the ups and downs of life.
- D. Our prayers/conversations with God will reflect what we are experiencing in life.

III. Prayer should be a two-way conversation.

- A. It is difficult to have a quality conversation with myself.
 - 1. Conversation is sharing thoughts and words with another person.
 - 2. Quality conversation is both speaking and listening.
- B. Prayer should also be a combination of speaking and listening.
 - 1. I have never been fortunate enough to see an angel.
 - 2. God has never spoken audible words to me.
 - 3. God, however, (through the Holy Spirit) on many occasions has directly influenced my thoughts in such a way to change my actions.
- C. As a D.S., I traveled about 50,000 miles a year and conducted hundreds of meetings each year. I had about 800 prayer partners from the 57 churches in our district.
 - 1. Lord, I have this meeting tonight; I do not have all the issues and questions at this time—the Holy Spirit directed my thoughts.
 - 2. Often I would be in the car four to six hours a day. Many, many times I was listening to a praise C.D. I knew the Lord was in the car with me.
 - 3. More times than I remember, the Holy Spirit would impress on my mind: That car is not going to stop.
- D. Prayer is a conversation with God.
 - 1. Talking with my heavenly Father.
 - 2. Sharing life with Him.
 - 3. Getting advice and counsel from Him.
 - 4. Sharing my fears, doubts, victories, and failures with Him.

Conclusion:

- 1. Our grandson, Clay is just 2 years old and beginning to talk non-stop.
 - A. Two years ago we welcomed Clay into our family as one of us!
 - B. We share life with Clay and have many memories of time spent together—one of us!
 - C. Now Clay can talk and express his thoughts with us (funny, and doesn't make much sense)—one of us!
 - D. As our grandchildren grow up, their conversation changes because their life style is changing—one of us!
- 2. That is how God desires to share with us.
 - A. When we are born again, we are adopted into God's family.
 - B. We then begin to share our life events with Him.
 - C. Prayer is simply talking with God about our life and things that are important to us.
- 3. I urge you to just enjoy being one of God's children.